

# 17B. WOMEN'S HEALTH

Some health issues only affect women.



Reviewed September 2023. Free to use for personal use and with people you support. **This checklist can be downloaded from [www.surreypb.org.uk](http://www.surreypb.org.uk)**

Women with learning disabilities are much less likely to use health screening programmes.

Many GP surgeries offer a well woman clinic where you may be seen by a female doctor or a female nurse.

Health screening programmes for women include cervical smear tests and breast cancer screening.



Health screening services can make 'reasonable adjustments' to make it easier for you to use them.

# THINGS TO CHECK

1

Do you need more support to manage your periods?



You may need more support with personal hygiene.



You may need more support to remember when your next period is due.



You may need more support to manage period pain. See our pain management factsheet for more advice.

Talk to your doctor about any problems with your periods, such as bleeding between periods and your periods stopping being regular.

## The menopause

Your periods will stop when you get older.

This is called the menopause and often starts when you are about 50 years old.

Getting hot flushes is one sign of the menopause.



2

Do you need more support to use the cervical screening service?



All women aged 25 to 64 can go for a cervical screen.

It is a test to check the health of the cervix, which is the lower part of the womb. It is often called a 'smear test'.



Women aged between 25 and 49 are invited for testing every three years.

Women aged 50 to 64 are invited for testing every five years.



The doctor or nurse will ask you to lie down. They will gently put a small instrument, called a speculum, into your vagina.

Then they will wipe a small brush over the cervix to pick up some cells. The test only takes a few minutes.

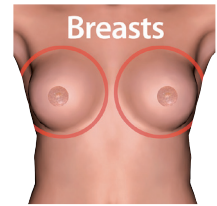


'Reasonable adjustments' can make health appointments easier for you.

Go to [www.surreypb.org.uk](http://www.surreypb.org.uk) for information about our Easy Read factsheet 'Getting ready for my visit to hospital' which explains about reasonable adjustments.

3

Do you need more support to check your breasts are healthy?



You may need support to check your breasts regularly.



It's important to check for lumps and other changes to your breasts.

Do this once a month after your period. If you no longer have periods you should check your breasts on the same date each month.

You may need support to go for breast screening.



Women aged 50 to 70, who are registered with a GP, are invited for screening every three years.

A special x-ray machine is used to check that your breasts are healthy.

Talk to your doctor about any problems with your breasts.

4

Do you need more support with relationships or sexual health?



Some things you may need support with.



You may want more advice about safe sex and contraception.

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the UK.

- It's passed on through unprotected sex (sex without a condom).
- Most people who have chlamydia don't notice any symptoms.
- Chlamydia is easily treated.



Talk to your doctor if you think you might be at risk of chlamydia, or have any signs of soreness around the vagina.

## Easy Health

Easyhealth is run by an organisation called Generate Opportunities Ltd.

There are Easy Read leaflets about 'Periods', 'Breasts', 'Cervical Screening' and 'Sexual Health For Women' designed by many different organisations.

Look in the 'Health Leaflets' section.



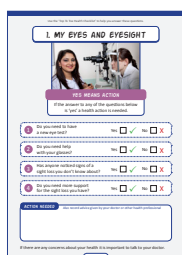
[www.easyhealth.org.uk](http://www.easyhealth.org.uk)

# USING THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist is a part of The Health Action Planning toolkit available from [www.surreypb.org.uk](http://www.surreypb.org.uk)

The Health Action Planning toolkit is free to use.

- There are 20 other checklists in the series covering a wide range of health issues.
- There is a Health Action Plan template for your checklist answers.



The Health Action Planning Toolkit was developed by Mike Leat from The Clear Communication People Ltd in partnership with Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust health professionals and other health professionals in Surrey.

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The Health Action Planning Toolkit is intended as a aid to support people with learning disabilities to access the support and advice of qualified health professionals. The Clear Communication People Ltd take no responsibility for medical diagnosis, advice and treatment given in conjunction with the use of this checklist.

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The **Clear Communication** People Ltd

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