

## ATTUNE

Bless your body always. Speak no word of  
condemnation about it.

—Rebecca Beard

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## The State of Health Services at TTU

A recent interview with Randy Tompkins, FNP, supervisor of Health Services at TTU, revealed some interesting facts about the health services offered to TTU students and faculty. Mr. Tompkins informed us that the health services department will be moving from the Infirmary building to the new nursing building upon its completion in early 2008.

In its current location, the Infirmary building, Health Services has just recently expanded its services to include faculty and staff. Due to limited space, however, these services—to students and faculty alike—are somewhat restricted. As many female students on campus are probably aware, Health Services is unable to prescribe the birth control pill. The reason for this is that a gynecological exam is typically required prior to providing a prescription, and the Infirmary, according to Mr. Tompkins, does not have enough space to accommodate routine gynecological exams. The same is true for mammography services; funding and space for mammography equipment simply are not available.

As discouraging as that may be, the Health Services staff are extremely helpful and do everything in their power to assist patients. Persons seeking the birth control pill or emergency contraception will be referred to the Putnam County Health Department, or if a breast self-exam has you worried, the staff will offer a professional

opinion and refer you to the Health Department, Cookeville Regional Medical Center, or for mammography, to Premier Medical Center. If you have any health questions or concerns, you can contact Health Services, and even if they are unable to meet your particular needs, they will be able to refer you to someone locally who can.

That being said, once Health Services has become established in the nursing facility, it is uncertain whether there will be significantly more space with which to work. Since problems with space availability may follow Health Services to their new location, Mr. Tompkins expressed a wish to contract through the Putnam County Health Department (if it can be arranged in the budget) to provide a part-time clinic a few times a year offering somewhat broader gynecological services.

Due to the inability to perform routine gynecological exams and the consequent inability to prescribe the contraceptive pill, Health Services does have condoms available (in reasonable quantities) at no charge to all students.

In regards to men's health (that's right, men's health . . . I've got to give men a reason to read the Women's Health and Well-being issue of *Attune*): It takes far less funding, equipment, and space to perform prostate exams than it does to perform gynecological exams, so prostate exams are currently offered by Health Services, and there is no reason to expect this service to be discontinued once in the new building.

Some STD testing is also

available. These services were not always available in the past. Depending upon the particular test administered, the screening may be free. HIV testing requires a fee, but tests for Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis, among others, are free. As with all personal health issues, confidentiality is respected in STD testing.

The new location of Health Services will include a conference room in which Mr. Tompkins hopes to host health promotion workshops emphasizing tobacco cessation, safe alcohol consumption, and healthy eating habits to name a few topics. Current health promotion programming is typically done in classes by agreement with professors.

In the future, Health Services would also like to provide for psychiatric needs. Mr. Tompkins was very complimentary of the Counseling Center's work, but stresses a need for psychiatry (altogether different from counseling) and the ability to provide medications for psychiatric problems. Mr. Tompkins is unsure whether psychiatric services will be possible, but he intends to continue to support the effort.

Mr. Tompkins was most cooperative in my quest to spread the word about health services available on campus, and he, as well as his staff, was very friendly and helpful in meeting patients' needs.

## What, no lump?

Inflammatory breast cancer is a rare type of cancer that eludes most of us. While its signs and symptoms vary from traditional breast cancer, the end result can be equally tragic.

Inflammatory breast cancer (IBC) gets its name from the appearance of the skin on the breast and occurs when cancer cells clog the lymphatic vessels in the skin overlying the breast. Redness, swelling and dimpled skin are classic signs and should be investigated promptly as this cancer grows rapidly. It is common for IBC to be misdiagnosed since its symptoms mimic those of mastitis, a benign breast infection.

Unlike other types of breast cancer, one most likely will not develop a distinct lump but instead will notice an area of thickness or a feeling of heaviness in one or both breasts. IBC usually grows in nests or sheets, rather than a solid tumor, allowing it to spread throughout the breast without a detectable lump.

Symptoms include:

- Rapid, unusual increase in breast size
- Redness, rash, blotchiness on breast
- Persistent itching of breast or nipple
- Lump or thickening of breast tissue
- Stabbing pain and/or soreness of breast
- Feverish breast
- Swelling of lymph nodes under the arm or above the collar bone
- Dimpling or ridging of breast
- Flattening or retracting of nipple
- Nipple discharge or change in pigmented area around nipple

While these symptoms may indicate a benign disorder, *any* change to your breast(s) should be reported to your physician immediately.

*Information for this article was taken from [www.ibcresearch.org](http://www.ibcresearch.org)*

— Leslie Burk

## Take Some “Me” Time

Fall is here. School is back in full force. Your planner is overflowing with a million things to do. It could be papers (grading or writing), work, extracurricular activities, getting some exercise, spending time with friends/family and whatever else may be part of your life. But there is something important that you are leaving out. Can't put your finger on it? Oh yeah, what about *me*?

Women are notorious for making sure everything, and everyone else is in order before we consider ourselves. Taking some “me time” is not hard to do, right? Why don't we do it?

Unfortunately for many of us, we feel guilty. Many women experience these feelings. Why is it wrong to do something just for you? Well ladies, don't fret, because the answer is . . . It isn't.

Oddly enough, the best way to counteract these feelings is to do exactly what you want to do . . . Take some “me time.” The elusive “me time” comes in many forms. Do what makes you happy, whether it's reading a book, pampering yourself, or just kicking back and watching your favorite movie.

Why should you do this? Marianne Legato, cardiologist, has a great reason.

“If you never have any time except reactive time— things you must do for others—you don't have a sense of control. You are interrupted all the time. Your brain has trouble resting even during sleep. Such chronic exhaustion increases the release of stress hormones, and your blood sugar rises.”

Legato links these physical reactions to higher risks of heart disease, diabetes, memory troubles and hormonal problems resulting in an increase in body fat.

So ladies, take advantage. Put down that schedule, forget about those dishes (I promise they will wait for you) and toss your worries—at least for a little while. Take some “me time” Do something for yourself and do it often. Not only will you physically function better, but you will feel better both mentally and spiritually. And most importantly, always remember to keep “me time” a *guilt-free* time.

— J. Natae Jones-Beasley

Yoffe, Emily. "Why is me time such a big deal?" CNN.com. 15 Sep 2006. Health Magazine. 26 Sep 2006 <http://www.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/09/15/me.time.health/index.html>

## Events to Watch For

November 16— *Great American Smoke Out*. Interested in ending your smoking habit? Come see the information the Women's Center can provide to help you quit.

February 26-March 2— *Eating Disorders Awareness Week*

March 27— Dr. Bernice Sandler, *Is There Gender Equity in Higher Education?* 7:00 p.m. Derryberry Hall auditorium, a Center Stage Event.

April 3— *The Clothesline Project* A visual display that bears witness to the violence against women. Viewing 9:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m., Roaden University Center, Tech Pride Room

*Take Back the Night*, hosted by the Tech Ladies Coalition, the President's Commission on the Status of Women, and the Women's Center. Roaden University Center Front Steps, 7:30 p.m.

April 10— Susan Estrich, a Center Stage Event. Title: Sex and Power; Women, Men, Sexism and the Future.

## Cancer... Caused by a Virus?

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States. Around 20 million people are infected. There is no cure for HPV, although in most women the infection goes away on its own. Human Papilloma Virus is spread through skin-to-skin contact. Half of sexually active women in the U.S. between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two are infected. Each year around six million people contract a new HPV infection. Genital warts may appear after sexual contact with an infected person within weeks or months, or they may not appear at all. Many people that contract HPV will not have any symptoms, and the infection will clear on its own.

There are more than 100 different strains of this virus. There have been ten identi-

fied HPV strains that can lead to the development of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of death in women. Cervical HPV becomes undetectable for 90 percent of women within two years. In the United States an estimated 5,000 women will die from this disease each year. In Tennessee, there are around 300 cases of this disease with one-third resulting in death.

In June 2006, the FDA approved the first vaccine for the prevention of HPV. The vaccine requires three doses over the course of six months for women between the ages of nine and twenty-six. The series of doses are around \$360. The second dose is given two months after the first and the third is given six months after the initial injection. The vaccine is called Gardasil. Gardasil prevents four harmful strains: types 6, 11, 16 and 18 in women. The

vaccine is producing good results in clinical trials. There is currently no vaccine available for men. Women who receive the vaccine should continue to get annual exams because the vaccine does not protect against all strains of HPV. Many private physicians may carry the vaccine, but most county health departments will not receive the vaccine until next year.

To prevent infection, girls will have to be vaccinated before they become sexually active. Many religious groups are opposing this vaccine, despite a CDC survey showing that 80 percent of parents favor vaccinating their daughters. Some parents believe that giving the HPV vaccine to their young daughters could be harmful because they think it will be promoting sexual activity. Parents think that their daughters will not need the vaccine because they will ab-

stain from sexual activity.

According to Dr. Jennifer Nevels of the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, in preventing contraction of HPV without a vaccine, "Environmental factors . . . are very important to consider." Naturopathic treatment options for HPV are also available. Dr. Nevels has a treatment regimen that has proven effective which involves the application of botanicals and zinc chloride to the cervix, helping to destroy abnormal cells.

—Brittney Denney

"A Natural Approach to the HPV Vaccination." [www.scnm.edu/college/news/11 Oct 2006. http://www.scnm.edu/news/article\\_900.php](http://www.scnm.edu/college/news/11%20Oct%202006/news/article_900.php)

*Information for this article taken from [www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/](http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/) and [www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com)*

## What's My Size and Why Should I Care

Vanity sizing, or size inflation, is the labeling of larger clothing with smaller sizes. With the media's emphasis on unrealistic weights and images, women feel the need to look perfect, which provides prime conditions for clothing companies to mark a size 10 pair of jeans with a label of a size 6.

According to Jennifer D'Angelo of Fox News, "... Designers are cutting women's clothing bigger in an effort to cash in on womanly vanity." Although this marketing scheme is wrong, Tamara Albu, fashion design coordinator at Parsons School of Design explains, "Designers make women feel that they are a size 4 and they make a sale. It's a marketing trick." A

woman is more likely to buy something in a smaller size in one store than to buy the larger size at another store. Women feel fulfilled if they go into a store thinking they are a size 10 and walk out with a size 6. They think they have lost weight or are one step closer to perfection.

It is clear that clothing companies who participate in the marketing scheme of vanity sizing do so for profits. D'Angelo notes that the designers Ralph Lauren, Betsy Johnson, Nicole Miller, Banana Republic, Gap and Old Navy are some of the clothing companies known to participate in vanity sizing. The majority of these designers justify vanity sizing by saying their clothing is made to fit women

with certain "body types" and "lifestyles." For example, Old Navy is geared towards mothers and children, whereas Banana Republic seeks professional career women. Tammy Kinley, professor of merchandising and hospitality management of the University of North Texas, found the differences between the "standard" size and the size indicated on the label could be as much as thirteen inches. This size deviation is more likely to occur in more expensive clothing. The consumer is paying for the smaller size, making both the consumer and clothing company happy.

It is fairly common knowledge that in the 1950s Marilyn Monroe wore a size 12. Today that size 12 could be a size

6. Elis Lotozo of the Tallahassee Democrat states, "Women's sizes did not become standardized until the 1940s when the U.S. Department of Agriculture did a large-scale study of women's measurements, which came at the urging of the mail-order clothing industry." However, that standardization was based upon a female hour-glass figure, whereas today most women have become more pear-shaped making the hour-glass figure standardization obsolete.

Should there be a new standardization of clothing that is based on today's women, or

*Continued on page 4*

## If I Only Had a Coke...

While sitting in the Women's Center one day, some of my colleagues and myself began discussing "you can't get pregnant if" myths. Within ten minutes, we had come up with at least a dozen different methods that would supposedly prevent pregnancy—like if you have sex while you are on your period you cannot get pregnant, or the few days following the end of your period provide some sort of immunity from pregnancy. Most of the so-called "safe methods" that different staff members had heard were contradictory. Is it during your period or the days following that provide amnesty from potential baby-making? (The answer is that both methods are completely false!) Consequently, our discussion prompted me to research pregnancy myths, and the more I researched, the more ridiculous the methods became.

One of the most common "you can't get pregnant if" myths I encountered is "you cannot get pregnant if it is your first time engaging in intercourse." The answer: false. There is no magic involved in the "first time" that will keep you from getting

pregnant. The truth is that you could lose your virginity one night and nine months later have a brand new baby calling you "mommy."

Another common myth is that douching with a soft drink, either Coke or Sprite, will kill the sperm in your body before it has a chance to reach the egg. False. Douching with a soft drink has never been shown to be effective at preventing pregnancy. As Barbara Mikkelsen writes, "Their various chemicals and flavorants do not amount to a spermicide, neither does the beverage's carbonation result in a fizzy and effective vaginal wash."<sup>1</sup> Instead, what you will likely end up with is a nasty infection that could be painful and hard to clear up.

Every woman has heard at least one or two pregnancy legends in her lifetime. Some left us giggling at the stupidity, whereas others caused us to ponder their potential validity. Almost all of these fantastic myths that have been passed around for generations are no more than "old wives tales." So, before you decide whether or not engaging in sexual activity is best for you right now, think

about the potential outcomes. If you are not ready to be a mom, or you find yourself having nightmares about the "gonorrhea monster" chasing you down a dark alley, then take the necessary precautions by educating yourself about true forms of birth control.

One cheap and effective method is the male condom. Condoms can easily be purchased at any local drugstore, but proper use requires a bit of practice. So, before you attempt to use a condom, learn the proper application method. After you are a veritable condom expert, keep a few with you at all times, so that "when the mood strikes" you won't be caught without protection. Before having sex, it is advisable to talk to your partner about your desire to use condoms during sex. Make sure that he understands that condoms protect you both from an unwanted situation. If he tries to talk you out of using a condom, or if he will not listen to your concerns, perhaps it is time to find a new partner.

Another readily available and cheap method of birth control is "the pill." While

the pill is not 100% effective, it is highly efficient in preventing pregnancy when taken correctly. Obtaining a prescription for the pill does require a visit to the gynecologist, which can be an intimidating prospect for someone who has never had a full body physical. However, a visit to the gynecologist is an essential part of a basic physical health regimen for women. (And, speaking from experience it is really not that bad. The gynecologists of the world just get a lot of negative press.)

There are lots of reliable and safe forms of birth control on the market. So, when you feel that you may be ready to participate in the world of sex, be prepared. Educate yourself—and that doesn't mean go buy a Coke. Research available birth control methods, and then decide which type is best for you. After all, being accountable for your actions shows respect for your body, and respecting your body is the best form of health.

— Hannah Holland

1. Mikkelsen, Barbara. [www.snopes.com/pregnant/conceive.htm](http://www.snopes.com/pregnant/conceive.htm)

*Continued from page 3*

should the clothing companies keep the old standardizations and continue vanity sizing? After all, as long as the consumer is buying clothes that fit well, feel comfortable, and look good, why should we care what the size is? Shouldn't we all just love our bodies for what they are?

—Summer Carnahan

D'Angelo, Jennifer. "Flattery Gets Designers Everywhere." FoxNews.com. 15 July 2002. 12 Oct 2006. [www.foxnews.com/](http://www.foxnews.com/)

Lotozo, Eils. "Lack of standard clothing sizes can drive women crazy." Tallahassee.com. 03 Nov 2002. Tallahassee Democrat. 13 Oct 2006. [www.fitme.com/Fitme/](http://www.fitme.com/Fitme/)

## F.Y.I.

The emergency contraception provider nearest to TTU campus is the Putnam County Health Department

Clinician: Teena King (RN, GONP)  
(931)528-2531  
121 South Dixie Avenue  
Cookeville, TN 38501

December 15 is the deadline for applications for the Wilma Carr Scholarship. For a review of the requirements, check the Women's Center website, or email [lburk@tntech.edu](mailto:lburk@tntech.edu).

## Love Your Body Day 2006

For the first time ever on Tech's campus, a Love Your Body Day celebration was held on October 18, 2006. Sponsored by the Women's Center and held at the Backdoor Playhouse, Love Your Body Day 2006 was a huge success. Some professors brought their classes, and many other people were in attendance. Despite the rain, there was good turnout to learn about the concept of loving and celebrating one's body.

The day's festivities included a PowerPoint presentation and discussion led by Women's Center student worker Hannah Holland. The presentation included information on the history and foundations of Love Your Body Day, as well as six advertisements from various companies that depicted women in degrading situations. The discussion that ensued was lively and

enlightening, and it appeared that most everyone felt inspired to participate in the conversation.

Dr. Peggy Elam, a Vanderbilt educated clinical psychologist, provided an enlightening discussion on the "Health at Any Size" philosophy. She provided details from clinical studies that, according to Dr. Elam, show that people who are often considered "overweight" live the longest of any weight category.

All things considered, everyone left Love Your Body Day feeling a little more empowered and with a new awareness of the negative impact of advertising. Love Your Body Day armed the audience with a whole new set of reasons to love their bodies, just the way they are, 365 days a year.

—The Women's  
Center

## Women's Health Resources

\*\*\*All books listed below are available at the Women's Center\*\*\*

*Fat is a Feminist Issue* by Susie Arbach

*Healing the Female Heart* by Elizabeth Ross, M.D. and Judith Sachs

*How Do I Love Me?* by Helen M. Johnson

*Issues of Women's Health and Wellness* by C. Amanda Rittenhouse, Ph.D.

*The New Our Bodies, Ourselves* by The Boston Women's Health Book Collective

*Revolution From Within* by Gloria Steinam

*Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom* by Christiane Northrup, M.D.

## 2006 Tennessee Economic Summit For Women

I wish to offer a gracious thank you to the Commission on the Status of Women for providing the financial support that enabled Dr. Stanger and me to attend this compelling conference. The day was jam-packed with various "break-out" sessions concerning vital information on the status of women in Tennessee, some of it encouraging, and some of it rather dismal.

I felt moved by the purpose of the conference, the gathering and the nearly overwhelming sense of feminine empowerment that permeated the event. Never, ever doubt a group of strong, organized women united with the sole intent to bring awareness to the plight of women in Tennessee. We women are practical in our approach toward the injus-

tics inflicted upon our sisters. We talk about the issue(s), determine a mode of action and attack it with the fervor of a lioness hunting down food for her young. I applaud the Tennessee Women's Economic Council Foundation for their dedication to furthering the movement toward equality for all women of all nations, classes and colors.

For more information please visit:  
[www.tennesseewomen.org](http://www.tennesseewomen.org)

-Leslie Burk

## Figures to Ponder

Statistics from *The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Tennessee Economy: A Report to the Tennessee General Assembly*

Presented by Tennessee Economic Council on Women

January 2006

-In Tennessee: Almost \$33 million is spent annually on *known* Domestic Violence related healthcare cases.

-In 2004, employees lost 103, 635.5 days of work to domestic violence in Tennessee.

Statistics from Tennessee Economic Council on Women *The Status of Women in Tennessee Counties: The Best and Worst Counties for Tennessee Women, Economic Autonomy*

-Putnam County ranked 80th of 95 counties in the "Percent of Women with Any Kind of Health Insurance Coverage" category.

-Putnam County ranked 57th of 95 counties in the "Percent of Women Living Below Poverty Level Incomes" category.

-Putnam County ranked 16th of 95 counties in the "Rate of Pregnancy of Girls Aged 10-19 per 1000" category .

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