

THE NAKED TRUTH

The Daily Mirror - 4 July 2006

By Helen Carroll

THE NAKED TRUTH

SIX WOMEN HAVE BRAVELY SHED THEIR CLOTHES TO APPEAR NAKED IN THE DAILY MIRROR AND REVEAL HOW THE FEMALE FORM CHANGES OVER THE DECADES

20s

"Between 22 and 24 women are at their most fertile," says Dr Jennifer Krup an expert in ageing at the HB Health Clinic in West London. "In her 20s a woman's body is producing hormones at peak levels in preparation for pregnancy."

WEIGHT: Hormones produced in preparation for pregnancy also lay down muscle and fat, but metabolism rates are high, helping twentysomethings burn calories easily

SKIN: High levels of collagen and elastin keep the skin plump and wrinkle-free. To prevent premature wrinkles avoid smoking, drinking too much and wear sunscreen every day.

HEALTH: While most women in this age group are generally healthy, this is the decade when they are most likely to have a number of partners and risk sexually transmitted diseases. Chlamydia is most common among young women. It's often symptomless but can lead to infertility if left untreated. See your GP if you're worried.

HORMONES: As a woman enters her 20s her body is producing the hormones oestrogen, progesterone and androgen giving her the best chance of conceiving.

ALEX Legouix, 25, a dancer from South-West London, says: "I used to live on crisps and iced buns but my metabolism began to slow down and I started putting on weight. I now need to take care of my body so I've cut out wheat, dairy and sugar - and I feel great."

30s

"Many women are juggling the roles of mum, wife and employee, making them more vulnerable to chronic fatigue syndrome and depression," says Dr Krup.

WEIGHT: Metabolism slows down as the percentage of lean muscle tissue in the body decreases and fat increases, resulting in weight gain. Keep exercising, because a gain of half a stone can lead to health problems such as heart disease.

SKIN: You'll still have plenty of collagen, but fine lines develop around the eyes and mouth as skin cell renewal slows down.

HEALTH: Being stressed or run-down can leave women more susceptible to immune system disorders. In her 30s a woman's bones start losing calcium which can lead to osteoporosis in later life, so have plenty of dairy products. Diabetes and high blood pressure can become a problem for those who have a poor diet and don't exercise.

HORMONES: Fertility declines rapidly after the age of 35, so if a baby features in your future plans start trying now.

Bethany James, 30, an Avon rep from West Yorkshire, says: "I put on lots of weight when I was pregnant with my two-year-old daughter and I can't seem to shift it. I'm always on diets and I binge exercise. For the sake of my long-term health, I know I need to be more consistent."

40s

"This is often when the menopause begins. As well as mood swings and hot flushes, a drop in oestrogen levels can lead to heart disease and osteoporosis," says Dr Krup

WEIGHT: As the body stores more fat and develops less muscle, the metabolism slows down making it harder to avoid gaining weight. Eat fewer calories and take more exercise to keep trim.

SKIN: As skin loses elasticity and much of its subcutaneous fat, it begins to sag and wrinkle. The result of gravity, pregnancy and breastfeeding will send breasts and bottoms heading south.

HEALTH: Even women with perfect vision are likely to notice a deterioration in eyesight. Fortysomethings are more susceptible to breast and ovarian cancer, so report any worrying changes to your GP.

HORMONES: A drop in oestrogen levels can lead to heart disease and osteoporosis. Many women have hormone replacement therapy to reduce the risk and treat menopausal symptoms.



Tina Lakeru, 44, a personal trainer from Birmingham, says: "When I turned 40 I had a check-up. My cholesterol, blood pressure and everything else was fine. I put it down to my healthy lifestyle. I'm fitter now than I was 10 years ago."

50s

"You are likely to now begin paying the price for years of smoking, excessive eating and drinking," says Dr Krup.

WEIGHT: A drop in hormones means less muscle, some of which is replaced with fat. Metabolism is also much slower.

SKIN: The loss of oil-producing glands means that the skin becomes drier. Further loss of subcutaneous fat also leads to more wrinkles.

HEALTH: Your bad habits like smoking and fatty foods will start to catch up with you leading to problems such as emphysema, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Many fiftysomethings may suffer stress looking after elderly parents.

HORMONES: Women usually emerge from the menopause around now. Before that happens, night sweats, bloating and fluid retention are likely to be at their worst. Expect more deterioration in both bone strength and mass. Ligaments also become stiffer.

Susan King, 52, an office worker from East London, says: "I've started the menopause and, no matter how hard I work at it, I struggle to lose weight. I'm also getting pain in my knees."

60s

"Post-menopausal women are vulnerable to a range of conditions, including osteoarthritis, incontinence, flu and loss of hearing or vision," says Dr Krup.

WEIGHT: Weight gain may slow down but if you are carrying too much fat around the abdomen you risk heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

SKIN: Pre-cancerous lesions and liver spots may appear as skin becomes thinner and wrinklier. Check out anything unusual with your GP.

HEALTH: Most sixty somethings need glasses, hearing is likely to be impaired, and gum disease may result in the need for dentures. Poor bladder function may lead to leakage. The body no longer absorbs nutrients as well, which can mean the bowel isn't so efficient and the immune system declines. So eat lots of fruit and veg. Falls can cause fractures as bones become much thinner. Boost your mental health in retirement by keeping busy and exercising.

HORMONES: The balance between oestrogens and androgens shifts, resulting in thinner hair and possibly a reduction in sexual desire.

Pat Porter, 60, a jewellery merchandiser from Middlesex, says: "I've always been slim, go to the gym and eat healthily. But over the past few years I've gained an extra inch of fat all over my body. Luckily, I've seen no other major signs of ageing - not even a grey hair."

70s

"Most seventy somethings see more of their GPs and other doctors than before," says Dr Krup. "That's not surprising, since this is also the decade when many people suffer from heart attacks, strokes and cancer."

WEIGHT: Adding pounds becomes less of a problem as appetite decreases, largely due to reduced physical activity. But being less active can be a problem for those who are already overweight.

SKIN: This will thin and hang loosely from the bones, particularly obvious on the arms, hands, jawline and legs. Fairer-skinned women and those who smoke or sunbathe are likely to be more wrinkled than others.

HEALTH: It will take longer to recover from illness or injury. Many in their late 70s experience mental decline, becoming forgetful and reacting more slowly to things than they used to. Staying active, walking or swimming, is still very important and can contribute to a longer, healthier and happier life. It is, however, normal to get tired and need rest.

HORMONES: Rejoice, for the first time in your adult life you are unlikely to be at the mercy of your hormones. Your child-bearing years and even the hot flushes and mood swings of the menopause should be a distant memory. But the fall in hormones can affect bones, making them thinner and more likely to break in a fall.

Joy Hussey, 70, a model from Essex, says: "My only problem is an under-active thyroid which was detected early and is now under control with medication. It seems that I - just like my mother who is 88 and very fit - have been blessed with good health."

To find out more about HB Health's anti-ageing programme call 0207 323 1388 or go to www.hbhealth.com