

WOMEN'S HEALTH *Talk*



NO FOOLIN'?

Legend has it that April Fool's Day was born as a result of a change in the calendar. Ancient European cultures celebrated New Year's Day on or around April 1, closely following the vernal equinox. The change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar dictated that New Year's Day should fall on January 1. Being creatures of habit, or being unaware of the change because of poor communication, many countries resisted the adoption of the new calendar for centuries.

The French were the first to adopt the new calendar. Those who refused to accept the new calendar and continued to celebrate New Year's Day on April 1 were considered fools, and were often sent on "fool's errands."

April 1 was dubbed Poisson d'Avril, or "April Fish," because anyone who fell for a prank played that day were thought to be as naïve as young fish – easily caught. The practice of taping paper fish to the back of a person's clothing became common practice, and made the wearer the butt of the joke.



For more on April Fool's Day history, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_fools_day

FROM FUNCTIONAL TO FLIRTY

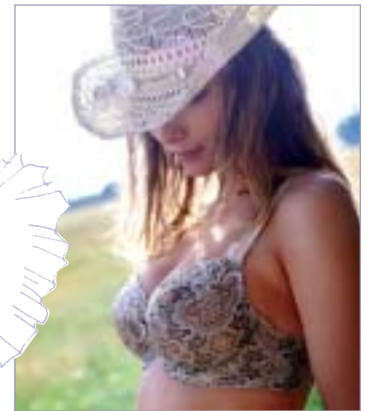
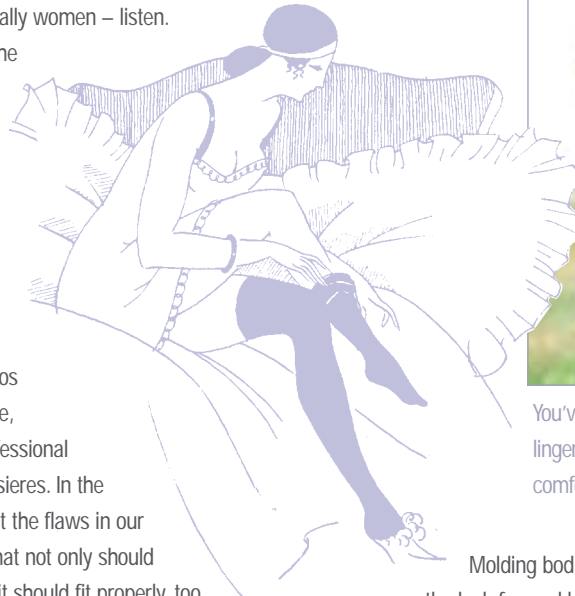
Women's love/hate relationship with lingerie through the ages

When Oprah talks, people – especially women – listen.

Oprah announced to the world that eight out of ten women were wearing the wrong size bra, and then showed us how to remedy the problem. To the delight of her audience, Harpo Studios became a bra boutique, complete with 35 professional fitters and 8,000 brassieres. In the process of pointing out the flaws in our fit, she reminded us that not only should our lingerie be pretty, it should fit properly, too.

Throughout the ages, women's relationship with lingerie has run the gamut between functional and flirty. Underwear can be traced back to ancient civilizations, Egypt and Greece, where its use was primarily functional. Simple corsets to support the breasts at their base and an early type of bra, a strophium, were worn during Roman times. During the middle ages, variations of corsets were worn to downplay the size of women's bust line as smaller, firmer breasts were in vogue.

Fast forward to the seventeenth century, when women did not need to enter a sanatorium to obtain a straightjacket. The corset of that era served the purpose admirably.



You've come a long way baby! Today's lingerie offers beauty, support and comfort.

Molding bodies into abnormal shapes achieved the look favored by the aristocracy. Corsets, though still worn as late as the 20th century, began to come into increasing disfavor with the public in the 1900s. French couturier Paul Poiret set women free from the corset in 1907 by designing a more natural contour in clothing, revolutionizing outerwear and underwear and ushering in the modern era in fashion.

It wasn't until 1913 that the brassiere made its first appearance, reportedly invented by a young girl who sold the patent to Warner's for \$1,500. Peer pressure seemed to be the catalyst for bra wearing in Britain. "French and American women all wear them, and so must we" was proclaimed in a magazine of the day.

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WHEN THE DOCTOR SAYS IT'S CANCER

Coping with one of life's scariest diagnoses



Rosie Cantu

Rosie Cantu's daughter had just announced her engagement when Rosie learned that she had some big news of her own. "The doctor's office called to tell me they had found something on my mammogram, and it was scary," she says. "I wondered if I would still be here for her wedding."

Just the week before, an American Cancer Society mobile mammogram unit visited Rosie's workplace where she had her second mammogram – ever.

Her first one was eight years earlier at age 40, and Rosie acknowledges that her employer, by inviting the mobile unit to her company, probably saved her life.

"I began praying a lot," says Rosie. "Family, friends and my co-workers helped me through. When I first received the call I was sitting at my desk and two co-workers nearby could tell something was wrong. When I got up from my desk, my supervisor followed me to find out why I was upset."

Coming to grips with cancer and discovering a personal coping mechanism is unique for each individual. Some find organized support groups are helpful in gaining perspective and feeling less isolated. Healthy eating, laughter and online support are other methods for learning to fight – and to live – with cancer. Blogging, or keeping Web logs, a type of online diary, helps many who have been diagnosed with cancer to cope with the ill effects of treatment. Blog readers, though strangers, are often a source of encouragement and inspiration as they respond online to the writer. Nothing takes the place of personal contact, however.

As fate would have it, Rosie caught her cancer at a point where a lumpectomy and radiation treatments were all that was needed. Within six months after surgery Rosie was declared cancer-free and recently celebrated five years as a survivor. Though her experience with breast cancer was relatively smooth, it has changed her forever. "I've talked to other people, and it's the same with everyone," she says. "We think about cancer every day."

Women's Health Boutique caters to cancer patients and survivors, carrying prostheses of varying skin shades, bras and lymphedema sleeves, as well as other products. Contact the WHB nearest you to learn more (www.w-h-b.com).

Reaching out to women everywhere

HELP FOR SENIOR ADULTS

Online program tracks benefits

Older Americans on fixed incomes may not be aware of the many benefits available to them from private and public sources. There are more than 1,300 different programs to assist adults, ages 55 and over, among all fifty U.S. states, with typically 50 to 70 programs in each state. But how does a person find out about them?

BenefitsCheckUp.org, an online service maintained by The National Council on the Aging, can help. It is the nation's most comprehensive Web-based service that screens for federal, state and some local private and public benefits for seniors. BenefitsCheckUp connects thousands of people every day to government programs that can help them pay for prescription drugs, health care, utilities and a host of other needs.



Medicare recipients with limited resources will be pleased to know that the online service has been expanded to include information about the new prescription drug coverage (Medicare Part D), provided as a result of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. To find answers to questions about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage program, visit BenefitsCheckUpRx.org. Information on qualifying for coverage, assistance with the cost and any additional benefits that will save on the purchase of prescription medications can be obtained when visiting BenefitsCheckUpRx.org. And the service is completely confidential. It does not require divulging name, address, phone number or Social Security number.

For more information about Medicare Part D, visit www.BenefitsCheckUpRx.org. For details on obtaining other services visit www.BenefitsCheckUp.org.

THE LINK BETWEEN OBESITY AND PULMONARY EMBOLISM

Younger, obese patients at risk

A study released late last year in the American Journal of Medicine confirmed that obesity is a risk factor for pulmonary embolism (PE) and deep vein thrombosis (DVT), especially in those under 40 years of age.

PE is the third leading cause of death behind heart attack and stroke, and is a hard-to-diagnose condition that occurs when an artery in the lung becomes blocked, in most cases by a blood clot that travels from other parts of the body. DVT is a blood clot that develops in a deep vein, usually in the leg. Most blood clots that cause blockage in the lung originate in the leg.

The study showed that obese females had a higher risk of developing blood clots than do overweight males, and obesity in those who were under 40 had the greatest impact on whether patients developed DVT. Obesity, especially in younger patients, is a strong indication that can alert physicians to the possibility of PE when patients present with the following symptoms:

- Sudden shortness of breath, either when active or at rest
- Chest pain that often mimics a heart attack. Pain can occur anywhere in your chest and may radiate to your shoulder, arm, neck or jaw. It may be sharp and stabbing or aching and dull and may become worse when you breathe deeply, cough, eat, bend or stoop.

Compression stockings keep the blood flowing, minimizing the risk of forming blood clots.



- Cough that produces bloody or blood-streaked sputum
- Excessive sweating
- Rapid heartbeat
- Lightheadedness or fainting

Women's Health Boutique carries compression stockings that assist in the prevention of DVT by applying steady, comfortable pressure to legs, promoting more efficient movement of blood through veins and leg muscles. Stockings come in a variety of strengths, styles and colors. Order online at www.w-h-b.com or visit the WHB nearest you.

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Hollywood glamour of the 1930s era pronounced cleavage as taboo, but tight fitting clothing that accentuated the bust line was quite popular and was worn by movie stars like Marlene Dietrich and Jean Harlow. The androgynous look of the 1920s was out; curves were in. A new manmade fiber, rayon, was used in assembling women's undergarments, and the advent of Lastex, an elasticized yarn that was a combination of latex rubber and ammonia, promoted garment flexibility unlike ever before.

Women in the 60s and 70s did not want to dress like their mothers. Gone was the structured bra, and as feminists began to express themselves by either burning or trashing their bras in defiance of women's repression, bra-lessness, for many, became the order of the day. It generally worked well for the small-breasted woman, but was not a comfortable option for those with larger breasts.

Power dressing, sports bras and Victoria's Secret rose to prominence in the 1980s and except for the corset-like bras worn pointedly by Madonna, brassieres were designed as a "second skin," soft, smooth and sleek, and were accompanied by matching panties. This trend continues on into the 21st century as women strive for a wardrobe defined by comfort, a sleek silhouette and sophistication – inside and out. Sometimes we just need a little help from our friends. Thanks, Oprah.

Women's Health Boutique offers beautiful fashion lingerie in sizes that will accommodate most any woman. Set up an appointment to ensure the proper fit by calling the WHB nearest you.

Sources: Oprah, aired November 15, 2005; <http://www.lingerie-uncovered.com/past/lingerie.htm>

LAUGHING OFF HEART DISEASE

Grandma used to say that laughter is the best medicine. Now researchers confirm that it is true. They say laughter actually promotes healthier blood vessels, giving chucklers an edge in combating cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Michael Miller, director of preventive cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center, led a study that subjected a group of healthy volunteers, most of whom were in their thirties, to both laughter-provoking and stress-inducing movies. They discovered that the inner linings of the blood vessels, or the endothelium, of those who laughed expanded, which increased their blood flow. Stressful movies such as Saving Private Ryan (Dreamworks, 1998) led watchers to experience a constricting of the blood vessels, reducing blood flow.



"The endothelium is the first line in the development of atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, so given the results of our study, it is conceivable that laughing may be important to maintain a healthy endothelium, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease," says Dr. Miller. "At the very least, laughter offsets the impact of mental stress, which is harmful to the endothelium."

Not determined in the study was the source of laughter's benefits. "Does it come from the movement of the diaphragm muscles as you chuckle or guffaw, or does it come from a chemical release triggered by laughter, such as endorphins?" asks Dr. Miller. In this case, just keep laughing. What we don't know won't hurt us.

PAMPERING SKIN AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Lindi Skin Soothes Symptoms

"My radiation caused what looked like a sunburn," says cancer survivor Rosie Cantu (See Rosie's story, "When the Doctor Says It's Cancer" on page 3). "It took about a year for my skin to get back to its normal color."

The American Cancer Society reports that although modern radiation treatments may cause less damage to the skin than in earlier types of therapy, patients may still find that skin shows a faint and short lasting redness during the first two weeks of treatments. Dryness and peeling may occur in the following two weeks and the skin over the treatment area may become darker.



Dryness and itchiness may be alleviated with the use of moisturizing lotions. Over-the-counter creams often cause nausea due to heavy perfume, irritation, and even inflammation or stinging. Unfortunately, even the few prescription creams on the market for those receiving cancer treatments do not necessarily solve these problems. Creams that are heavily concentrated with paraffin or petrolatum are not suitable for covering a burn.

Combining the latest medical information with innovative ingredients, Lindi Skin formulates superior products for a very special group of people, and is dedicated to developing skin care products that ease the burden of common treatment-related side effects.

Contact WHB at 888.708.9982 for information on Lindi Skin products.

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