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Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers



“CELEBRATING MOTHERS IN MAROONDAH”

Are you a mother with a young baby? Then this newsletter is for you!

We aim to keep mothers up to date with current activities of the PRISM project in Maroondah and to share information about topics that relate to mothers' health and well-being. All Community members and especially mothers are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter – so, if you have any community information stories, experiences, ideas or tips you would like to share with other mothers, please call Leanne Skipsey, the PRISM Community Development Officer on PH: 9870 8450

Baby Care Rooms

Having a new baby can change the way you look at the local environment. Things that were never important before can now make the difference between whether going out and about is a struggle or an enjoyable experience.

Some of the things that can make life easier in getting around with a baby and a pram are the provision of 'parents with prams' parking spaces which are located close to the entrances of shops, shops that provide trolleys with baby carriers, knowing that mothers with babies and young children are welcomed and the provision of a comfortable area to feed and change your baby.

When there has been no other option, many a baby has been changed and fed in the back of a car. This is not ideal and when you are heading out it can be helpful to know where Baby Care Rooms are and what they offer.

Baby care facilities vary greatly from a simple pull down change facility sometimes included in the disability toilet, to total baby care rooms for parents.

The Nursing Mothers Association of Australia (NMAA) has developed criteria for Baby Care Rooms and gives awards for facilities that meet these criteria. There is a Baby Care Room which meets these standards in Myer, Eastland on Level 3, near the lifts.

Other varied baby care facilities include those at:

- Eastland Shopping Centre situated on level 2, near Centre Management
- Ringwood Square Shopping Centre near Centre Management
- Ringwood Market Shopping Centre
- Croydon, in the carpark between the station

- Eastland Shopping Centre situated on level 2, near McDonalds
- Ringwood Square Shopping Centre near Centre Management
- Ringwood Market Shopping Centre
- Croydon Market Shopping Centre

Council has a process in place for upgrade of public toilet facilities throughout Maroondah to include basic baby care facilities where possible. This has already been done at Ringwood Lake near the playground and Croydon, in the carpark between the station and Main Street. The next project is McAlpine Reserve.

If there are toilets that you regularly use where you would like to have baby care facilities included please let us know. (contact details below)



All Maternal and Child Health Centres in Maroondah are places you are welcome to feed and change your baby - even when you're not coming to see the Nurse. Many mothers make use of disability toilets when out and about because they provide enough space for prams and toddlers! Some also have a pull down change table, e.g. at Ringwood library or Wyreena Community Arts Centre. Community houses are also places where mothers can feed and change babies in a friendly environment.

Giving feedback on usefulness and cleanliness of Baby Care Rooms, to their providers, will encourage awareness of their benefits and ongoing maintenance.

Mobilising local communities in support of mothers



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Mothers' Voice

We'd love to hear your thoughts, feelings or experiences of being a Mum. See front page for contact details.

A Mum's Story

"I have a new baby and an older child. I was looking through my (PRISM) vouchers and thought about using a child care voucher so that I could spend some time alone with my baby. I haven't used child care before. I was very hesitant but finally I decided to use a voucher and phoned to book my older son, Jak, into occasional care. I was so worried. I was so sure that he wouldn't fit in and I guess that I felt guilty leaving him with strangers too. I nearly pulled out and didn't take him.....You could have knocked me over with a feather! Jack fitted in like he'd been going there all of his life. The staff were very friendly and reassuring. He was having such a great time that I left him sooner than I expected. I even felt good leaving him having such a great time.

I'll use child care again. The hardest part was trying it for the first time. Now I don't know why I worried so much about it. Thanks to all the voucher sponsors, especially the child care centres – I've been encouraged to try something new to me."

Some Thoughts about Mothering and Sexuality

- ♥ "My body used to be just a vehicle to get around in. After having a baby I am more sensitive to changes in the way it feels"
- ♥ "The arrival of a new baby changed my whole life, including my sex life"
- ♥ "I don't think I'm the only new mother to have lied at the six week check-up when asked if I had 'resumed sex.'"
- ♥ "There was confusion in my emotions between sexual feelings and mother feelings."
- ♥ "A bit of time spent finding out from the physiotherapist about how to do pelvic floor exercises could have helped me to enjoy sex more"
- ♥ "Continued pain from my episiotomy was something I could have discussed with my Doctor or Maternal & Child Health Nurse earlier. When I finally did they were able to offer some things that helped."
- ♥ "I was so scared of becoming pregnant again that I was unable to enjoy sex. Finding out more about contraception helped overcome this anxiety"
- ♥ "After providing comfort and food 24 hours a day every day, is it any wonder that I don't feel cuddly at night?"
- ♥ "I didn't realize the relationship between breastfeeding and a very dry vagina. It would have helped to know that this was not unusual and that it is not a permanent condition."
- ♥ "We are both too tired for sex at the moment all we can manage is to hold each other close. In some ways our relationship is stronger than ever"

HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE YEAR AFTER BIRTH

Over 1,000 women who had recently had a baby were asked what kinds of health issues had been a problem of them in the first six months. The list below shows just how common it is to experience health problems after having a baby.

- ◆ 69% tiredness
 - ◆ 44% back pain
 - ◆ 26% difficulties with sex
 - ◆ 21% soreness from an episiotomy or tear
 - ◆ 18% relationship difficulties
 - ◆ 17% depression
 - ◆ 17% mastitis
 - ◆ 13% bowel problems
 - ◆ 11% urinary incontinence, eg when you cough or laugh
 - ◆ 11% more coughs and colds than usual
 - ◆ 8% difficulties with contraception
 - ◆ 6% constantly reliving the baby's birth
- Almost all women (94%) had experienced one or more of these problems

Tip: If you have complex issues you need to discuss with your Dr or Maternal & Child health Nurse ask for a longer appointment time when making the booking



What is Prism ?



The PRISM program (Program of Resources Information and Support for Mothers) aims to improve the emotional and physical well being of recent mothers in Maroondah. The project is about building support for mothers in their local community. It also provides opportunities for Mums to spend time with other local Mums, and raises community awareness of Maternal health issues.

The views expressed in articles are those of the individual and are not necessarily endorsed by the PRISM publicity committee.

Tip: If your baby is too small to leave, try having a relaxing bath, reading a book or taking a short nap while grandparents, a friend or partner play with the baby. Taking the baby to bed with you can provide a rest for you both.

Interview with a Maroondah Maternal & Child Health Nurse – Christine Poste

After the birth of a baby, large numbers of women experience a range of emotional and physical health problems. It is quite common that mothers don't discuss these issues with others, even with health professionals. Mothers often believe that it's just part of having a baby and nothing can be done to assist. It can seem too difficult to talk about issues such as chronic back pain, exhaustion, incontinence or depression. Finding someone you feel comfortable speaking to about how you are feeling can greatly influence your wellbeing. Both your Dr & Maternal & Child Health Nurse are there for your health as well as your baby's.

What Qualifications do you need to become a Maternal & Child Health Nurse? (M&CHN)

It is quite a long process to become a Maternal & Child Health Nurse. You are required to have a degree in General Nursing, then post graduate diplomas in midwifery and M&CH. Many M&CHN's have other qualifications such as Lactation Consultant, Paediatric Nursing or Infant & Parent Mental Health.

How are mothers allocated to a particular centre? Does a mother have a choice about which centre she attends?

The birth notice is given to the nurse at the centre which is geographically closest. However, if this is not suitable for any reason, she may attend another centre within the municipality.

When would you usually see a mother for the first time?

The first visit is usually within the first week at home with the baby, and is a home visit. It is recommended that mothers visit the M&CHN in their area prior to the birth to establish rapport with the nurse and learn about the service.

“Once I'd spoken to my M&CHN and admitted I wasn't coping really well, I felt so much better”

How many times can a mother visit?

The service is free, flexible and works to meet the needs of individual mothers. The number of visits is jointly decided on what will best meet mothers needs. Parents call to make an appointment.

In the past M&CHN's were called Infant Welfare Sisters. How does the current name reflect a change in the role?

The name change was about 20 years ago and reflects an expansion of the role. The focus used to be on the baby but now the service has a broader view and sees mothers' and children's health as inseparable. We work with children up to 6 years of age and have a more holistic approach to mother and child. Part of the care of the mother involves looking at any issues that may have an impact on her wellbeing, such as relationship with partner, extended family and friends (or lack of these). Other concerns may be financial, housing, domestic violence issues. We listen to mothers and assist them to address any areas where she would like to see change and make suggestions or referrals as needed. Generally if a mother's physical and emotional health is supported this will have a flow on effect to the rest of the family.

What kind of issues do mothers present with in relation to their own health? How do nurses assist individual mothers with these issues?

Mothers are generally reluctant to discuss their own health, and need to be encouraged to say how 'they' feel. Some common issues are tiredness, backache, and sexual issues. Many have issues around their confidence as mothers (which is easily undermined by comments from others) and issues around self esteem.

We offer mothers a chance to talk in a supportive, listening, non-judgmental manner. They can book extended visits at the centre. We offer up to date professional advice and give mothers the opportunity to make informed choices about contact with other professionals. Nurses are aware of current activities, services and programs available and will suggest those that seem appropriate. All information a mother shares with a nurse is confidential.

Health problems like perineal pain, incontinence & sexual difficulties are common after birth. How are problems like these dealt with?

Mothers are sometimes unaware that the M&CHN has the necessary background and training to deal with these concerns, or are under the impression that having to put up with these problems is normal after giving birth. The nurse would initially discuss with the mother the birth history. We would then talk with women about simple strategies they might try, such as pelvic floor exercises, and encourage them to talk about their experiences. A further course of action could be referral to their GP or physio or continence clinic. Sometimes physical recovery after birth just takes a long time. Providing information about the link between physical ill health and feeling depressed can be helpful. Many women ask when it is safe to have sex again and often talk about feelings of exhaustion, as well as physical and emotional changes that make interest in sex difficult. Mothers are encouraged to talk about this openly with their partner and enlist their support in practical aspects of caring for baby and home. This can be a time to be creative about ways to support each other, and your relationship.

M&CHN's are well aware of women's health problems after birth. Involvement in the PRISM project has increased the focus on mothers' health. Most problems can be improved with the appropriate support and treatment.

Sat AM appointments and open session times and are available.

For details about the Maroondah M&CH Service contact Brenda Armstrong on PH 9871 0361

Community Service Profile

Womens Health East

A health service run for women by women

We provide a range of services for women across the ages. Some activities which relate to mothers with babies and young children are:

- reproductive health and sexuality – there is a ‘well womens’ sexual health clinic which runs 3 half days per week. Women attend for issues relating to contraception, continence issues, mid-life issues, STD checks, infertility issues, pregnancy testing, sexual counselling, referral, pap and breast checks.
- women’s emotional and mental health
- body image and disordered eating.
- violence against women

There is a health information service which runs from 10 – 2pm daily. There is a worker answering queries by women who will provide information, support and referral on women’s health and wellbeing issues.

(Ph 1800 069 967)

For women who prefer the ‘written word’, there is a lending library situated in our comfortable lounge area. There is an extensive range of books on many & varied topics. There is also a toy box to keep toddlers amused while you browse.

It is possible to join our mailing list and receive our informative newsletter.

On sale there are some resources around menopause, eating disorders, and osteoporosis. Our booklet on postnatal depression is currently being updated and will be available soon. We have a very useful tape available on relaxation which costs \$5.00 to purchase.

Womens Health East is also involved in Educational Services and can provide speakers for groups or programs for special issues.

Providing Services & Information on many aspects of Women's Health.

For further information

Contact 9879 2199

Mum's Time Together Lunches



An invitation to get together for a casual lunch

Mums are regularly doing, doing, doing for everyone else. We often forget to give to ourselves as well.

It's a friendly informal time to meet other Mums and Babies.

Come along with your baby, on your own, or with another Mum.

A time for yourself as an individual as well as being a Mum.

Each month guest visitors present something special for you

Future lunch dates:

(no lunches during school holidays)

- * August 31st Simple Home Remedies for Mother and Baby – Brigetta Bennett naturopath and masseur.
- * September - no lunch- school holidays
- * October 26th
- * November 30th
- * Dec no lunch

DATE: Last Thursday of the month (during terms)

TIME :10.30- 12.30

WHERE : Nth Ringwood Community House, Oban Rd (In Holy Spirit Primary School grounds -Mel 49 , J 2)

COST : lunch – \$6

There will be limited spaces for pre school children within the Community House Creche. Bookings one week in advance. Fee \$2.00 per hour.

To assist us with catering we would prefer you to call 3 days prior, but if you decide to come on the day we are happy to accommodate you.

Nth Ringwood Community House

Lactation & Settling Day Stay Program

Maroondah Maternal & Child Health Service
&

O'Connell Family Centre

This service is for Maroondah residents and is free.

Ringwood Maternal & Child Health Centre

28 Warrandyte Rd

Ringwood

Bookings 9870 4777



Depression

Health in Focus

after the birth of your baby

Having a baby is generally a positive experience. However, feelings of sadness, exhaustion, feeling alone and overwhelmed by the situation are not uncommon.

These feelings may only be short lived, but for some women, they can last for weeks, months or even longer.

Recent studies in Australia show that 1 in 6 mothers experience some form of depression following the birth of their baby.

Why do some mothers feel depressed?

Recent research has found certain factors to be clearly linked with depression. Things like feeling alone or unsupported, ongoing physical health problems, and having a sick or difficult baby *may* contribute to depression after birth.



What Can Help

★ **Find someone to talk to** : it may be your partner, family member, friend or health professional. The main thing is that they are a good listener, someone who can share the burden and acknowledge your difficulties. It is not always easy to talk with someone, but most mothers who have been in this situation report that it is helpful, and often a turning point.

★ **Join a support group** : new mums are excellent for sharing experiences and making new friends. Playgroups, craft groups, walking groups can also be helpful. Specific groups such as PaNDA ((03) 9836 7382) offer telephone support. They are run by volunteer mothers who have all had postnatal depression.

★ **Time out for yourself** : mothers need to value themselves and take some time for themselves. Looking after a baby is a 24hr job, however, with a little planning, a small amount of time out, on a regular basis, will help. Some examples are:

- * a walk around the block
- * a cuppa with friends, without baby
- * a luxurious bath, uninterrupted
- * a meal out with your partner
- * time for gardening
- * time for craft or hobbies



None of these activities need to be expensive or highly organised. When done on a regular basis, mothers have reported that they feel much better.

★ **Sharing the work** : accept all offers of help - do not feel guilty, you can always repay any kindness later. Remember, we all need help at some time in our lives. Let your family and friends know what you need - be specific about what will best help you at the moment.



Mothers Walking Together

Walking just because it's fun!!

Are you a Mum who enjoys a leisurely walk?

Would you like to meet with other Mums and babies for a relaxed stroll?

PRISM welcomes you to a weekly get together with other mums who live locally.

We meet at Maternal & Child Health Centres at various times

For details about a group near you Contact Maroonah City Council on 9871 1222



Hints for Getting out on Time

(Adapted from Nursing Mothers' Booklet 'Survival Plan' - available for \$4.40 from your local group)

- * **Just Go** – don't try to get everything done first.
- * **Ignore the phone in the last 15 minutes** before leaving.
- * **Pack the car while baby sleeps** – gather the things you need as you think of them and put them all in one place.
- * **Plan clothes** for yourself, baby and other children the night before. Some mothers find that by using clothes that are suitable for both day and night wear they can avoid having to 'get the baby dressed' before going out.
- * **Keep track of your keys** – having a place to put keys which is out of toddlers reach can save a lot of searching time. A few spare sets can be helpful.
- * **Repack the nappy bag** – when you return home from an outing.
- * **Keep a hairbrush in the nappy bag** –for those times you forget to do your hair before leaving the house.

What's On – Community Noticeboard

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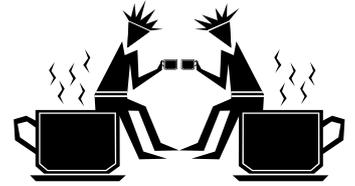
Nursing Mothers' - Ringwood Group

New & Expectant Mothers 1-3pm
August 14th – Breastfeeding & Infant Growth
September 4th – You Can Do It – Breastfeeding Your Baby



Parents With a Disability Support Group For The Eastern Region

Fortnightly 1pm– 3.30pm
 Anglicare Croydon
 Contact Jeanette or Effe at Yorella on 9607 3522
 Childcare, attendant care and other support available



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Croydon Library

Tiny Tots (Mums & Babies 0-12 months)
 Every week 1pm Songs, Rhymes and Stories and time together for mothers over a cuppa
 Contact Pia Butcher 9724 3232

Parents Group

For parents, carers and grandparents 9.30-11am
 Friendship Inn
 Sacred Heart Catholic Church
 35 Wicklow Av Croydon
 Contact Suzie 9723 9326 or the parish

M.O.P.S.

(Mothers of Preschoolers)
 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. A chance for some time out. Children cared for in same building. Guest Speakers, activities and discussion 9.30am-11.45am Cost \$6 per week
 Ringwood Church of Christ
 Contact Joy-anne Edwards 9779 4067

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Post Natal Exercise Group

Where: Eastern Access Community Health
 46 Warrandyte Rd Ringwood
 When: 10-11am
 Cost: \$2.00 per session
 Contact: Physiotherapist Joanne Robinson 9879 3933

Nursing Mothers'- Ringwood Group

Coffee Mornings 2nd & 4th Wednesday 10 am - 12 noon
 Topic each meeting for discussion
 Confidential Breastfeeding Counselling Available
 Contact Kerrie 9870 3824
 Lilydale Croydon Group Meetings
 Contact Pearl 9761 9701

Conservatory Tea Rooms

Wyreena Community Arts Centre
 13 – 23 Hull Road Croydon
 Spacious setting overlooking gardens and playground
 10am – 12 noon Special mothers time
 Contact 9725 0992

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Mum's Time Together Lunches

Last Thursday of the month. Guest presenter and informal time together with other mothers and babies
 When: 10.30-12.30
 Where: Nth Ringwood Community House
 Cost: \$6.00 for lunch
 Contact: 9876 3421 to book at least 3 days prior
 August Topic:
 Child care available Bookings one week in advance Fee \$2.00 per hour

All Smiles Florist Café

Special time for mothers 10am - 12 noon.
 Enjoy beautiful flowers, bright colours and lots of space.
 Shop 1&2 10-14 Railway Ave
 East Ringwood
 Phone 9879 2855

Post Natal Yoga

Ringwood School of Yoga
 Suite 1, 1st Floor Main St Croydon
 Thursday 10.00 am
 Also relaxation tape for home use available
 Contact Judy McVee 9870 2248



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Spikes Café – Ringwood Public Golf Course

Drop in for a relaxing cuppa
 10am-12pm is special mothers time.
 Contact 9876 8049



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Playgroup for Fathers & their Children

Saturday Mornings 10am-12noon
 Maroondah Social & Community Health Centre
 Contact ALLAN JARVIE 9879 3933

COMING UP

Arrabri Community House: Skillsnet Courses in computers. Beginners Course 9 hours covers Introduction to computers, Introduction to the internet and Introduction to Email. All for only \$16.50. Various times & Childcare available
 Details: 9729 2863

