



# My Body. My Health.

A health education toolkit

Facilitator Guide

## **About Jean Hailes for Women’s Health**

Jean Hailes for Women’s Health is a national not-for-profit organisation committed to improving women’s health across Australia through every life stage. Jean Hailes translates the latest scientific and medical evidence into practical and accessible information, through resources, educational programs and health professional events.

## **About the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health**

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The Centre does this by working with services from the health, community and local government to help improve the way they engage with their clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Ballarat Region Settlement Advocacy Committee – Health and Wellbeing Action Group

Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health

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## About this toolkit

*My Body. My Health.* is a series of five educational presentations to help organisations deliver health information to women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. This toolkit is written in plain English and guided by health literacy principles, making it practical and easy to understand and use. It is specifically designed for women who don't know the Australian healthcare system and struggle to make informed decisions about their health. The presentations also encourage conversations with women about good health.

The topics cover:

- health checks
- healthy eating
- physical activity
- emotional health
- vitamin D.

The presentations were developed with the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, and involved consultation and collaboration with service providers, clinicians, women from migrant and refugee communities, and other multicultural health organisations.

## Objectives

This toolkit aims to improve health outcomes for migrant and refugee women. It has been designed to:

- support the delivery of health education to migrant and refugee communities
- address some of the barriers to accessing health information experienced by migrant and refugee women
- improve women's health literacy and understanding of the Australian healthcare system
- improve knowledge about women's health
- support women to make more informed decisions about their health and healthcare
- promote preventive health behaviours.

## Content overview

The presentations deliver key health messages, facilitate discussion, and encourage behaviour change.

### Topic 1 – Health checks. Tests that check your health.

- What a health check is and when to have it
- What we can talk to a doctor about at a health check
- Cancer screening tests in Australia
  - Cervical Screening Test
  - Breast Screening Test
  - Bowel Cancer Screening Test
- What a sexual health check is and when to have it
- What sexually transmissible infections (STIs) are and how to avoid getting them
- How to make and prepare for a medical appointment.

*Note: The Health checks presentation should be delivered or cofacilitated by a health professional. It can be broken up into shorter single presentations.*

### Topic 2 – Good food for good health. Healthy foods for you and your family.

- What a healthy diet is
- The 5 food groups
- The importance of calcium
- Healthy school lunches for children.

### Topic 3 – Move more. Sit less. Move your body to stay healthy.

- What physical activity is and why it's important
- Physical activity guidelines and recommendations
- Tips on how to move more during the day.

### Topic 4 – Feeling good. How to feel more positive in life.

- What feelings are and what affects them
- Bad feelings and what to do to feel better
- Available support
- Looking out for others.

*Note: The Feeling good presentation should be delivered or cofacilitated by a health professional.*

### Topic 5 – The importance of vitamin D

- Why vitamin D is important
- How to get vitamin D
- Children at risk of low vitamin D
- How to check vitamin D levels.

*Note: The importance of vitamin D presentation can be incorporated into another topic or be used as a short standalone presentation.*

## Barriers to accessing healthcare

When engaging with women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, it's important to be aware of the barriers they face in accessing and navigating the Australian healthcare system, as well as possible cultural beliefs that may stop them from seeking help. These may include:

- low levels of health literacy
- low levels of English language literacy
- mistrust of health services and/or health practitioners due to negative past experiences, including discrimination
- the complexity of the Australian healthcare system
- lack of familiarity with the Australian healthcare system or knowledge of available services
- limited access to culturally appropriate health services
- high costs of certain practices or services
- feeling uncomfortable or not familiar with the experience of talking about, showing or touching certain parts of their body
- feeling shame about certain illnesses
- believing that certain tests cause a lot of pain
- stress associated with unemployment, financial or housing insecurity, and racial discrimination
- competing priorities, such as family responsibilities
- certain cultural beliefs, attitudes or misconceptions about illness or healthcare, such as the belief that talking about illness will invite it into the household, or that illness is fate, a curse, or a punishment and nothing can stop it.

To support facilitators in addressing some of these barriers, every presentation starts with a discussion on the views and experiences that women have on the topic.

For more information about the challenges migrant women face, go to the resources pages at [www.culturaldiversityhealth.org.au](http://www.culturaldiversityhealth.org.au) or [www.ceh.org.au](http://www.ceh.org.au).

## Delivering the presentations

The toolkit includes five presentations, supported by suggestions for group discussions and facilitator notes. The presentations can be used by anyone with experience in delivering health education to women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, in a variety of settings, such as:

- migrant and refugee support services
- multicultural health organisations
- neighbourhood houses and community centres
- community health services
- women's health services
- local government
- settlement services.

However, the *Health checks* and *Feeling good* presentations should be delivered or cofacilitated by a health professional. These presentations may raise issues and specific questions among

women, which non-health professionals might find hard to address. Alternatively, the facilitator may arrange a follow-up session with a health professional to address the issues.

Before any session, facilitators should read through the presentation to fully understand its content. It's crucial that they include information about available and culturally competent local services and referral pathways, eg names and addresses of mental health professionals or sexual health clinics in the area, where women can seek help discreetly and, preferably, free of charge. This is especially important if issues arise among women during the session. Since some women may not have access to Medicare, it's the facilitator's responsibility to provide other options for having the screening tests done locally.

*Note:* In the *Health Checks* presentation, we refer to "doctor or nurse". This way, we want to acknowledge the important role nurses working with migrant and refugee women play in keeping communities healthy. Working in this area, a nurse may be the first contact for women. Nurses provide care for a range of health issues and link women to doctors and other health professionals. We want to encourage women to take care of their health by seeing somebody they trust and feel comfortable with, and from there a referral can be made to other services, such as a GP, if required.

### **Delivery mode**

The presentations are offered in PowerPoint format and are available online at [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au).

The time required to deliver a presentation depends on the topic and the needs of the audience. Allow around 40 minutes to deliver a longer presentation and 15 minutes for the short *The importance of vitamin D* presentation. The *Health checks* presentation may take around 60 minutes to deliver but can be easily divided into shorter presentations.

When planning a session, it's important to remember that a private space for the participants to attend, a projector and screen should be provided. The presentations can also be printed out or delivered using a computer.

### **Translated health resources to support the session**

To reinforce the learning, we recommend providing topic-related resources to the participants during sessions. The Health Translations online library offers more than 21,000 free, reliable health resources in many different languages.

The Health Translations can be accessed at <http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/>.

### **Evaluation and feedback**

We welcome all feedback and suggestions on how to improve this toolkit. We'd also like to hear about your experience using the presentations and facilitating the sessions.

Forward any feedback to [hello@jeanhailes.org.au](mailto:hello@jeanhailes.org.au).

## Useful websites

For more information on the topics covered in these presentations, we recommend the following websites. However, you may choose to refer to your state-based sites.

Jean Hailes for Women's Health. [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au)

Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health [www.ceh.org.au](http://www.ceh.org.au)

Health Translations [www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au](http://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au)

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

Better Health Channel [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

BreastScreen Australia [campaigns.health.gov.au/breastscreen](http://campaigns.health.gov.au/breastscreen)

Cancer Council Australia [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)

Cancer Screening (breast, bowel, cervical) [www.cancerscreening.gov.au](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au)

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health [www.mcwh.com.au](http://www.mcwh.com.au)

Nutrition Australia [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)

Osteoporosis Australia [www.osteoporosis.org.au](http://www.osteoporosis.org.au)

SunSmart [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)

The Australian Government Department of Health [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

Refugee Health Network of Australia [www.refugeehealthaustralia.org](http://www.refugeehealthaustralia.org)



## Glossary

The following definitions explain specific terms that are used in the presentations.

Word/term	Meaning
<b>Anus</b>	The opening at the end of the <b>digestive system</b> , through which poo comes out
<b>Bowel</b>	Part of the <b>digestive system</b> between the stomach and the <b>anus</b> . It finishes the digestion and absorption of food and gets rid of the parts of food the body does not use (poo)
<b>Bowel cancer</b>	Cancer in any part of the large <b>bowel</b> (colon or rectum). It is sometimes known as colorectal cancer and might also be called colon cancer or rectal cancer, depending on which part of the <b>bowel</b> it starts in
<b>Breast screen</b>	A <b>mammogram</b> to find breast cancer
<b>Calcium</b>	A chemical element necessary for life. It is vital for healthy teeth and bones. It also important in other systems of the body, such as nerves and muscles. Calcium can be found in <b>dairy</b> products
<b>Cancer screening</b>	The use of simple tests to look for early signs of cancer in people who don't show any <b>signs of the illness</b>
<b>Cervical cancer</b>	Cancer that grows in the <b>cervix</b>
<b>Cervix</b>	The lower part of, or entrance to, the <b>womb</b>
<b>Counselling</b>	Professional help in resolving personal or psychological problems, such as feelings of stress, grief or sadness
<b>Dairy</b>	Milk and milk products, such as cheese, yoghurt, and butter
<b>Diet</b>	The kinds of food that a person eats every day
<b>Digestive system</b>	Starts at the mouth and ends at the <b>anus</b> . It breaks down food and turns it into energy. It also gets rid of the parts of food the body does not use
<b>Fibre</b>	Food material that cannot be broken down by the <b>digestive system</b> . It is important to keep the <b>digestive system</b> healthy by eating foods that have lots of fibre like vegetables, fruits, or <b>wholegrains</b>
<b>Health check</b>	A test that a doctor does to see if a person's health is good
<b>Heart disease</b>	When the heart is not working normally. It covers a range of conditions that affect the heart
<b>HPV</b>	A very common virus that usually causes no <b>signs of an illness</b> and goes away by itself, but it can sometimes cause serious illness. HPV is responsible for almost all cases of <b>cervical cancer</b>
<b>Infection</b>	When harmful bacteria, viruses, or parasites invade the body
<b>Mammogram</b>	A photograph of the inside of one's breasts. It shows changes that are too small to feel or see

<b>Medical history / Family (medical) history</b>	Telling a health worker about any illness or treatment that a person has had or person's close relatives have had, such as a <b>heart disease</b> , cancer, depression, surgery, etc.
<b>Menopause</b>	The final or last menstrual <b>period</b> that a woman has
<b>Period</b>	The monthly process in a woman of getting rid of (through the <b>vagina</b> ) blood and other materials from the lining of the <b>womb</b> . Also called menstruation or bleeding
<b>Physical activity</b>	Movement of the body that uses energy, like exercising, walking, swimming, dancing, cycling etc.
<b>Processed food</b>	A food item that has been mechanically or chemically changed or preserved. Processed foods are those that usually come in a box or bag and contain more than one item on the list of ingredients. They often have added fats, sugars and/or salt
<b>Protein</b>	A nutrient that is important for the body to build bones, muscles, skin, and blood. It can be found in foods like meat, fish, eggs, soy products, legumes, seeds, and nuts
<b>Puberty</b>	The stage in people's lives when they develop from a child into an adult because of the changes in their body that make them able to have children
<b>Semen</b>	Fluid that comes out from a man's penis when he has an orgasm, eg during sex
<b>Sexually transmissible infection or STI</b>	An <b>infection</b> that can be transferred from one person to another through sexual contact
<b>Sign of an illness</b>	A change in the body or mind that shows an illness
<b>Stroke</b>	When the flow of blood to the brain is suddenly stopped. It can cause death or permanent or temporary disability
<b>Supplement (dietary)</b>	A product that is supposed to add nutrients, such as <b>vitamins and minerals</b> , to the diet when taken by mouth as a tablet or liquid
<b>Wholegrains</b>	Whole unprocessed grains, eg brown rice, barley, buckwheat, oatmeal
<b>Womb</b>	An organ in a woman's lower part of the belly where a baby is carried during pregnancy. It is also called the uterus
<b>Vagina</b>	An internal tube that connects the <b>vulva</b> with the <b>cervix</b> and <b>womb</b> . It's what babies and menstrual blood leave the body through. It's also where some people put penises, fingers, sex toys, and/or tampons
<b>Vaginal fluid</b>	Fluid that comes out of the <b>vagina</b>
<b>Vitamins and minerals</b>	Substances that the body needs to develop and function normally
<b>Vulva</b>	The general name given to parts of the female genitals that can be seen from the outside