

ALL ABOUT EVE



Text by Dr Annabel Chew
Photos by MCI Chwee and Dr Georgia Lee

Dr Chew is a senior consultant at the Glaucoma Department of Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC), a clinical assistant professor at Duke-NUS Medical School, an adjunct clinician investigator at the Singapore Eye Research Institute, and the clinical director of the SNEC Primary and Community Eyecare Clinics.



Over the years, the Association of Women Doctors (Singapore) (AWDS) has observed and keenly discerned the myriad roles and responsibilities of the modern woman. Daughter, mother, wife, caregiver, career woman, volunteer, advocate – it is common for many women to be juggling multiple roles at any given time. While being key in maintaining healthy families, women often overlook their own physical, mental and even emotional health. This is made even more complicated because women live longer, experience unique health problems and have higher rates of chronic health disease than men.

A compendium for women

Through AWDS, we hope to inspire and motivate women to do more for their own health and well-being. We therefore produced the book *All About Eve: Your Women's Health Questions Answered* in 2022 to provide comprehensive information about health issues women may have as they navigate each stage of life.

In the book, we have forewords contributed by President Halimah Yacob, Ms Yong Ying-I and Ms Andrea de Cruz. Following the introduction, the book is divided into three parts.

The first part, "Overview of the female anatomy", provides an overview of the changes the female body undergoes from puberty to menopause.

"Stages of life and common problems at each stage" forms the second and main part of the book. The five sections within delve deeper into individual life stages and the common health problems that women may encounter at each stage.

Five stages of life

The second part of the book starts with the "Puberty" section, where we answer questions such as: what constitutes a normal menstrual cycle, why adolescents are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour and how to support them during this period, what eating disorders are and how to manage them, and what some common skin conditions associated with puberty are.

Under the "Young womanhood" section, we discuss the various methods of contraception, the importance of Pap smears, the role of human papillomavirus vaccinations in preventing cervical cancer, and what happens if one has an abnormal Pap smear result.

In "Starting a family", we explore issues such as the various physiological changes associated with pregnancy, and

perinatal depression and anxiety as well as their management. Beyond these, we also debunk myths associated with breastfeeding, and offer tips on what to do when one goes back to work and how to cope as a working mother. The section also looks at common gynaecological conditions such as fibroids, endometriosis, ovarian cysts and polycystic ovaries, and explains the causes of infertility.

In the "Middle-aged women" section, we dive into the common health conditions experienced by this age group – the chronic conditions and cancers we should screen for, how to reduce the risks of these conditions, how to perform a breast self-examination, and what happens if one has abnormal mammogram or breast ultrasound results. We also look at the silent disease of diabetes, its management and the associated complications. Heart diseases and their symptoms are also covered, including ways to strengthen the heart. Other important issues we discuss include knowing when vaginal



With President Halimah Yacob, Ms Yong Ying-I, and fellow editors Dr Ho Ching Lin and Dr Jade Kua at our official book launch on 19 November 2022

bleeding is considered abnormal and when one should seek help, and what happens if one is diagnosed with womb or ovarian cancer.

Finally, in “Mature womanhood”, we cover the topics of menopause and how it affects our bones and heart, what the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy are, dementia and its management, and common eye conditions such as dry eye disease, refractive errors, cataract, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration. We also discuss the psychological impacts of ageing, how to safeguard our mental well-being during this process, and how to achieve peace of mind by planning our legacy ahead for the end of life.

“Bare essentials from cradle to grave” forms the final part of the book and looks at some salient health topics that are essential throughout one’s lifetime. We answer questions on how to get started on exercising, how to develop and maintain good oral hygiene and dental health, what lifestyle changes can help prevent depression and burnout, and how to improve the quality of our sex life and the level of intimacy in our relationships.

Written with love

This book is a project of ambition and heart. Each chapter is written by dedicated women who specialise in their authored topics, presented in a clear and concise question-and-answer format, and comes with summary boxes outlining the key take-home messages for every chapter.

This book is enabled by the generous Seeds of Change grant, provided by the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Singapore Council of Women’s Organisations (SCWO). In 2022, we distributed 500 copies of *All About Eve* to the following parties: member organisations of SCWO, the People’s Association Women’s Integration Network Council, the Chinese Women’s Association, the SCWO-Star Shelter, Yellow Ribbon Singapore, Methodist Welfare Services and various AWDS partners.

We hope this book will reach women of all backgrounds and empower them to become healthier versions of themselves. Only when women understand how and why they should put their needs first, can our community continue to benefit from all that they give. ♦



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