



## NZEMail

October 2011

Newsletter for the NZ Early Menopause Support Group

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### Resources for members

Available now:

[NZEM Reference Library](#)

[NZEM Newsletters Archive](#)

Available on request:

[AMS Newsletters](#)

[Daisy Network Newsletters](#)

[NAMS Scientific Reviews](#)

## Welcome...

I'm not a rugby fan but I have to say things have been pretty exciting around the country since the Rugby World Cup started. I was working on the opening ceremony down at the Auckland waterfront and the atmosphere was electric. Thousands of people gathered in one place for one purpose: to cheer on their teams. When we humans come together we can create some really good things and that's what I love about this support group: the sense of community, belonging and the shared purpose of helping each other through this minefield of diagnosis, treatment and impaired fertility. Go team NZEM!

I have re-designed our newsletter (again) in the hopes that it'll be easier to read as an email rather than a full size document. I hope you like it and I hope to see you Aucklanders at our Christmas Lunch on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. More on that below!

*Nicole xx*

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## Group News

### New members

Here is a very brief introduction to our newest members. If you identify with any part of their story, they would love to hear from you. Please drop them a quick hello on the forum, or email me and I'll pass it on.

**Angela** was diagnosed at the age of 18, is now 35, and only recently found our website. She lives in Dunedin. I'm sure she'd especially love to hear from others diagnosed in their teens.

## Contact Us

website:

[www.earlymenopause.org.nz](http://www.earlymenopause.org.nz)

email:

[nzem.info@nzord.org.nz](mailto:nzem.info@nzord.org.nz)

forum:

[www.nzordforums.org.nz](http://www.nzordforums.org.nz)

**Simone** was diagnosed a few months ago. She lives in Auckland, has a young son and is struggling a bit with all the new information.

'**Noodle**' has made contact via our message board. She's in Hamilton, and her symptoms came out of the blue in June. She hasn't had much good medical help on her journey so far.

**Jo** has also made contact on the forum. She's in the lower North Island and also has not had a lot of good luck with medical advice since her diagnosis last year.

**Elizabeth** is starting her first donor egg cycle soon and would love to hear from Auckland members &/or anyone who has done DE IVF.

**Caroline** has been living with her early menopause experience for 15 years and only just found this support group via our website and would love to hear from anyone, especially Aucklanders.

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## NZEM HRT Guide

There is so much conflicting information out there about HRT and it's very difficult for any woman to know if she's chosen a good regime for her long-term health. Especially for the younger woman who has no research studies to give her the evidence she needs. So, I have begun to write a guide to HRT for young women. It will cover all the available options and all the latest thinking about each option. I envision a website that is quick and easy to update with links to good sources of information.

I have most of the information I need and a few specialists involved to check I've got my facts straight. But it is going to be a rather large task collating it all and writing it all up. So, I need some help. Preferably from someone in Auckland so we could get-together and chat things through, but anyone would be good, really. A list of the primary organisations I'm using can be found on the new [HRT post](#) on our forum.

Please get in touch if you'd like to be involved in this exciting project bringing information to NZ women.

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The screenshot shows the phpBB NZORDforums interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links. Below that, the forum structure is displayed for the 'NZ Early Menopause Support Group'. The forum has three main sections: 'General discussion', 'Infertility', and 'Parenting/Pregnancy'. Each section has a moderator notice and a list of topics with their respective post counts and last post dates.

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
<b>General discussion</b> For discussion on general Early Menopause/Premature Ovarian Failure topics, whatever stage you're at. Moderator: Nicole	75	249	by Nicole ☺ Sat Sep 17, 2011 8:38 pm
<b>Infertility</b> Dealing with infertility as a result of early menopause can be an emotional minefield, share your thoughts and experiences with others here. Moderator: Nicole	37	112	by Nicole ☺ Sat Sep 17, 2011 6:57 pm
<b>Parenting/Pregnancy</b> Having an early menopause and being a mother (whether naturally or via DE IVF or adoption) presents many unique challenges, talk to others dealing with similar issues here. Moderator: Nicole	4	18	by Nicole ☺ Thu Jun 23, 2011 1:28 pm

## Latest posts on our forum

### [First try IVF](#)

'Wagsnag' is in the middle of her first DE IVF cycle and would love some support.

### [Herbal remedies – 3 things every consumer should know:](#)

While encouraging patient participation in their healthcare, in this article, Dr. Tina Marcantel discusses three important facts we should all know before we buy a herbal remedy.

### [POF on the rise?](#)

Helen forwarded this article to me in July  
Previously thought to affect 1% of the female population, a new study has suggested POF may be more prevalent than once thought – up to 7%! These findings prompted me to contact *Good Health* magazine and they seem interested in doing an article, so watch this space.

### [Extremely dry skin](#)

Davina and I are both experiencing dry skin. If you have any tips we'd love to hear from you!

### ['Quirky'](#)

Lives in Hamilton and is finding herself in the common position of getting heaps of fertility treatment advice while not getting enough information on how to look after her health.

### [Balanced news story!](#)

It was nice to see a balanced news story in August on menopausal symptom therapies. Instead of more scaremongering, the journalist looked at the different options and concluded that each woman must make an informed decision about what works for her. What a breath of fresh air!

### [Testosterone replacement](#)

Janice started this conversation to try to even out the bad publicity this hormone sometimes gets. She's found a marked improvement in her quality of life since taking this hormone.

### [Skin changes, POF & dating – any advice?](#)

Charlotte has noticed some troubling skin changes since her POF diagnosis. She feels very self-conscious, especially on dates, and would love to hear your tips and tricks for dealing with this.

### [Scientific advice on "Bio-identical" HRT](#)

I have added another informative article to this list of resources

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Publicity

## Magazine articles



As well as contacting Good Health Magazine to do an article as I mentioned above, I was approached by 'Awareness Today' in July. They were doing an article on menopause and were curious about the 'early menopause' experience as a side-line.

Once I gave them a rundown of the various issues we have to deal with, they agreed to a full article on us, instead! I had to write it, of course, but at least we're getting the word out about the condition and the support that is available. And we've had a new member make contact because of it. What a great achievement! It's out now, so keep an eye out for it at your chemist or doctor's office.

## Television

I was in Wellington working on Good Morning in August and met their resident gynaecologist in the car on the way to Avalon studios. I introduced myself and gave him our website address for his patients. Little did I know the topic for the day was infertility. He even had an email from someone with POF and in his reply to her he mentioned the website on air! What a wonderful man. You may call it fate or coincidence, but I believe we were blessed that day.

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## **IVF Success Stories**

I just wanted to celebrate the success some of our members have recently had with DE IVF. We've had three births this year and another due next year. Congratulations ladies!

Laura's daughter Sylvia was born in January  
Kari's daughter Amity Skye was born in May  
Lee's wee bub was born in July  
Rochelle is pregnant and due in April next year

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## **NZEM Member is Published!**



“A bun in the oven” is the story of conception via donor egg. Anita has twin sons from donor egg IVF and wrote this great story for them when trying to find a way to explain their origins to them.

She is also looking into doing another similar so it is suitable for donor sperm.

The book is \$16.99 including postage. To order, contact Anita on: [paulstokes@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:paulstokes@slingshot.co.nz)

We also have two copies in the NZEM library for members to borrow.

Well done Anita!

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## We need you!

### We want to hear your story

Newly diagnosed women get so much from hearing the experiences of others. Is there something you've learned that you think might help others on their journey? It can be quite a cathartic thing to write down your experiences, so not only might you help someone else, you're almost certain to help yourself in the process.

### We always need volunteers

There are many areas you could help out in:

- \*Website maintenance (1 or 2 hours per month)
- \*Forum chat (1 or 2 hours per month)
- \*Quarterly newsletters - ad hoc contributions gratefully received
- \*Contact with membership (especially newbies)
- \*Publicity via media/specialists/media (1 or 2 hours per month per area)

Please email me if you'd like to contribute in some way to the on-going success of this group.

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## Getting together

### National Gathering 2011 report

This was a great weekend in Taupo. Not a large group this time, but it was still good to catch-up. For the full rundown of our weekend, [see our website](#)

It was a less formal affair this year than last year's outstanding conference in Rotorua, and I think that's a pattern we'll stick to: a big event one year followed by a casual one the next. That way we don't exhaust our sponsors, speakers or organisers and keep it affordable for our attendees. That's the plan for now, anyway!

## Auckland High Tea

A few of the Auckland members gathered for High Tea in August. We had a lovely afternoon. [Click here](#) to read more about it.

## Auckland Christmas Lunch

We've had quite a bit of growth in the Auckland membership this year and I think it would be really nice to celebrate this with a lunch on Saturday December 3 in Devonport. Let me know if you want to join us.

## Other areas

If you want to organise something in your area, please let me know and I'll do my best to help you out.

## National gathering 2012

Instead of a NZEM get-together next year, through my role on the Fertility NZ Auckland committee, I'm helping to organise a National Fertility Day in October. We hope to tag onto the Fertility Society of Australia conference happening in Auckland at that time and make a wide range of specialist speakers available to the Auckland public.

If you're interested in being involved, please let me know.

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## Local news

### FNZ contact points

Fertility NZ aims to provide information and support to all New Zealanders living with infertility. The Auckland Committee has recently revised our list of Auckland contact points for various areas of infertility. This list is made available to fertility clinic counsellors and the local and national Fertility NZ committees.

If you have had successful donor egg IVF and would like to be available (via phone or email) for people who need a friendly ear, please email me.

### Non-funded HRT?

Did you know that shopping around for a good price on non-government funded HRT can be very worthwhile? There are some huge price differences out there. [Click here](#) for more.

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## Your Health

## BodyLogicMD

I recently found a 'natural HRT' site that seems to have scientific evidence backing their claims (quite an unusual thing, in my experience). The site is <http://www.bodylogicmd.com/medical-research-studies>

But the big organisations (AMS, NAMS, IMS) are still saying there's no evidence that 'natural' or 'bio-identical' hormones are any better for us than traditional 'synthetic' HRT. Obviously not all science is good science. As my RE said to me the other day, a lack of negative data does not necessarily indicate safety. I guess she was also referring to the lack of good science available.

What we need to remember is all drugs carry risks and benefits. And at least we know a lot about the traditional 'synthetic' ones, even if it's not all good news.

Just so you know, oestradiol is 'bio-identical' oestrogen and you can get that in many standard HRT options. Utrogestan is a 'bio-identical' progesterone available in this country from your specialist. There are ways to get 'natural' hormones from a trusted source if you're not happy with 'synthetic' options.

So do your own research, learn which places are reliable sources of good information, review your regime regularly and look after your body with exercise and nutrition. At the end of the day, it's your body and you have to be happy with your treatment plan.

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## The Need to Nurture – And How Childfree Women Can Satisfy It

"So just how does a woman satisfy the biological need to nurture when she isn't a mom? It's interesting to examine the lives of celebrities who are childfree to see how they have fulfilled this need to nurture..."

Although written from the perspective of women who've chosen not to have children, I still really enjoyed the positive message of this article. I hope you do, too. Please go to [www.care2.com](http://www.care2.com) to read the full article.

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## What's On Guide

### Fertility NZ AK Facilitator training day

Saturday October 29, 1-5pm

We need more facilitators for our contact groups which "provide people with "an opportunity to meet others experiencing infertility and gain support in an informal and relaxed setting". If you'd like to be involved, please email me.

## Fertility NZ AK information evening: What's new in the fertility world?

Thursday November 3, Obex Medical, Manukau Rd

RSVP by November 1 to [nikki.horne@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nikki.horne@xtra.co.nz)

## Moving Beyond Childlessness workshop

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> and Sun 13<sup>th</sup> November, Sandringham, Auckland

Offers a rare opportunity for women to break the isolation, by connecting with others who share the experience of being without children.

For more information, [click here](#)

## NZEM Auckland Christmas Lunch

Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Devonport, Auckland

Please RSVP to me by November 26<sup>th</sup>.

## Australasian Fertility Day

October 2012

Auckland

## Fertility NZ Contact Group meetings

Regular get-togethers in the following centres:

**Auckland**

**Hamilton**

**Tauranga**

**Nelson**

**Wellington**

**Christchurch**

See [our forum post](#) for more information

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*If you no longer wish to be on the NZEM mailing list, please let us know by emailing [nzem.info@nzord.org.nz](mailto:nzem.info@nzord.org.nz)*