

LGBT

# 4 OUR HEALTH

A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER HEALTH NEWSLETTER

## RELATIONSHIP AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By Megan Snow

Relationships and Domestic Violence—everyone knows it happens, and yet, it remains invisible. No one wants to believe that it could happen to them or to anyone they love, and there is a remnant belief from childhood that many still believe: *If I can't see you, you can't see me.* However, Relationship Violence does occur, and it can happen to anyone. No one is immune, whether they are Black, White, Jewish or Queer. The only solution is to know what it is and how to stand up and face it.

There are warning signs, and if someone is being hurt by Relationship/Domestic Violence, there are places to turn. Warning signs include: extreme jealousy, controlling what someone else wears or who that person hangs out

with, humiliation, yelling, swearing, having a history of battering past partners, threatening to hurt their partner and/or themselves, having been abused as a child, or having lived in a home where Domestic Violence occurred.



This can be terrifying, and often there is a tendency for battered individuals to blame themselves. Thoughts such as, *"If I didn't make him so mad, he wouldn't have to hit me,"* or, *"If I would just do what she wanted, I could keep her happy and she wouldn't get like this"* are common for battered individuals. Domestic violence is never the fault of the battered, and no matter how hard that person tries, something will always happen to set off the cycle of violence again. The only thing to do in such a situation is to get out and get help.

Domestic violence can also be devastating for the friends of the battered partner. If a person begins withdrawing from friends and has a partner that exhibits the signs listed previously, this person could be in an abusive relationship. Despite having given friends the cold shoulder, this person actually needs help, love and support. Sometimes, confrontation with the problem by a friend is the only way that someone will be able to find help, even though this person might not be very receptive at first. Being battered causes victims to be embarrassed, afraid, withdrawn, and even in denial, so this person needs continued support. There are people and organizations out there dedicated to help victims of domestic violence, including but not limited to, My Sister's Place (593-3402), OU Counseling and Psychological Services (593-1616), and OU Police Department (593-1911).

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## THE KEY TO EXERCISE FOR TRANSGENDER HEALTH: EXERCISE IS KEY

By Nicole Long

While all people should consider making a routine of exercising, there are many ways that exercising can be particularly beneficial for transgender people. Not only is exercise a good way to get the body more physically fit, exercise can also lead to higher self esteem and a better self image. Depression and depressive symptoms tend to be a more significant problem in trans populations, and exercise is a great way to battle them. In order to get the most out of exercise, one must consider the environment and the end goal, among other things.

First, exercise alone is not enough to build a healthy body. One must take care of oneself by eating a well-balanced diet and getting plenty of vitamins. Without the proper nutrients and plenty of water, it is difficult for the body to get into shape. Not smoking can also be a big boost to health, especially if one is on hormone replacement therapy. Second, the environment can mean everything when it comes to sticking to a routine. Working out with friends can be the key to success. Actually scheduling exercise time into one's week is vital.

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## STI EXPOSE: GENITAL WARTS AND CHLAMYDIA

*Editor's Note: STI EXPOSE will appear in following issues covering different STI's each time.*

By Justin DeWolfe

Two common Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) which are often overlooked in the wake of HIV/AIDS and the various types of Hepatitis are Chlamydia and Genital Warts. Though rarely if ever fatal by themselves, both diseases have been linked to potentially life threatening conditions.

### Genital Warts

Genital Warts is the most common STI reported in North America. Relatively easy to detect, they may appear as small lumps that appear on the genitals or the anal area. The infection is caused the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) which is spread through intimate contact with moist surfaces. About two-thirds of all people who have the virus show no symptoms and can still pass the infection on to their partners. The virus is especially transmittable if skin or mucus membranes are already damaged. Remember 6th grade health class? The skin is the first line of defense.

The warts can be removed with topical medication, laser, cryotherapy, or surgery. As the warts are caused by a virus, there is no

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cure; the virus always remains. Currently researchers are working on developing a vaccine for genital warts. Certain types of genital warts are linked to very serious conditions, such as cancer of the cervix, anus, and prostate.

### Chlamydia

While the etiology of genital warts is a virus, Chlamydia is caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis*. It is the most commonly reported bacterial STI in North America. Symptoms of the disease may include painful urination and/or a watery or milky discharge from the penis, anus, or vagina. Men may experience pain in the testicles and women may experience light bleeding between periods. Often, there may be no symptoms. If left untreated, Chlamydia can lead to potentially seri-

ous conditions such as infection of the liver, appendix and heart. It can also lead to infertility in men and women and is linked to pelvic inflammatory disease in women. Chlamydia is easily diagnosed by a urine test and is easily treated with oral antibiotics.

As with all STI's, the only way to avoid them completely is to abstain from sexual activity. However, safer sex is the next best measure available to prevent them. Bottom line is this folks—to quote Sex Educator and Registered Nurse Sue Johanson, host of the Oxygen Network's Talk Sex with Sue: **"Safer sex, or no sex."**

## Trans Health, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Without having a specific time set aside to exercise every day (or couple of days), it is more difficult to stick to a plan. Cramming all of one's weekly exercise into one or two days is not going to do the trick; to get the most out of exercising, it must be done at least four or five days a week, even if it is only 15-30 minutes as opposed to multiple hours less frequently.

Finally, what is the end goal? People wishing to appear more masculine would probably want to focus on weight lifting to bulk up. People wishing to appear more feminine may wish to remain fit yet lose some of the muscle mass; thus, cardio workouts would be better. Keep in mind

that hormones can have a large impact on the outcome as well. Testosterone makes it much easier to build muscle mass, and estrogen makes it more difficult to build and retain it; thus, for transgender people, being on hormones can make a large difference in the results of exercising.

Exercise is not something that can only be done at the gym. Even simple things like walking the dog, dancing to the radio, or playing catch can count. The trick is to find something that one enjoys doing and to do it on a regular basis. Incorporating exercise into one's routine can make a world of difference.

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## SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

By Doug Cloud

Before climate controlled homes and artificial lighting, changing climate conditions greatly affected human behavior. Seasonal Affective Disorder is a powerful example of how seasonal weather changes still deeply affect our lives. It is almost as if the disorder is a reminder that nature can still affect something as abstract as people's moods.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is an extended period of depression that occurs during the winter months with complete remission during the remainder of the year. Reduced sunlight and fluctuating melatonin levels are thought to be mainly responsible for this condition. The most important thing to remember when distinguishing SAD from conventional types of depression is that the symptoms are not present to nearly the same degree during the summer months. The disorder can cause excessive eating, sleeping, and weight gain in addition to a craving for sugary or starchy foods. With such general symptoms, it is important for your doctor to diagnose the disorder.

**"People with SAD tend to stay in a deep sleep later into the morning than usual, then feel lethargic, drowsy, and "wiped out" during the day -- much like a case of jet lag." David Avery, M.D.**

There are a few different ways to approach treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder. A number of companies market devices designed to simulate natural sunlight. A person spends a few minutes each day in front of these devices which often take the form of a large metal box filled with a row of fluorescent bulbs. Little research has been done to track the effectiveness of such treatments, but many will attest to their effectiveness—particularly those who

market the devices. For less severe cases, your doctor may recommend spending increased time outdoors in sunlight. If phototherapy proves ineffective, anti-depressants can also be prescribed for SAD.

For more information about SAD and methods of coping with it, check out [www.nmha.org/](http://www.nmha.org/) or [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com).



*Winter has varying affects on each individual. Some find winter a cheerful time, but others become sad and depressed because of the lack of sunlight and lack of outdoor activities.*

## NEW STUDY SHOWS GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN MAY NOT BE PROTECTED FROM HEPITITIS A AND B

By Doug Cloud

A report from the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) warns that more than half of the nation's gay and bisexual men may not be adequately protected against hepatitis A and hepatitis B.

All strains of hepatitis can cause jaundice, dark urine, nausea, vomiting and severe abdominal pain. Hepatitis B, or HBV, is the most serious strain and can cause chronic infections and later liver cancer and cirrhosis of the liver. HBV can be transmitted along several vectors including mother to child, child to child, through unsafe transfusions or injections, and sexual

activity. HBV is spread in much the same way as HIV but is 50 to 100 times easier to transmit. The World Health Organization called for all children to be vaccinated against HBV in 1991.

Hepatitis A is most present in the blood and feces of the infected person. Many children are infected at a young age and often do not experience symptoms. Widespread infection is often caused by poor sanitation conditions. In more developed countries, men who have sex with men (MSM) and intravenous drug users are among the popu-

lations at the highest risk. It should be noted, however, that the World Health Organization believes hepatitis B to be a much greater risk to public health than hepatitis A.

The GLMA research found that the vaccination rate declined in proportion with income bracket. There were also fewer vaccinations among men without regular health care providers and those who were not out to their health care providers. Though the research is still in its infancy, it is clear that gay and bisexual men are both at a higher risk and are not adequately protected.

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## **4 OUR Health**

**Editor:** Amanda Thompson

**Publisher:** Mickey Hart

**Winter 2005**

### **MISSION**

*The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Programs Center, as an integral part of the university community and the Division of Student Affairs advances the mission of Ohio University by serving people of all sexual orientations and gender identities as individuals and as groups. We are committed to fostering human development and cultivating an inclusive, open, and supportive community through education, support, student engagement, collaboration, and advocacy at Ohio University and beyond.*

## **4 O U R H E A L T H ~ 4 Y O U R L I F E T I M E**

### **HUDSON HEALTH CENTER**

Student Health Services 593-4730

Counseling & Psychological Services 593-1616

Health Education & Wellness 593-4742

## **THANKS FOR PICKING US UP, NOW KEEP IN TOUCH!**

We hope you like this issue of **4 OUR Health!** Please write us and let us know what you think and what you want to see more or less of. Remember this resource is here to provide for your needs and concerns while adhering to the mission of the LGBT Center and the most current information available to us. We want to make sure that you are given the best information and facts so that you can make informed and sound decisions concerning your life and your health.

If we are not providing what you need, we want to know about it. And if we are providing what you need, we want to know about it. Any way it goes, we would really appreciate your input and ideas. We can be reached by telephone at (740).593-0239 or by email at [lgbt@ohio.edu](mailto:lgbt@ohio.edu).