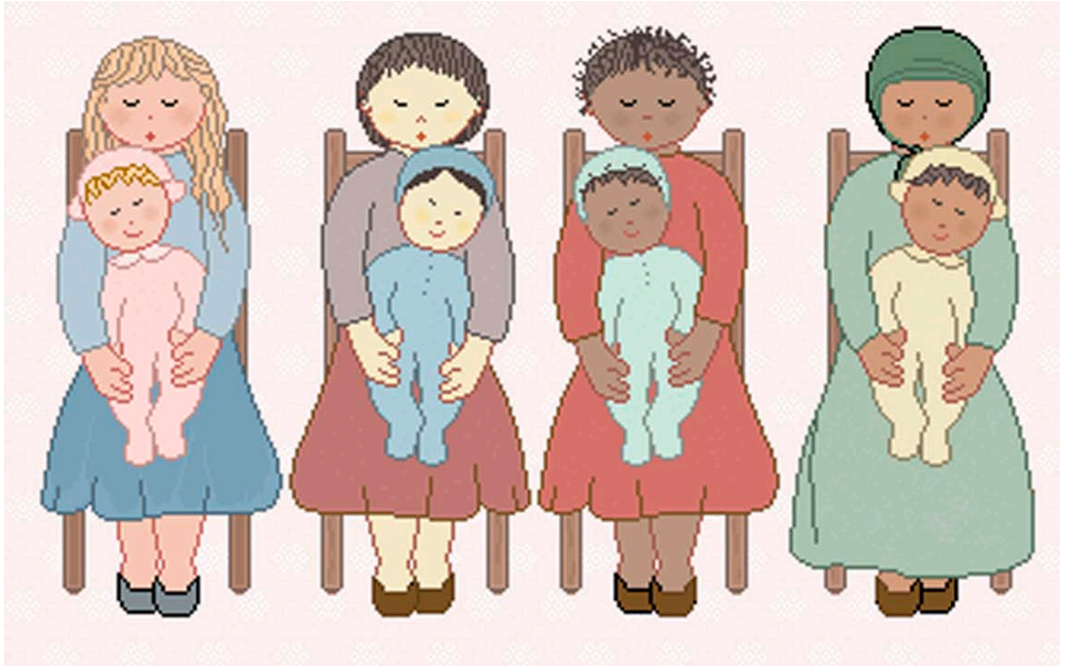




Regione Lombardia
Famiglia e Solidarietà Sociale



Intrecci



WOMANSHIP

Informations for a woman's health

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The brochure has been realised thanks to the sponsorship for the project **"INTERLACEMENTS" (INTRECCI)**, L.R 23/1999 and this is one of the several activities that see the engagement of the different assistencial realities (public and private) that operate on the territory of Valtrompia: **La Vela** - Cooperative Social Society ONLUS, **Civitas srl** - Social Services - assistencial, **Il Mosaico** - Cooperative Social Society ONLUS, **ValTrompia Solidale** - Cooperative Social Society ONLUS, **GAIA** - Cooperative Social Society ONLUS, **Fondazione Opera Caritas San Martino**, Voluntary Association **"Rut"**.

INTRODUCTION

This brochure was designed as a possible useful tool of knowledge and orientation, for Italian and migrant women, that can help them, face problems of womanhood, as being mothers, partners and wives in life.

The brochure has the duty to inform the woman, but not only that, it also wants to reduce the distance between the users and the operators of the Consultatories and the services that are offered.

It is a short publication that is purposed to help the woman to have a deeper knowledge about her body and everything that concerns the pathway of a responsible maternity, having clear her duties and rights and what the Italian law has established to protect her.

The most important scope is to promote the psycho-physical well-being of the woman, and allowing everybody to have a clear access of the information regarding maternal services offered by the Consultatories on the territory.

The guide has been translated in four languages(of the predominant nationalities on the territory) to obviate the linguistic gap, which today is a strong barrier for the diffusion of information.

The language used in the guide, which we wish will be simple and immediate, takes its source from "recurrent interviews" that are made between users and operators; so by answering some of the most asked questions we hope to reach the needs of all women.

The realization of this guide is the fruit of the coordinated work of a group of professionals: Roberta Riolo - intercultural counsellor , Monica Inselvini -social, Elena Rampini - midwife, Ramona Parenzan - intercultural operator , Rehab Ganoum - cultural mediator , Fabio Tosini - project supervisor, Tiziana Bonomi in charge of this action of the project.

Thanks are also extended to the interdisciplinary working group of translators Therèse Diouf, Rehab Ganoum, Noreen Javid, Vittoria Donkor.



What is a family Consultatory?

The family Consultatory is a public service primarily directed to the health of the woman, where singles, couples, young ones, and families can be addressed to ask for a help and support on social and sanitary problems.

Privacy and professional secret are guaranteed.

Even migrant women without a stay permit have the right to be assisted at the Consultatory, and if they are pregnant their assistance is free. The Law has established the prohibition of personal denounce of clandestinity.

The Consultatory collaborates with all the territorial services and hospitals.

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Who works in the family Consultatory?

In the Consultatories of Valle Trompia you can find a working group with different competences: sanitary, psychological, social and legal:

- Midwife
- gynaecologist
- social assistatant
- psychologists
- professional educator/paediatrician
- psychotherapist
- legal consultant
- family mediator



For what kind of needs can I go to the family Consultatory?

You can go to the consultatory for:

- pregnancy
- after delivery and nursing assistance
- contraception
- voluntary interruption of pregnancy (I.V.G)
- tumours prevention (pap – test)
- menopause
- affective and sexual education
- family mediation in support of separation or divorce support
- fertility, infertility
- violence and maltreatment of women
- legal consulence
- individual sustain, to couples and families, in a difficult social-economic conditions
- consulence for an anonymous delivery

The Consultatory organises courses that accompany the woman in delivery, birth and neo-parenting (group for delivery, after delivery, baby massage, and thematic seminars). These courses give information about delivery, from the physical to the psychological aspect, and techniques that can help you in containing the pain of delivery, feeding, nursing and all what concerns the care of the baby.



Gravidanza

Are you sure you are pregnant?

There are different signals that can let you think you are pregnant: your periods might not be regular and might come differently from the previous ones, morning nausea, vomit, stimulation to urinate frequently.

To be sure, you have to do a pregnancy test, you can purchase the kit in a pharmacy or have a test in a laboratory.

I'm expecting a baby: whom do I talk to?

You can go to the doctor or to the consultatory where you will find the possibility of having some periodical tests and visits for all the pregnancy period. All the exams are free because they are assured by the guardianship of pregnancy. It's a good thing to keep accurately all documents (exams and visits) during pregnancy.

What can I do during pregnancy?

Pregnancy is not a situation of illness, but a natural course of life.

It is important to have some attentions: avoid heavy works, have healthy and varied meals, avoid smoking and alcoholic drinks. In the last months of pregnancy it can be useful.

to attend pre-delivery preparatory course.

The Italian law protects the maternity of working women,



regularly employed, guiding their employment up to the end of the first year of the child. If the working conditions are dangerous for the health of the mother and the child, or if the pregnancy is at risk, the pregnancy leave can be anticipated with a medical certificate.

Delivery

Where can I deliver and how?

You can deliver freely and in security, in one of the hospital structures of your choice equipped for delivery.

You can ask to the consultatory personnel or your gynaecologist the modalities of delivery active in the structure you will choose.

Your husband, partner, or a person of your choice can stand with you during your labour and delivery.

In some cases where the delivery can't be natural, the caesarean cut might be needed. This operation does not preclude a natural delivery in future.

In certain hospitals the new baby can remain near the mother, in others the babies are kept in a department called "nido".



After delivery

... and when I get home?

After your re-entry at home, you might need sustain, information and assistance for yourself and your baby. For this you can utilise the "PROTECTED DIMISSIONS" service, called "At home after delivery" that enables you to request a domiciled visit of a midwife of the consultatory in the first days of birth.

This service is free and can be requested at the Hospital with a form given by the personnel or you can directly contact the Consultatory near your house or zone.

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You will be contacted by the midwife and together you will program the visit at home which has these objectives:

Sustain and give information and assistance to the mother and child;

give information about the services of the Consultatory.

Other services are:

1. after delivery visit for a sanitary evaluation and contraceptive consulence (prescription, application, contraceptive mode)
2. group of activities (after delivery and breastfeeding group, baby massage, and parenting groups);
3. psycho-social sustain



Guardianship of the migrant maternity

I'm a foreign mother: what are my rights?

If you're expecting a child, you must know that in Italy all women, Italian or not, have the right to have sanitary control that is free in certain periods of pregnancy.

This is also extended to women that don't have a stay permit. If you are a foreigner and you don't have a stay permit, you can take a stay permit that is valid for all you pregnancy period and for the first six months after delivery. With this permit you can ask the inscription to the national sanitary service that will enable you to use the exemption for the payment of the ticket of clinic and laboratory analysis, visits with specialists, and also for delivery courses and eventual sicknesses due to pregnancy.

The health of your child will also be guaranteed; the baby will be vaccinated and will have prophylaxis interventions. Remember that the stay permit for pregnancy does not permit you to go outside the Italian territory, you can't work with it and it can't be changed to a different type of permit.¹

¹L.G. 40/98



Breastfeeding

Is breastfeeding good?

The maternal milk is natural, complete, good, economical and ever ready. In one word, perfect! It gives all the nutrition and liquids that a baby needs. Thanks to the maternal milk your baby is more protected from infections and the risk of serious and chronic pathologies reduces.

The milk of the mother is also more digestible and babies suffer less in colics.

Breastfeeding is a special gesture for all mothers as well. Breastfeeding offers also the chance to have a physical exchange, that is warmth, skin contact, embrace, etc... things that can be considered as nutrition as well. In other words whiles the sense of hunger is satisfied, a relationship is also built between the mother and the baby which is like a dialog made of different corporal messages and rich of relational significance.

This is why all children should be breastfed for the first six months of life (26 weeks). According the indications of the World sanitary organisation, of Unicef and the European Union, seconded by our Health ministry, breastfeeding can continue according the desire of the mother and of the baby.



How do I make it?

It's important that you have the possibility to remain with your baby to establish a first important relation.

Give a thought to the advice we're giving you: breastfeed the baby on "request", without following rigid schedules, control the position and the attachment to the breast of the baby, avoiding to detach the baby before finishing; don't give the baby other liquids (water, sugar, or sugared water) different from the maternal milk, before the first suck or between a suck and the other; avoid the use of artificial teats, baby bottles, dummies or pacifiers, mostly in the first months of life; don't wash your breast with special detergents after every suck, avoid the use of creams or oils during the breastfeeding period; the normal hygiene is sufficient because the breast has gland that cleans the areola.

Once the breastfeeding has started, it is a happy practice and a nice experience for most women and children. In the first days anyway, you might face some difficulties, but you can ask for a help from the competent personnel (midwife of the Consultatory, paediatrician). If you can't breastfeed for lack of milk or for health problems, don't worry. With the counsel of the midwife and of the paediatrician your child will grow as well with the formulated milk.



Weaning

In the first months of life the milk alone is able to guarantee a normal growth of the baby. Progressively, around 6 months, the milk must be integrated with other food: that is the weaning moment.

Regarding the timings and modalities of food, we advice you to consult your paediatrician.

Other important indications:

weaning is a critical time of change, it needs to be initiated with a healthy child; preferably introduce every new food gradually (every 4-5 days); if the baby refuses the food don't insist and try again some days later; start with small quantities, and increase them gradually; don't add salt for all the first year of life; inform the paediatrician of any allergy in the family: it important to define when to start the use of allergic food (for example egg, fish, tomato, citrus fruits)



Role of the paediatrician

What are the necessary cures for the baby?

In Italy every child has the right to be taken in cure by a paediatrician, including the migrant mothers, inscribed at the SSN or with the STP card. Till the age of sex, the baby has the right to have all the visits and necessary checks to guarantee health freely, if the income of the family does not exceed the pre-arranged amount of the law.

Who will cure my child?

Every child , from 0 to 14 years, has the right of having a doctor, the paediatrician. When the baby is born, is automatically inscribed at the SSN and with the sanitary code the mother can choose the paediatrician.

The paediatrician works in a studio, with defined schedules, sometimes you will need to book the visit. The doctor can visit at home for urgent cases (the necessity of the visit will be evaluated together with the doctor), after having taken an appointment before 10 am; the paediatrician doesn't take care of the child only in case of a sickness but the doctor follows the growth of the child through periodical visits and will inform the parents on when to do them.



Which vaccination does my child need?

Vaccinations are very important for the health of baby and the community.

In Italy vaccinations are distinguished in obligatory: the law states that all must vaccinate and the ASL sends invitation letters with the date and venue of the injection;

Recommended: all the vaccinations are recommended and the ASL sends an invite at home with the date and venue of the injection;

Facultative: parents are not obliged to let the children attend those vaccination, but the paediatrician can advice the execution or not looking at the clinic history of the baby. In this case the parents must call ASL to book an appointment.



Voluntary interruption of pregnancy

I'm expecting a child, but I'm not sure I want to continue with the pregnancy. Whom can I go to?

At the consultatory you will find specialised personnel that will know how to listen to you and sustain you in your choice. The decision of interrupting a pregnancy, often represents a difficult and dramatic moment in the life of a woman, and no lady can face it superficially, and alone.

The reasons that may lead you to interrupt a pregnancy are many. The consultatory personnel will help you verify if in the area you live there are services that can help you overcome your problems, whether economical, social or familiar.

I've decided to abort. Is it possible? What should I do?

The Italian law states that it is possible to interrupt a pregnancy in the first 90 days that correspond to 12 weeks and 6 days in echografic terms, in a total privacy and even without the consent of your partner.

Foreign women, even without a stay permit, can abort freely. After 90 days of pregnancy, interruption is allowed only on therapeutic purposes, when the health of the woman is at risk. In Italy this practice can be done only in sanitary structures. To make use of IVG (Voluntary interruption of pregnancy) you need a certification



that accretes the date of the pregnancy, this can be released from a gynaecologist. With this document after seven days the operation can be done in any hospital you have chosen. Anyway you have the chance to change your decision anytime before the operation and continue the pregnancy, with the help of consultatory staff.

I'm expecting a baby and I'm a minor. Can I use the IVG?

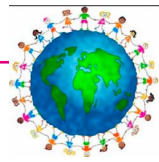
Yes, with the consent of your parents. If you don't want your parents to know, or if they're not present, you need the authorisation of a judge and at the consultatory you will find a psychologist and a social assistant that will accompany you.

Indications

IVG cannot be used as a contraceptive mode.

IVG does not preclude the chance of having other children.

IVG done repeatedly can damage the woman's health.



Adoption

...what if I can't or don't want to raise the child?

If you have chosen to give birth but you can't keep the child for diverse motives, when delivering do not recognise the child and give the baby to adoption in total privacy.

The act of not recognising the child is not a crime.

The law allows the mother to leave the child in the hospital where the baby was born (DPR 396/2000, Art. 30, comma 2).

The name of the mother remains secret. If within 10 days the mother doesn't recognise the baby, the child will be signalled to the Tribunal of minors, and the registry of the commune will give the baby a name and will receive the Italian citizenship if the mother is a foreigner.

Then the baby will be given to an adoptive family that will take good care of him or her.



Contraception

Can I avoid unwished pregnancies?

To avoid unwished pregnancies and consequently decide when to have a child you can use contraception.

Which contraceptives can I use?

Contraceptives in the market today, offer a very good protection from unwanted pregnancies, but their efficiency is based on how regularly and attentively you use them.

A wrong use of these can drastically limit the efficiency and its work of protection.

The most diffused methods of contraception are:

- Condoms
- Diaphragm
- Hormonal contraceptive
- Loop
- Natural methods
- Emergency contraceptives

What is a condom and is it used?

The condom or preventive (efficiency from 85% to 98%) is a contraceptive of barrier that consists in a thin scabbard of natural rubber that has to be worn on the male organ erected before every sexual intercourse to avoid that sperma penetri in vagina.



the sperms penetrate into the vagina.

The condom is the only efficient contraceptive against the risk of HIV/AIDS and from other sexual transmittable disease (hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhoea).

Wrong use of the condom or factory defects and a wrong conservation, may cause a damage to the condom.

What is a diaphragm and how is it used?

The vaginal diaphragm (real efficiency 84%) is a hood soft rubber with a thick border that covers the opening of the uterus. It must be smeared with a cream, or a spermicidal glaze, then it must be inserted in the vagina before every sexual act (2 or 3 hours before).

Absolutely wait for 6 hours after the intercourse before taking off the diaphragm. A gynaecologic visit is needed to choose the measure and type to be utilised.

Its use can be stopped at any moment.

Hormonal contraceptives are small doses of hormones that taken regularly in a correct way, will reduce the possibility of pregnancy of 99%.

These following items are types of hormonal contraceptives:

- The Pill (efficiency from 92% to 99,7%)

It is the most popular hormonal contraceptive, and it is taken orally everyday, every pill



7. Contraception

has its own indications.

There is a pill called "small pill", ideal for a woman that is breastfeeding and that doesn't create problems to the baby.

Most of the pills are given on payment, although there are some types that are for free and that the consultatory can prescribe.

Vaginal ring (efficiency from 92% to 99,7%)

It is a ring of a flexible and transparent material that has to be inserted in the vagina between the first and the fifth day of menstruation. It must be changed every two weeks, and an interval of seven days must be observed.

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Contraceptive bandaid (efficiency from 92% to 99,7%)

It must be applied on a part of the body, it has to stick well on the skin, giving you the chance to do physical activity, bath or swim without problems. It must be changed every seven days, observing a pause every 3 weeks where the contraceptive efficiency still remains.

What is the loop and how is it used?

The IUD, called loop (efficiency 99,4%) is a plastic and cooper device that prevents the process of fertilization.

It has to be inserted in the uterus by the gynaecologist and it lasts from 3 to 5 years. Women that have not given birth yet, are not advised to make use of it.



What are the natural contraceptive methods?

The natural contraceptive methods (basal temperature, Ogino-Knaus, Billings, efficiency 75% - 91%) are based on the abstention of sexual intercourse during the fertile time, calculated in a different way according to the modality chosen

They're not very reliable because recognizing the signs of ovulation is not easy, and because of the unpredictability of the cycle.

The coition interruption consists in the timely extraction of the penis from the vagina before ejaculation.

It has a scarce efficiency because fertile sperms might be in the lubricant liquid produced from the man at the beginning of the intercourse.

What are emergency contraceptives?

The "after day pill" is not a contraceptive method and it is used only in an emergency case.

The pills have to be taken after an unprotected intercourse. They must be taken within 48 hours, maximum 72 hours, after the sexual act.

The alternative is the application of a loop (by the gynaecologist) within 5 days after the intercourse.



Woman's health

Oncologic prevention

There are oncologic pathologies (tumours) that is possible to prevent through the knowledge of your own body and the changes that can come through clinical exams.

For some of these diseases ASL has introduced some free screening programs (diagnostic investigations of part of the population) with the purpose of finding quickly alterations that might be transformed in a tumour.

The screening programs are concerned about: the breast tumour (execution of MAMMOGRAPHY), the neck of uterus tumour (execution of PAP TEST), erected colon tumour, (execution of HIDDEN BLOOD research in the urine).

For both sex, between 50 to 70 years, you will receive at home an invitation letter with a pre-fixed appointment to do these tests, that can be modified with a call.

Pap-test

What is a PAP-TEST and when do i have to go for it?

The Pap-test consists in collecting substance from the neck of the uterus by a professional operator. The substance will be sent to a lab to be analysed. Normally is simple and not harmful.



All women from the age range of 25 to 64 years are invited to do the pap-test. If the response is negative, it will be important to repeat it every three years.

The ASL will call you again if they see any alteration or for any explanation.

Mammography

What is a MAMMOGRAPHY and when should I do it?

Mammography is a simple exam that consists in a radiography of the breast. All women, Italian and foreigners, (regular) in the ages of 50 to 70 are invited to do it every two years or every year if in the family there have been cases of breast tumour.

ASL might call you back if after the exams there is the need of further checking and it is important to do them.

The mammography is an important exam of breast tumour prevention that needs to be done together with the self-palpation of the breast.

In case you find some nodules, changes on your skin or liquids coming from the nipple is important to tell your doctor or go to the consultatory.



Menopause

In the everyday language the term menopause indicates the period after the last cycle in a woman's life, where the reproductive activity ceases.

As age goes on, the hormones reduce their production and that causes irregularity in the menstrual cycle. Those hormonal modifications can determine a variable quantity of signs and symptoms that are considered typical of the climacteric.

So it is not a disease, but a physiological stage of life.

The ages in which this can happen are from 45 to 53 years. The most common disturbances of menopause are hot flashes of heat, or psychological or emotional problems.

Then connected to this might also be sicknesses like osteoporosis (weakness of the bones) and the increase of cardiovascular illness (heart and arteries diseases) or breast tumour.

***You need an entire village to
train up a child.
-African proverb***



Il Mosaico

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