

A TRANS-FEMININE GUIDE TO WELLNESS

Trans-feminine bodies come in a wonderfully wide range of sizes, shapes, colors, configurations, abilities, and body parts. **They all deserve to be cared for.**

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

Find and regularly visit a health care provider you feel good about; someone you're willing to tell the truth to. You may know more about trans health than they do; that's ok if they're willing to meet you where you are. To see FORGE's list of Wisconsin/Illinois trans-friendly medical providers, go to www.forge-forward.org

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS.

Get regular blood tests and preventive screenings. If you use estrogen or progesterone, common routine blood tests include: complete blood count, hormone levels, lipid profile (total = <200mg/dL), liver function panel (ALT = 21–72 UL), and blood glucose (<100mg/dL). Your medical history, length of time on estrogen/progesterone, and current medical conditions will determine the frequency of these tests.

KEEP IT FLOWING.

MTFs who use estrogen are at significantly higher risk than cisgender women of developing blood clots - which can lead to strokes and heart attacks. Smoking and being sedentary raise the risks even higher, so put that one butt out and get the other one moving! Talk to your healthcare practitioner about estradiol valerate and stop hormones 2-4 weeks before any surgery.

DON'T LET THE PRESSURE BUILD.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in U.S. adults. Don't become a statistic. Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol counts down through routine checks, regular exercise, stress reduction techniques, and a diverse, low-fat, high-nutrition diet.

MOVE IT!

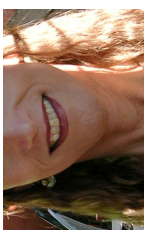
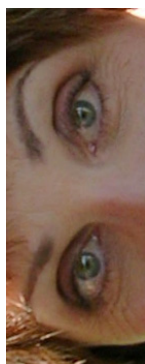
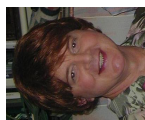
Exercise is not only good for your body, but it improves mental health and alertness, reduces stress, and helps you sleep better.

FUEL UP.

Well-balanced diets include ample fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein. Keep portion sizes small and enjoy a wide variety of foods.

KICK THE HABIT.

Estrogen and smoking aren't a healthy pair. Together, they increase your risk of heart disease more than either one alone.



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ENOUGH ALREADY!

Addictions come in a variety of forms: alcohol, drugs (prescription or street), nicotine, gambling, sex, food, or just about anything else. Don't let them take over your life.

SHARE THE LOVE, BUT NOT THE FLUIDS!

Did you know that HIV rates are higher among MTFs than they are among gay men? Unless you have just one partner and you're both monogamous and free of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, be prepared when you're going to be sexual with others. Have and use barriers (dental dams, condoms, gloves) to keep body fluids safely confined to their original owners.

GO FOR CURVES WITHOUT SILICONE.

Injecting silicone is not just dangerous: it could be deadly. It can cause severe, debilitating immune disorders, blood clots, cancer, and unwanted "lumps" in odd places. Talk to your health care provider about safer ways of acquiring the curves you desire through hormones or surgery, or find a therapist or support network to help you learn to love your body the way it is.

CHECK THE INS AND OUTS.

If you still have testes or a prostate, have regular exams to check for any abnormalities that may need to be addressed.

GOT MILK?

Believe it or not, hormones keep our bones strong. If your original sources have been removed (orchiectomy) and you aren't taking replacement hormones (of any kind), ask your health care provider what you should do to keep your bones from getting brittle.

BUILD A STRONG TEAM.

No one makes it through life alone. Friends, family, professionals, and spiritual connections all can help us deal with day-to-day stress and transphobia. Groups like FORGE's social support meetings and events like our Writing to Heal series can help keep things in perspective, too.

KEEP IT LOVING.

Learn about healthy relationships. If you suspect yours isn't healthy or is even abusive, seek help in changing the pattern or getting out.