

Women's History Month—Advances in Women's Health



Progress in women's health is rooted in a foundation formed by the dedicated women and men responding to the pain, cries, and suffering of women in need. Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis was one such physician who in 1847 worked to reduce the number of deaths in women during childbirth. He achieved this impact by proving the power of hand washing with chlorinated water between the delivery of each women's baby. He was rejected by his medical colleagues—even thrown in an asylum for his views—beaten and died from an infected wound to his hand. The very hand used to help women giving birth survive.¹

Today we talk about women's health as a priority. A wise woman takes advantage of keeping herself well, as she often takes the lead to make sure all in her household stay well. We're fortunate today that there's personalized knowledge for best health practices across the lifespan, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, to old age. Women have the support of a dedicated agency in [womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov). In the last 31 years, this resource has identified numerous ways to help ensure better female overall health such as pre-pregnancy planning, help with breastfeeding, cancer screenings like pap smears, mammography, personalized care plans for quality of life before, during, and after menopause. All of which help to keep women and their household healthy.²

We appreciate such progress, including International awareness campaigns, like Endometriosis Awareness, now in March. These campaigns are in part thanks to physicians like Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi. Her research clarified women can still exercise and participate in all duties during menstruation; the medical view held in 1876 believed that a woman should not exercise during that portion of menstrual cycle.³

Honor means another's words, ideals, principles "carry weight". Honor provides meaning, guidance, and direction to you. During the Month of March, for all who have made bold, innovative, daring steps to care for, study, and put in place the priority of women's health, your work carries weight with us today and will for future generations of women. We honor you!

¹ Ignaz Semmelweis. Wikipedia, 9 Jan. 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignaz_Semmelweis.

² Nancy Lee. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1 April 2019, <https://www.womenshealth.gov/30-achievements/nancy-lee>

³ Stay Wiener. AAMC, 3 March 2020, <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/celebrating-10-women-medical-pioneers>

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