Contents

Preface, 1

1 Our Changing Sense of Self, 5

Changing Our Internalized Sexist Values, 6 Rediscovering Activity, 8 Rediscovering Anger, 10 Rediscovering Our Separateness, 10

2 The Anatomy and Physiology of Reproduction and Sexuality, 12

Our Feelings—Finding Out About Ourselves, 12
Description of Reproductive Organs—Anatomy (Structure) and Physiology (Function), 14
Outer Organs—Vulva: Pubis, Outer Lips, Clitoris,
Inner Lips, Urinary Opening, Vaginal Opening,
Perineum, Hymen, 14
Inner Organs—Bartholin Glands, Vagina, Fornix,
Pelvic Floor Muscles, Uterus (Womb), Cervix,
Fallopian Tubes, Ovaries, 15
Schematic Description, 17
Development of the Sexual Organs, 17
Stages in the Reproductive Cycle, 17
The Ovarian Cycle—Ovulation: Follicles, Hormones

(Estrogen and Progesterone), Ovulation, Mittelschmerz, Corpus Luteum, Fertilization, 17
The Uterine Cycle—Menstruation, 18
The Menstrual Discharge, 19
Feelings About Menstruation, 20
Menstrual Problems: Painful Periods (Dysmenorrhea); Premenstrual Depression; Lack of Periods (Amenorrhea), 20
Appendix: Hormones of the Menstrual Cycle, 21
Negative Feedback Mechanism, FSH, LH, Estrogen,
Progesterone, 21
Cervical Cycle, 22
Further Readings, 22

3 Sexuality, 23

A Cultural Orientation, 23 Sexual Feelings, 24 Growing Up, 26 Virginity, 27

Fantasies, 29 Masturbation, 30 Lovemaking, 31 Further Readings, 39

4 Living with Ourselves and Others: Our Relationships, 42

Feelings About Celibacy, 43 Feelings About Homosexuality, 44 Our Experiences, 45

- 1. Laura: Family, Marriage and Separation, 45
- 2. Mathilde: A Deepening Relationship, 47
- 3. Sarah: Thoughts and Feelings About Monogamy, 48
- 4. The Experience of Being Single: Many Voices, 48
- Abigail: Search for New Forms—Excerpts from the Diary of an Eleven-Year Marriage, 52
- 6. Lesbian Relationships: A Few Words, 52
- 7. Elena: Marriage and Multiple Relationships, 53
- 8. Anger and Relationships, 55

5 In Amerika They Call Us Dykes: A Boston Gay Collective, 56

- 1. Introduction, 56
- 2. Out of the Closet and into the Frying Pan, 61
- 3. The-rapists: Lesbians and Psychiatry, 63
- 4. The Bars, 65

- 5. Loving, 66
- 6. "Blessed Are the Poor," 70
- 7. Lesbian Mothers, 71

viii Contents

6 Nutrition and the Food We Eat, 74

The Necessary Nutrients, 74 About Protein, 77 Fats and Oils, 78 Carbohydrates, 79 Problems with the Food and Agriculture Industries, 80 Some Valuable Suggestions, 81 Further Readings, 82

7 Women in Motion, 83

Why We Don't Get the Exercise We Need, 83 Things Are Beginning to Change, 85 Choosing an Exercise: Some Guidelines and Some Benefits, 87
Some Final Advice, 90

8 Rape and Self-Defense, 92

Rape, 92
Whose Fault Is Rape?, 92
Rape and Race, 93
Rape and the Law, 93
What We Can Do as Women, 93

What to Do if You Have Been Raped, 93 Self-Defense, 94 Learning to Protect Ourselves, 94 Self-Defense Training, 95 Some Things You Can Do, 95

9 Venereal Disease, 98

The Problem, 98
Syphilis and Gonorrhea—How They Spread, 98
Prevention—General, 98
Treatment—General, 99
Syphilis, 100
Symptoms, 100
Diagnosis, 100
Treatment and Test for Cure, 100
Syphilis and Pregnancy, 100
Gonorrhea, 101
Symptoms, 101

Testing and Diagnosis, 101
Treatment, 102
Test for Cure, 102
Pregnancy and Gonorrhea, 102
Other Venereal Diseases, 103
The Politics of Venereal Disease, 103
Protect Yourself—Protect Others, 104
Summary Chart on Syphilis and Gonorrhea, 105
Important Information About Penicillin Treatment, 105
Further Readings, 105

10 Birth Control, 106

Introduction: Factors affecting our decision about birth control and our ability to choose and use a birth control method that is good for us, 106

Conception. The process to be interrupted. How pregnancy happens. Some facts about sperm, 110

Birth Control Pills, 111

IUD, or Intrauterine Device: Coil, Loop, and Shield, 120

The Diaphragm, 123

The Cervical Cap, 127

The Condom (Rubber, Prophylactic, "Safe"), 127

Foam—Aerosol Vaginal Spermicide, 129

Jellies and Creams for Use Alone, 131

Birth Control Methods That Don't Work Very Well, 132

Withdrawal. Rhythm Method (Safe Period). Vaginal

Tablets and Suppositories, 132

Nonmethods—Attempts at Birth Control That Don't Work at All, 134

Douching, Avoidance of Orgasm by the Woman. Avoiding Actual Intercourse. Norforms and Other Feminine Hygiene Products, 134

After Unprotected Intercourse—"The Morning-After Pill," 135

When You Are All Done: Sterilization, 135

Tubal Ligation. Laparoscopy. Vasectomy (for the man), 135

Future Methods of Birth Control, 136

Male Contraceptive Research. Female Contraceptive Research, 136 Helpful Organizations, 137 Further Readings, 137

Further Readings, 153

11 Abortion, 138

History, 139
Abortion Practices in Some Other Countries, 140
Abortion Law Reform, Repeal and the Medical Community, 141
If You Think You Are Pregnant, 143
Where to Go for Counseling and Referral, 143
The New York Abortion, 144
Having the Abortion, 144
Timing, 144
Medical Techniques for Abortion, 144
Up to Three Days After Unprotected Intercourse, 144
Up to 12 Weeks. Vacuum Suction or Dilation and Curettage, 145
12-16 Weeks, 145
After 16 Weeks: Saline Injection, 146

After 20 Weeks: Hysterotomy, 146
Medical Preliminaries: The Importance of the Woman's Medical History and Blood Type, 146
Anesthesia, 146
Complications: Hemorrhage, Infection, Incomplete Abortion, 146
Aftercare, 147
Birth Control After an Abortion, 147
Abortion Counseling, 147
Illegal Abortion, 148
The Doctor-Performed Illegal Abortion, 148
Methods of the Unskilled Abortionist, 149
Self-Induced Abortion, 149
Future Prospects, 149
Two Personal Experiences, 151

12 Deciding Whether to Have Children, 154

13 Childbearing, 157

Introduction: Moving Toward Understanding and Control of Our Childbearing Experience, 157 Section One: Pregnancy, 159 A. A Preventive Program: What You Can Do to Prepare Yourself, 159 Taking Care of Yourself: Choice, Commitment, Preparation, Feelings, Emotional Needs, 159 Taking Care of Your Physical Needs, 160 Nutrition, 161 A Good Diet for Your Pregnancy, 161 Why These Foods Are Important, 161 Controversy About Nutrition, 162 Gaining Weight, 162 Toxemia, 162 Edema, 163 Diuretics, 163 Diet Pills, 163 Salt, 163 Effect of Medication, 164 Nutrition-a Political Issue, 164 B. The Pregnancy Itself, 164 First Trimester, 165 Physical Changes, 165 Procedures for Detecting Pregnancy, 166 Pelvic Exam, 166 Some Women Just Know They Are Pregnant, 166 Exam Schedule, 166 Your Feelings About Yourself and Your Pregnancy, 167 Growth of the Fetus, 168 Second Trimester, 168 Physical Changes, 168 Your Feelings About Yourself, 170 Your Feelings About Your Baby, 170 Men's Feelings About You, Your Pregnancy, 172 Intercourse, 172

Medical Fact and Fiction, 172 Your Feelings About Making Love, 173 If You Are Living with a Group of People, 173 Third Trimester, 174 Physical Changes, 174 Your Feelings About Yourself and Your Pregnancy, 175 Appendices: 177 Miscarriage (Natural Abortion), 177 Ectopic Pregnancy, 178 Rh Factor in Blood, 179 Early Diagnosis of Birth Defects, 180 Infertility, 180 Section Two: Prepared Childbirth, 182 Introduction: Why Preparation?, 182 Home or Hospital?, 183 What Is Labor?, 185 Less Usual Presentations, 187 Some Signs of Abnormal Labor and Delivery, 189 Premature Labor, 191 Induction of Labor, 191 Drugs, 192 Exercises, 195 Being in Labor, 198 The Immediate Postpartum Period, 205 Appendix: Associations Concerned with Childbirth Education, How to Choose a Childbirth Class, 206 Section Three: Postpartum-After the Baby Is Born, 207 Kinds of Postpartum Emotional Problems, 207 Possible Causes of Postpartum Disturbances, 209 The Childbearing Year as Maturational Crisis, 209 Life Changes of Becoming a Parent, 210 The Physical Context-Fatigue, 211 The Social Context, 212

Education and Preparation for Child Care, 213
The Family Context, 213
The Medical Context, 215
Theories of Contributing Factors and Some Clinical
Research, 215
Physical-Stress Theories, 215
Possible Connections Between Physical and Social
Factors, 216

Social Stress Theories and Prevention, 216
Some Proposals for Change, 218
Appendices:
Feelings When the Baby Dies, 219
Physical Aspects of Postpartum, 220
Infant Care, 223
Further Readings, 225

14 Menopause, 224

What Is Menopause?, 230 What Are the Symptoms?, 231 What You Can Do About It, 232 Depression and Menopause, 233 Pregnancy and Menopause, 234 Sex and Menopause, 234 Further Readings, 235

Vaginal Infections (Vaginitis), 260

15 Women and Health Care, 236

Section One: The American Health Care System, 236 Problems of Inadequate Care for Women, 237 The Organization and Control of Health Care, 238 The Capitalist Theory of Disease Causation, 238 The Power and Role of Male Doctors, 239 Women as Workers in the Health System, 240 The Profit Motive in Health Care, 241 Section Two: Choosing and Using Medical Care, 242 Introduction—The Myths of Choice and Quality, 242 Choosing the Doctor, 244 The General Practitioner-The Specialist-Group Practice, 244 What to Look For, 246 The Doctor-Patient Relationship, 248 Managing the Obstetrician-Gynecologist, 249 Doctors: Summary, 252 The Clinic, 253 The Hospital, 255 Hospital Maternity Care, 256 Hospitals: Summary, 257 Section Three: Common Medical Problems and Procedures, 259 Glossary of Common Medical Terms, 259 Hygiene, 259 Douches, 260

Yeast Infection (Candidiasis or Moniliasis), 260 Trichomoniasis, 261 Nonspecific Vaginitis, 261 Atrophy or Senile Vaginitis, 261 Crabs, 261 Endometriosis, 261 Cervical Erosion, 261 Cystitis, 262 Cancer, 263 Breast Cancer, 263 Breast Self-Exam, 263 Treatment of Breast Cancer, 264 Cervical Cancer, 265 Other Female Cancers, 265 The Gynecological Exam, 266 Dilation and Curettage (D & C), 267 Hysterectomy, 267 Section Four: How to Cope and Organize, 267 Future Demands, 269 Some New Beginnings, 270 Appendix A: Preamble to the 1970 Accreditation Manual for Hospitals, 271 Appendix B: Guidelines for NEIGHBORS, 273 Further Readings, 275