

## **I'm so sick of this obsession with health**

From the age of fifty it seems we are required to spend each waking moment either being tested or contemplating what we are going to die of. We are bombarded through the letterbox or on our televisions with the latest disease, and the most up-to-date test to find it before it takes hold. I know doctors sign an oath that says they will keep us alive forever, but I think we are missing living with a light heart.

While we might enjoy our older years – the travel, the dining out and the myriad activities – we have become obsessed with our health. Every conversation is full of stories of going to the doctor, what test was carried out and what new medication has been prescribed. If nothing can be found we must be depressed but fear not. There is a pill for that too.

In a moment of madness in the wee small hours I tick off the organs I could do without so as to eliminate some of the sources of these lurking diseases. I could book myself into hospital and have them all removed in one go. The breasts, the ovaries, the uterus, the cervix and the gallbladder and probably one kidney could go too. This would give me some respite.

I am beginning to question whether all this health information is progress. There is a limit to the quality of life, and if we go on being tested and medicated we will live to a very old age.

In my grandparent's day they lived life to the full. They drank and partied, ate what they liked. They went to the doctor when they were sick, not to try and find something that may make them sick. My parent's generation started the trend of being totally mesmerised by medical information. They had every test and took every tablet. Their conversations were full of who had what disease, who had died and what new test the doctor wanted them to have. We are going to die. It is inevitable, so more energy should be put into living. It would be lovely to be oblivious.

I am taking a stand. I am grateful to have lived as long as I have. I have aches and pains and I get breathless. My body is following the natural process of winding down. I have no interest in knowing the cause or swallowing anything to make it go away and I won't bore my friends with the details. I woke up this morning and that has got to be cause for celebration.

**Heckler, Sydney Morning Herald, 3/3/2009**

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