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• NEW ZEALAND •

# positively POSITIVE→

The official publication of **Body Positive Inc.** A peer support organisation for people living with HIV/AIDS

June 2010

## nPEP available in New Zealand from 1st July 2010

**N**on professional Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) will be available in New Zealand from 1<sup>st</sup> July say the Ministry of health's drug funding agency Pharmac. PEP has been available for many years in the Australian community and is made available for people who have had an unsafe sexual experience and are worried about contracting HIV. If a 28 day course of medication is started within 72 hours of the exposure then the infection can be stopped.

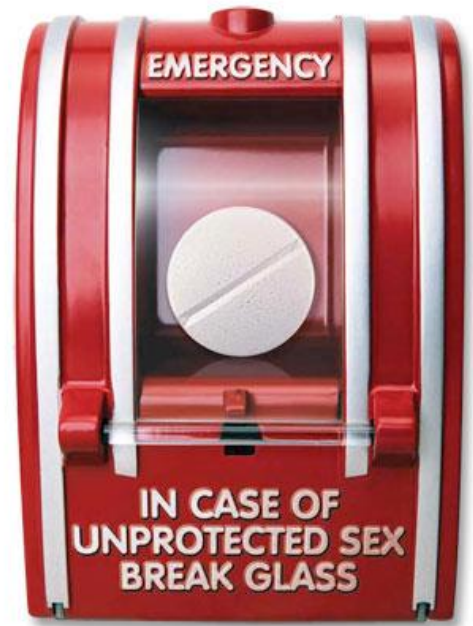
Equally for years the opponents to making this scheme available in New Zealand have argued that the gay community would treat it irresponsibly and use it like the "morning after pill." Anyone living with HIV can tell you the pills are no joy and side effects especially when starting new medication can range from nausea to dysentery and possibly other unpleasant effects.

Stringent restrictions have been imposed on its availability in New Zealand making it only available to those who have had "receptive anal intercourse with a known HIV

positive person." This basically excludes all women and for gay men it will exclude all randomised anonymous sex which is where most HIV transmission takes place.

The one area of our community which this will serve is for those living in a serodiscordant relationship where one partner is positive and the other partner is negative. People are human and accidents happen so as long as couples can access this easily then it can serve a purpose for some. Accessing this treatment is not yet clarified but it is only available from Infectious Diseases specialist physicians as they are the only people authorised to prescribe this medication.

Body Positive expects "3 day starter packs" to be available at hospitals accident and emergency departments as 72 hours after exposure to the virus can be a short time if the beginning point is a Friday evening out on the town.



A follow up appointment within the 3 days of medication should see an ID physician prescribe the balance of the 28 days course.

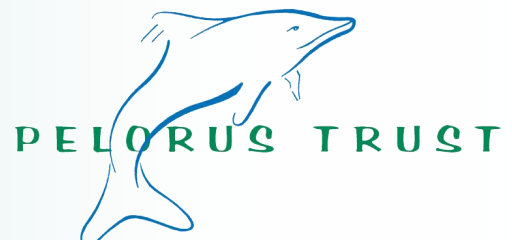
Getting this information out to the "at risk" community is limited as Pharmac have made no budget available and we will rely on our community newspapers and websites.

For additional information please telephone toll free - **0800 HIVLIVE**

POSITIVELY POSITIVE NEWSLETTER

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*Kindly Funded By*  
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**W**ould you like to help reduce Body Positive's printing/postal bill and save a few trees as well??

To receive the Positively Positive Newsletter via e-mail instead of in the post, simply e-mail your name & current e-mail address to: [office@bodypositive.org.nz](mailto:office@bodypositive.org.nz) or call us to update your details.

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**For more information contact us in complete confidence.**

**Call toll free from anywhere in New Zealand**

**Contact:**

0800 HIV LINE  
(0800 448 5463)  
Or 09 309 3989

**Website:**

[www.bodypositive.org.nz](http://www.bodypositive.org.nz)

**Street Address:**

Body Positive House  
1/2 Poynton Terrace  
Newton  
Auckland 1011

**Postal Address:**

PO Box 68-766  
Newton  
Auckland 1045

**Opening Hours:**

10am-5pm, Mon-Fri

**E:** [office@bodypositive.org.nz](mailto:office@bodypositive.org.nz)

**Fax:** 09 309 3981



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## Ministry of Health Review of all HIV / AIDS Services delivered in New Zealand



In January this year the Ministry of Health announced a review of all HIV / AIDS services delivered in New Zealand. This will include all clinical services from hospitals and sexual health clinics as well as services delivered by the Ministry of Health funded New Zealand AIDS Foundation Inc. Positive peoples group have been included as well. Body Positive, Positive Women, Absolutely Positively Positive in Wellington, and the INA Foundation (for Maori and Pacific Island people) are also asked to contribute. The person charged with leading this review is Dr David Miller. David has extensive experience with HIV /AIDS in working for both the World Health Organisation and UNAIDS. He is experienced in the politics of HIV as well as having extensive clinical experience in the UK with people living with HIV / AIDS (plwha)

The review is intended to assess the present coverage of services for plwha in New Zealand and to identify any gaps that may require public health investment. When asked if this review will include services beyond clinical, for example prevention programmes and education Dr Miller replied it is intended to cover everything to do with HIV / AIDS. Dr Miller made the point that he had been assured this was not a "cost cutting" exercise but one intended to identify how things could be improved

by identifying the "gaps."

Body Positive has long claimed that Ministry of Health funding should be available to us for at least the clinical services we provide. Our facial wasting lipoatrophy treatment for example is fully funded by the National Health Service in the UK, as well as Canada, and Australia but here in New Zealand it is not and Body Positive secures intermittent funding to deliver this service to those most affected by it. Testing is another service Body Positive believes should be funded by the Ministry.

Each of the positive groups have their own opinions and will be keen to ensure their plight is well known to Dr David Miller who has interviewed at length each of the positive group organisations and the New Zealand AIDS Foundation.

The draft report is prepared and with the Public Health division of the Ministry of Health. We expect to see this report in the next couple of weeks to see for the first time in New Zealand a comprehensive review of services delivered.

Bruce Kilmister CEO of Body Positive says that this report promises nothing and the Ministry of Health may totally ignore it but we are pleased that for the first time the Ministry has been advised of what we do and been made aware there are other groups doing good work for plwha.

We will report progress in the next edition of "Positively Positive."

## A New Justice of the Peace

Last month our CEO Bruce Kilmister was sworn in as a Justice of the Peace making an additional service available for members at Body Positive House. "I know the frustration I have experienced trying to find a JP so I am pleased to be able to offer this to our members" says Bruce Kilmister. Bruce was nominated to this position by local Member of Parliament Nicky Kaye.



## Positive Peoples Lives at Risk Again



Recently, Merck Sharp and Dohme completed a funding agreement with Pharmac to make Raltegravir available under the subsidised scheme. This effectively put Raltegravir into the list of drugs funded by Pharmac from which only three can be prescribed to any one positive patient. This has reduced physicians' ability to prescribe OBT which can be for more than three drugs.

This situation will worsen when Pharmac eventually agrees to fund Darunavir, making only three drugs available for

physicians to prescribe. The manufacturers of Duranavir cannot be blamed for wanting it funded. They lodged an application with Pharmac back in 2007 and have been negotiating ever since to get it funded. When it is, physicians will have no options remaining and have to restrict prescribing to just three drugs. This could be anytime soon and when this happens positive people with MDR will have their options reduced and risk resistance developing in their systems all over again.

Faced with this potential reality we could see lives put at risk.

Pharmac must allow physicians to prescribe Optimised Background Therapy.

*By Bruce Kilmister*

The introduction of antiretroviral medication was literally a lifesaver. Without medication back in the late '80s we saw multiple deaths at a rate that had most of us at a funeral almost on a weekly basis. Unless you experienced those days you will never know the ravages it had on our community - and to some extent, still does on those who live today with the scars from back then.

We hope we will never see them again - ever, but unless Pharmac, the government's drug funding agency, moves to counter issues being expressed by our leading physicians we may well be back in those dark days.

For well over two years now, physicians have been encouraging Pharmac to let them treat their HIV+ clients with Optimised Background Therapy (OBT). This would mean that Pharmac would have to amend the current special authority criteria to doctors prescribing antiretroviral medication, to allow them to prescribe more than three drugs which they are currently restricted to.

Currently in New Zealand there are an estimated 60 patients who have multiple

drug resistance (MDR). This means their medication is failing them. Each year we can expect to see at least another 10 positive people develop resistance to their medication. To overcome this situation, physicians have been able to prescribe more than three drugs. Three have been funded by Pharmac and the fourth or fifth has been free from the pharmaceutical companies. It is quite common for a pharmaceutical company to provide their medication free once Medsafe has approved the drug. Medsafe is the Ministry of Health division that authorises the sale and use of all drugs in New Zealand after it is satisfied with the safety and efficiency of the drug. For most pharmaceutical companies, this practice of offering their drugs free is only for the limited time between Medsafe's approving the drug and Pharmac's agreeing to start paying for it.

Recently, New Zealand physicians have been able to prescribe more than three drugs because they have had a choice of at least two other drugs freely supplied by the pharmaceutical companies. One drug is Raltegravir, or by another name, Isentress. The other drug is Darunavir, or by another name, Prezista.

**After months of extensive lobbying to Pharmac, Body Positive has received notice from Pharmac that they are now considering increasing their funding from 3 antiretroviral's to 4**

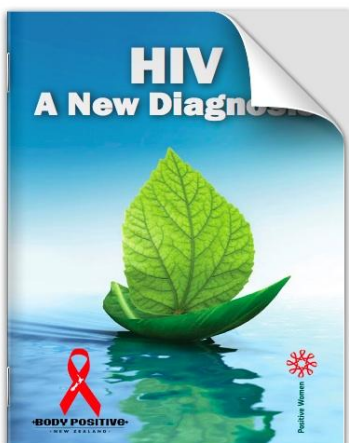
## HIV - A New Diagnosis

A new publication has been produced by Body Positive and funding contributed from Positive Women. For the first time in New Zealand Body Positive has produced a comprehensive booklet for newly diagnosed HIV positive people seeking answers to common questions they might have.

The booklet is produced with approval

from the Australian Federation of AIDS organisations but has been edited for New Zealand purposes by local physician Dr Rick Franklin from Auckland Sexual Health Clinic.

If you would like a copy of the booklet please contact Body Positive, alternatively it can be downloaded from our website [www.bodypositive.org.nz](http://www.bodypositive.org.nz)



## Names honoured at Circle of Friends

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May friends and family gathered together to acknowledge those who have recently seen their loved ones names added to the Circle of Friends Memorial at Western Springs in Auckland. Kanuka grove which features in Western Springs near the Zoo car park has been the repository of the Circle of Friends where a large piece of Chinese granite carved into a circle contains names of those affected and effected by HIV / AIDS. Names of people living with HIV / AIDS, their friends and families as well as those who have passed on are all part of this very special place.

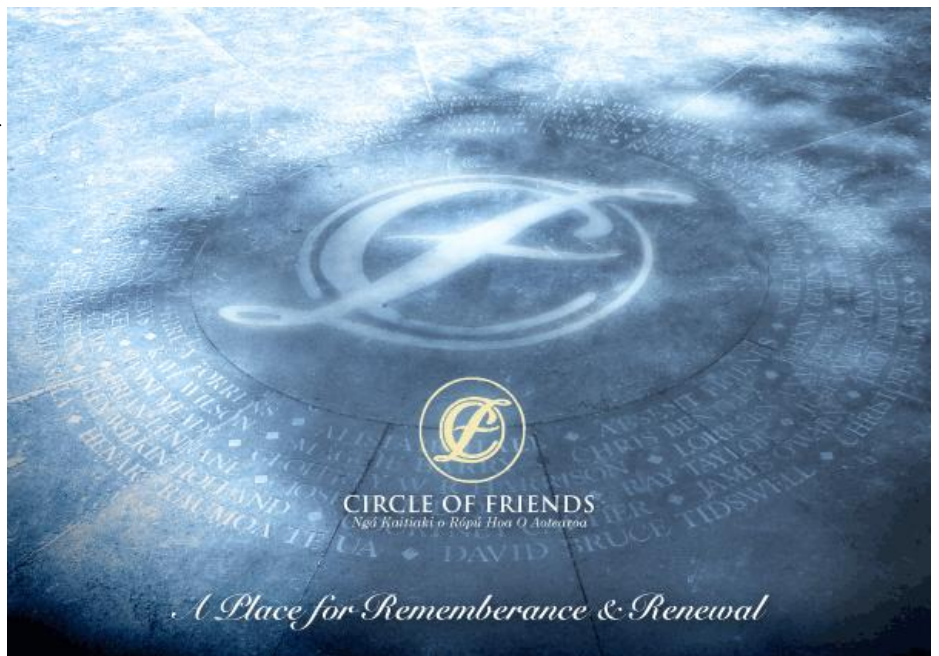
The latest names to be incorporated included those of Sister Paula Brett-Kelly a well known AIDS activist and Trustee of the NZ AIDS Foundation. Rodney Leitch - Higgey who passed

away 2 years ago has had his name included in the list of those we honour.

This is open to anyone who would like to have their name engraved as an acknowledgment that their life has been impacted with HIV and they want

to record their support. The cost is approximately \$250 per name.

A full list of all the names currently engraved on the Circle of Friends is available on the Body Positive website along with further details on the memorial.



**Under 35?  
Positive?**

**GET  
CONNECTED**

Group meets 1st  
Sunday of each  
month, 3-5pm

**BODY POSITIVE  
NEW ZEALAND**

For details ph 09-309 3989

## New Neighbours Move In

With an escalating annual rental from our landlords Body Positive had no option but to surrender some space to help reduce overheads. What better neighbour could we have secured than the Hepatitis C Support group?

"This is a natural fit for us" says Bruce Kilmister as many of our own members have this co-infection and they can secure multiple support information from one location at Body Positive House. Already plans are in preparation for the testing of Hepatitis along with our usual rapid tests for HIV and Syphilis.

### PILL BOXES

Remembering to take your HIV Medication every day is vital to your long term health



Body Positive has a large stock of Pill Boxes which can greatly help the adherence process.

Just contact us or drop in to Body Positive House if you would like some.

## Maintaining Higher CD4s Protects Against Brain Damage

People who are able to maintain CD4 counts above 350 have a lower risk of developing brain damage. This conclusion, based on an analysis of data from a large cohort study, was presented as a poster February 16 at the 17th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in San Francisco.

The CNS HIV Antiretroviral Therapy Effects Research (CHARTER) study is a large cohort following 1,562 people living with HIV who are at various stages of disease and who have different histories of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy use. CHARTER is exploring relationships between HIV and the central nervous system (CNS), and the study is being conducted at six research sites across the United States.

The poster presented at CROI examined how a person's lowest ever (nadir) CD4 cell count influenced the risk of developing HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder (HAND), which can include impairment in thinking and memory. Ronald Ellis, MD, PhD, from the University of California in San Diego (UCSD), presented the data on behalf of the CHARTER team.

## Vitamin D Deficiency Common Among HIV Positive

Vitamin D insufficiency is common among people living with HIV - although not necessarily more so compared with the general population - according to a study reported on Friday, February 19, at the 17th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in San Francisco.

Bone loss is a growing concern for people with HIV. This is partly because researchers are finding that people with HIV have bone problems at a younger age and are more likely to experience fractures than their HIV-negative counterparts. In addition, people with HIV are also living to the age that uninfected people begin to have bone problems.

Vitamin D is a critical part of bone health. Without it, the body cannot absorb calcium, which makes up the structure of all bones. Vitamin D deficiency has also been linked to higher cancer rates, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

## Normal Life Expectancy With Maintenance of CD4s Above 500

Survival among HIV-positive men who keep their CD4 counts above 500 cells for at least three years is comparable with that of the general population, according to optimistic data from a large European cohort reported on Friday, February 19, at the 17th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI). More sobering findings were documented among HIV-positive women: mortality rates, even among those responding well to antiretroviral (ARV) therapy, were still lower compared with HIV-negative women.

Though combination ARV therapy is lauded for its life-extending potential for people living with HIV, premature death rates - from any cause (all-cause mortality)—remain higher among HIV-positive people receiving treatment compared with those in the general population.

Both the mortality rate and the excess mortality risk to be lower in those with higher CD4 counts, explained Charlotte Lewden, MD, of the University of Bordeaux in Bordeaux, France and her colleagues explained. Lewden's group recalled a previous study finding that death rates among HIV-positive individuals were CD4 counts of 500 cells and higher after several years of ARV therapy were similar to those of the general population.

## ★ Evening Discussion with Dr David Cooper ★

Wednesday 23rd June, Body Positive House

**Professor Dr David Cooper will be visiting New Zealand and will give a talk at Body Positive House on Wednesday 23rd June starting at 6pm. (Food will be available from 5.30pm)**

**There are a handful of names that are universally recognised for their work in HIV/AIDS - David Cooper is one of them.**

**If you would like to attend please RSVP to Body Positive on 09 309 3989**





# HIV Treatments Update

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2010  
University of Otago House  
385 Queen Street, Auckland  
.....

A one day seminar in HIV medicine and treatments information.

Invitations extended to:

- Health professionals
- Community support groups
- People living with HIV.

For further information please contact  
Body Positive New Zealand  
(09) 309 3989  
0800 HIV LINE

[www.bodypositive.org.nz](http://www.bodypositive.org.nz)



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# Body Positive Inc. AGM 11am, Sunday 27th June 2010

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been scheduled for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June at Body Positive House commencing at 11am. It has been delayed this year as our annual accounts have not been completed by the Auditors KPMG. This delay has been mainly attributable to staff and personnel changes – not at Body Positive but with our accountants Man In The Moon Ltd run by Richard James who departed New Zealand for his extensive overseas trip. His business partner from Right Click Accountants Ltd

has taken them in hand and completed them for the auditors who are working their way through them as we go to print. We are assured they will be available for the AGM. We'll keep our fingers crossed. The fees we pay are minimal to the accountants and the auditors complete the work “pro-bono” (free) so it is difficult to push them for an early completion but we have had discussions and are assured for next year they will be much earlier for us.

## Government Considers New Legislation

The Government has included in the Crimes Act 1961 (“infecting with a disease”) which states that every one is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years who, wilfully and without lawful justification or excuse, causes or produces in any other person any disease or sickness. This clause is

already in the act but now is considered a “serious violent offence” and will be included in the “three strikes” provision of the bill. This is now currently awaiting its third reading in Parliament before it becomes law. There is no provision for public submissions.

## Chemical in Bananas may Prevent and Treat HIV

A chemical in bananas has been found to inhibit HIV, according to research findings from a University of Michigan Medical School published in the March 19 issue of the Journal of Biological Chemistry. According to the study authors, this may lead to the development of inexpensive microbicides to prevent HIV transmission and, quite possibly, novel compounds to treat the disease.

Mannose-specific lectins—naturally occurring chemicals in plants that bind to sugars on the surface of disease-causing microorganisms such as viruses—have been of interest to researchers, given their ability to halt the chain of reaction that leads to a variety of infections.



The test tube studies conducted by Michael Swanson, a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, and his colleagues, indicate that a lectin isolated from the common banana binds to the sugar-rich HIV envelop protein gp120. Not only may this prove useful in the development of vaginal and rectal microbicides to prevent HIV transmission, Swanson and his fellow authors speculate, but the HIV-inhibiting lectin—dubbed BanLec—may also have therapeutic potential.



## Diary Dates

### June

Fri	18	Pot-Luck Lunch	
Wed	23	Evening Discussion with Dr David Cooper	
Thur	24	Psychiatrist Clinic Straight Arrows	
Fri	25	WINZ Clinic	
		Pot-Luck Lunch	
Sun	27	Body Positive AGM	

### July

Fri	2	Pot-Luck Lunch	
Sun	4	Under 35's Group	
Fri	9	Pot-Luck Lunch	
Wed	14	Pot-Luck Dinner	
Fri	16	Pot-Luck Lunch	
Fri	25	Pot-Luck Lunch	
Thur	29	Straight Arrows	
Fri	30	WINZ Clinic	
		Pot-Luck Lunch	

### August

Sun	1	Under 35's Group	
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### September

Mon	20	HIV Treatments Update	
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### November

Sat	6	Queen of the Whole Universe	
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## Under 35's Group

As a younger HIV+ person you may feel an added sense of isolation because of your age.



'Get Connected' is a monthly social group for HIV+ people aged 35 and under, giving younger people an opportunity to connect and socialise with other people around your own age.

Call 09 309 3989 for details or visit [www.bodypositive.org.nz](http://www.bodypositive.org.nz)

## HIV Rapid Testing

The **60-second HIV Rapid Test** is now available at Body Positive House. A simple pin Prick is done, to test the blood with a 99.7% accuracy. Its always better to know your status early, so you can keep healthy, if you become HIV+



Call **0800 HIV LINE** to book a FREE no-hassle Rapid Test

## WINZ Clinic

Remove the anxiety you experience in dealing with WINZ.

Body Positive operates a monthly WINZ Clinic for anyone at our premises with qualified, sensitive, understanding and supportive WINZ staff.

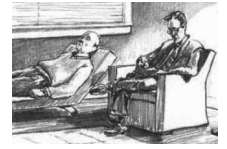


## Psychiatrist

An experienced, qualified psychiatrist operates a clinic at Body Positive on a monthly basis.

*Access is by medical referral*

Contact Body Positive for more information.



## Foot Doctor

A professional podiatrist runs a clinic here at Body Positive House on a monthly basis.



Phone now for an appointment  
09-309 3989

## Friday Pot-Luck Lunch

Members please note Body Positive will be hosting a drop-in lunch every Friday at mid-day. Members are welcomed to bring a pot-luck plate of food.



## 6 on 6

The next 6 on 6 will start soon. This facilitated peer support group is for anyone who has issues around their HIV status. It is particularly useful to recently diagnosed people and is open to both men and women.



If you would like to register your interest in attending or want more information call us on 09-309 3989

## Budgeting Service

Need help with your money? Body Positive has developed a computer software programme that helps you to identify concerns and issues with your personal budget and recommend ways to help.

Contact us in complete confidence.



## Quit Smoking

Apart from adhering to your medication regime, quitting smoking is the next most significant improvement HIV+ people can take to improve their health and life expectancy. Smoking increases the risk of brain, heart and lung diseases, various cancers and opportunistic infections.

If you would like to quit smoking we can help, just call 0800 HIV LINE



## Vitamins

Body Positive has a fantastic Swisse brand Men's and Woman's Multi Vitamins available for members at the low cost of only \$15 for 30 days supply (Usually over \$30!) - Both with the highest quality ingredients that will give you a kick!

Drop by BP House or call **0800 HIV LINE**



## Recycled Medication

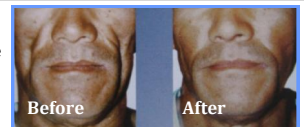
If you have unused medication or no longer need left over medication, please either return it to your prescribing physician or drop it into us or send it to: (We will pass it onto physicians.)

Body Positive Inc.  
PO Box 68-766  
Newton Auckland 1045



## Facial Lipodystrophy Treatment

A fantastic facial filler treatment is available through Body Positive to reverse the effects caused by Lipodystrophy.



Please contact Body Positive on 0800 HIV LINE for more information.

## Monthly Pot-Luck Dinner

Held at 7pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Body Positive House.

Make your favourite dish and come along for a great social shared meal.

Contact Body Positive for further information or just turn up on the night.



## Straight Arrows

A monthly get together for **Heterosexual Men and Women living with HIV** on the last Thursday of each month a Body Positive House from 6.30pm.

Contact Body Positive for further information

