

# HEARTbeat

HEALTH AND VITALITY FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Rebecca's oral allergy syndrome • Finding a partner in your 40s • How to reduce the risk of MRSA • Your medical questions answered

## NEWSbeat

g birth naturally may strengthen the bond between a mother and her baby, according to



dy published in the *Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry*. Researchers say that differences in hormones generated by a child's birth could be the key.

ity TV shows are encouraging people to pay for cosmetic surgery, say psychologists in New Zealand. They think showing only patients who had dramatic results and by 'giving up' operation and recovery time the programme makers vastly overstate viewers' expectations.

ny pregnant women take natural remedies — such as ginseng leaf or cranberry — without telling their doctor or midwife, according to a study published in *BMJ*. Experts say natural remedies can have unwanted effects, and pregnant women should always seek medical advice before taking them.

The secret of getting someone to find you attractive is to let them know how you feel, say researchers from the University of Aberdeen. They found

you tell a prospective partner you really like them, make eye contact or smile at them they'll be more likely to reciprocate your feelings.

ven if you can't hold a tune you could still support the charity's Sing For Your Heart campaign for Heart Research UK. The charity is encouraging people to sing anywhere — in the car, at work, or in shopping malls, for instance — they also suggest that instrumentalists hold a sponsored instrument. For an information pack, contact [info@heartresearch.org.uk](mailto:info@heartresearch.org.uk) or call 0113 234 7474.

## WHO CARES?



# 30p an hour

**J**une Tagg picked up the phone and heard a voice say: 'Hello, June. I've got some news for you. It's good and bad.'

'Oh?' said June, wondering what was coming next.

The voice continued: 'Yes, the good news is that you're now eligible for your pension.'

'And the bad?' asked June warily.

'Well,' said the caller, 'we're stopping your carer's allowance. If you still want it, you won't get your pension.'

June shook her head in despair at the workings of bureaucracy and said: 'But I've paid into that pension all my life.'

It seemed too harsh to be true but sure enough, June soon found out that she was no longer being paid the £50 a week she had been getting for caring for her daughter Susan.

All her life June

## It's a scandal. We'd be lost without their dedication yet we still don't treat carers fairly

had been a coper.

When Susan was diagnosed with learning difficulties, she'd dealt with that. She'd coped when Susan developed diabetes and thyrotoxicosis, a disorder of the thyroid gland.

She had also coped when Susan almost died of kidney failure, and lost most of her sight.

And every day, she coped with the same routine...

Putting Susan on her

dialysis machine.

Getting up in the night to check that the machine was working.

Giving her four injections a day, and 22 pills in the morning and eight at night.

Testing her blood sugar and her blood pressure.

Finding activities and outings to give Susan pleasure.

Accompanying her to the kidney care unit, the chiropodist, the diabetes

clinic and the eye clinic.

After she lost her carer's allowance, June got on with life.

Then one day Susan came back from her day centre very upset. A social worker had tried to persuade her to go into a home.

June complained.

The social worker wasn't sorry, repeating: 'It would be easier for everyone if you'd just put Susan in a home.'

But June didn't want her to go into a home. All she wanted was enough money and support to care for her daughter properly.

When June went into hospital for an operation, social services paid for her other daughter to look after Susan for a couple of weeks. Later that year, June tried to claim some money for respite care, only to be told: 'Your hospital stay was counted as your respite care. You can't have any more.'

June's story shames a



June and Susan

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