

# Men's

Essential

# HEALTH

TOOL KIT



HOW MUCH  
YOU DRINK  
IS YOUR  
CHOICE...

Men's  
Lifestyle  
Exposed



WHAT ALL  
MEN NEED  
TO KNOW.  
How to  
live long,  
live well!

TOP 10 *Man*  
KILLERS



Decades  
of Life

DIY  
TIPS

THE ROAD MAP FOR GOOD HEALTH!

Foundation  
Men's Health



Foundation 49: Men's Health is a not for profit Men's Health promotion initiative of Cabrini, promoting good health and wellbeing in men.

## LIVE LONG, LIVE WELL

### OUR GOAL

To improve the health of Australian Men by increasing awareness of the importance of men's health and wellbeing and providing information and resources to encourage regular health checks.

### CONTACT US

Foundation 49: Men's Health  
183 Wattletree Rd  
Malvern VIC 3144 Australia

T 03 9508 3549

F 03 9508 3501

E [admin@49.com.au](mailto:admin@49.com.au)

W [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)



#### DISCLAIMER

The information in this booklet is intended as a guide only. We encourage all men to have an annual health check up with their GP or health professional – Live Long. Live Well.

All resources are reviewed by recognised experts in their respective field to ensure that health information is accurate and up to date. You can download our resources or order hard copies from the Foundation 49: Men's Health website at [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)

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# Welcome

## WELCOME TO THE NEW FRESH LOOK – FOUNDATION 49: MEN'S HEALTH TOOLKIT BOOKLET.

The men of Australia are becoming more health aware, which is great news. We want all men to live healthy and fulfilled lives and reach their potential.

This booklet is full of great information on topics important to men, encouraging healthier physical, mental and emotional behaviours. The information is current, evidence based and written by health experts. It covers a range of issues that may affect you, your friends, colleagues or family members.

Foundation 49: Men's Health, a Cabrini health promotion initiative, continues to focus on our vision to improve the health and wellbeing of men by raising awareness of men's health issues and encouraging men to have a regular health check. I hope you will find this booklet a useful reference and source of information to guide you through your Decades of Life.

We want to improve the health of men in our community and take a grassroots approach by distributing our information in easy-to-read formats such as our free *Whole New Ball Game* magazine and this popular *Men's Health Toolkit* booklet.

Please take a look at our website [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au) and complete our online health check; find out about our projects and activities and subscribe to our free men's health magazine.

Foundation 49: Men's Health is funded through donations, fundraising activities and philanthropic grants. It is from this support we are able to provide men's health resources and support for men in the community. So please, donate now to enable us continue this great work!

## LIVE LONG, LIVE WELL.



Cheers

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large 'G' followed by several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Associate Professor  
Gary Richardson  
Chairman Foundation 49: Men's Health

# Face the FACTS

Men live on average approximately 5 years less than women

Each hour, more than 4 men die prematurely from potentially preventable illnesses

The suicide rate is approximately 4 times higher for men than women

Almost twice as many Australian men die of skin cancer than women

Every cigarette you smoke takes 11 minutes off your life

75% of people who have diabetes die from cardiovascular disease

A man's life is affected by genetics 25% and modifiable risk factors 75%

Men account for 74% of alcohol-related deaths

Almost one-quarter of all men (24%) have not seen a doctor in the past year

1 in 10 men have not seen a doctor in 5 years

More than 66% of Australian men are overweight and this is predicted to rise to 83% by 2023

72% of men admit to binge drinking – this can lead to long term brain damage, heart and liver disease, high blood pressure and increased risk of cancer

Men in blue collar work (such as trades) are two-and-a-half times more likely to die from liver disease than white collar workers

## WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT MEN'S HEALTH?

### THE STATISTICS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES...

Each hour 4 men in Australia die from potentially preventable health conditions.

### WHAT IS THE REASON?

While biological factors have some impact, the threats to men's health are illnesses linked to lifestyle choices and behaviour.

### RING A BELL?

Every year, too many men die prematurely from heart disease, cancer, accidents, suicide and illness caused by obesity and smoking.

### THE REALITY

Men who eat nutritious food, exercise, undertake regular activity, keep track of their health and get prompt treatment for health problems have a better chance of a healthy and long life.

### GOT A GP?

If not, find one by visiting [www.nhsd.com.au](http://www.nhsd.com.au)

### YOUR TOOLKIT

This men's health 'Tool Kit' booklet is designed to help you make great decisions and take control of your health.

#### Why gamble with your life?

Give yourself the best chance by investing in your health – it's your most important asset.



# TOP 10 *Man* KILLERS

- 1 Ischaemic heart diseases
- 2 Lung cancer
- 3 Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)
- 4 Chronic lower respiratory diseases
- 5 Dementia and Alzheimer disease
- 6 Prostate Cancer
- 7 Blood and lymph cancer
- 8 Colorectal (bowel) cancer
- 9 Diabetes
- 10 Intentional Self-harm

## *Decades of Life*

STEER YOUR WAY THROUGH THE 'DECADES OF LIFE' ROAD MAP FOR GOOD HEALTH.

The next few pages are packed with essential, evidence-based information for your life decade.

Set your path for a life where you avoid the pitfalls and steer your way to good health and fulfilment.

See next page...



# Decades of Life

THE ROAD MAP FOR GOOD HEALTH!

## YOUR 20s:

You have your whole life ahead of you – new found independence, fun and risk taking opportunities as you take control of your life.

Just be aware of the health issues affecting your age group.

Too much grog, smoking and drugs, plus sexually transmitted diseases and accidents are largely self-inflicted.

Be aware of your mental health as young men are vulnerable to emotional issues leading to self harm and suicide.

Find a doctor (GP) you feel comfortable with and have a yearly health check and a chat about any other health concern you may have.

## 20'S HEALTH CHECK

- ✓ *Weight and waist measurement*
- ✓ *Blood pressure*
- ✓ *Examine your testicles for lumps or bumps - feel anything unusual? Get it checked out immediately*
- ✓ *Skin cancer screening - get those moles checked out*
- ✓ *Blood cholesterol and glucose*
- ✓ *Anxiety and depression - talk to your GP about any concerns*
- ✓ *Sexually transmitted diseases*

## DIY TIPS

- Drink moderately – don't binge and if you drink or take drugs and drive you are a b----y Idiot!
- Keep active – maintain a healthy weight and continue to meet with your mates for sport and exercise – try cycling
- Look after your skin – slip slop slap – avoid future skin cancer
- Practise safe sex – use a condom
- Eat nutritious food and plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Talk about any emotional problems or concerns, seek help – your GP or a counsellor will assist you
- Enjoy life – value your relationships and yourself!
- Laugh lots and loud
- Quit the smokes

Your 20s



# Your 30s



## YOUR 30s:

A busy and exciting time, building a career, developing relationships, maybe starting a family, juggling work/family/finances – lots of stressors.

Maintaining your fitness is very important and your lifestyle will impact on your body.

Undertake an annual check-up to check on blood pressure, cholesterol and fat levels.

Eat nutritious food and continue to play sport and maintain activity to keep your weight under control.



- Keep Active – exercise and play sport with your mates, assists with weight control and fitness
- Avoid working too hard – enjoy your family and friends and allow them time to enjoy being with you
- Drink moderately – have three alcohol-free days each week
- Time out – if you have a hobby or interest pursue it, take some time out of your schedule – try cycling
- Laugh lots and loud
- Don't bottle up issues – spill the beans

## 30'S HEALTH CHECK

- ✓ *Weight and waist measurement*
- ✓ *Blood pressure*
- ✓ *Examine your testicles for lumps or bumps – feel anything unusual? Get it checked out immediately*
- ✓ *Skin cancer screening – get those moles checked out*
- ✓ *Blood cholesterol and glucose*
- ✓ *Talk about any emotional concerns anxiety, stress and depression – your GP or a counsellor will assist you*
- ✓ *Sexually transmitted diseases*



## YOUR 40s:

Work can sometimes take over your life – don't let it take your life!

Family and work pressures during this decade can cause great anxiety, so don't neglect your own physical and mental health.

Work/Life balance is important; make time for yourself and the family.

Your body needs more care and attention – have an annual health check.

If there is a family history of bowel or prostate cancer or any other health issue in the family speak to your GP about any suitable screening.



- Keep activity as a high priority – try cycling
- Catch up with mates and enjoy your friends and family
- Smoking? Stop – your GP can help
- Take a break – a weekend away can revive a tired mind and body
- Laugh lots and loud
- Talk about any issues or concerns – seek help, your GP or a counsellor will assist



## 40'S HEALTH CHECK

- ✓ *Weight and waist measurement*
- ✓ *Blood pressure*
- ✓ *Cholesterol and blood glucose test*
- ✓ *Blood test for kidney and liver function*
- ✓ *Examine your testicles for lumps or bumps – feel anything unusual? Get it checked out immediately*
- ✓ *Eye check*
- ✓ *Mental health – talk about any issues or concerns, your GP or a counsellor will assist*
- ✓ *Sexually transmitted diseases*



# Your 50<sub>+</sub>

## YOUR 50s:

This can still be an extremely busy time as you continue to work and support family as they become more independent and move into further education and away from home.

Health risks increase in your 50s especially if you have neglected to take care of your own health in the past.

This is a great time to take action – eat healthy nutritious food, lose weight and start to undertake more activity.

Ageing may start to affect your physical strength, energy and libido and sense of masculinity.

There may be added risks with family history of prostate or bowel cancer discuss this with your GP while having your annual health check.

## DIY TIPS

- Keep fit by exercising at least three times each week for 30 minutes – try a brisk walk or try cycling
- Time Out – enjoy your friends and family
- Drink moderately; are you having at least three-alcohol free days each week?
- Laugh lots and loud
- Talk about any problems or concerns you may have with your friends or family or talk to a GP or counsellor.

## 50'S HEALTH CHECK

- ✓ Weight and waist measurement
- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ Cholesterol and glucose levels
- ✓ Eye Checks
- ✓ Bowel cancer screening
- ✓ Tetanus booster each 10 years
- ✓ Blood tests for kidney and liver function.
- ✓ Mental health – talk about any issues or concerns, your GP or a counsellor will assist
- ✓ Hearing check
- ✓ Sexually transmitted diseases



# Your 60s

## YOUR 60s:

This is a decade of major change – most men have plans for life outside the workforce into the future.

The importance of good health is realised and there can be room for improvement. Good health can provide an opportunity to enjoy retirement, travel and spend time with family.

Have an annual health check and discuss any health issues that may be bothersome with your GP – for example waterworks issues.



- Keep physically and mentally active – play golf, tennis, undertake brisk walking or try cycling. Do Sudoku puzzles, crossword puzzles, play cards with your friends or sign up to learn something new, like learning a language, yoga or woodwork
- Challenge yourself often and keep on learning new things
- Drink moderately; are you having at least three alcohol-free days each week?
- Socialise as much as possible – Laugh lots and loud
- Have a problem? Talk about it – your GP or counsellor will be able to assist you



## 60'S HEALTH CHECK

- ✓ *Weight and waist measurement*
- ✓ *Blood pressure*
- ✓ *Cholesterol and glucose levels*
- ✓ *Eye check - especially for glaucoma and cataracts*
- ✓ *Bowel cancer screening*
- ✓ *Flu and Pneumonia shots*
- ✓ *Blood tests for kidney and liver function*
- ✓ *Check bone density*
- ✓ *Mental health - talk to your GP about any concerns*



## YOUR 70s and beyond:

By now you will know there is a significant link between your health and your lifestyle. Keeping fit and well, both physically and mentally, is essential.

Have an annual health check!

Keep your weight down to a healthy level. Keep your activity levels as high as you are safely able to.

Eat nutritious food with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Many men in their 70s are affected by depression and emotional problems as they lose some independence. Speak to your family, your mates or your GP if you are feeling depressed.

Remember; it's never too late to improve your diet, get fitter, energise and find new interests and friends.

- Keep moving, walk daily and do any other activities that keep you fit and well
- Stay connected – keep in touch with friends and family, socialise and get out and about as much as possible
- Keep your brain active – Do Sudoku puzzles, crossword puzzles, play cards and other games that engage you
- Moderate your alcohol – have three alcohol-free days each week
- Talk it over – don't be embarrassed about any personal issues or problems, talk to your GP or a counsellor for assistance and advice
- Laugh lots and loud

## 70'S AND BEYOND HEALTH CHECK

- ✓ *Weight and waist measurement*
- ✓ *Blood pressure*
- ✓ *Cholesterol and glucose (diabetes)*
- ✓ *Eye checks glaucoma, cataracts etc*
- ✓ *Bowel cancer screen*
- ✓ *Flu and Pneumonia shots*
- ✓ *Blood tests for kidney and liver function and iron levels*
- ✓ *Bone density*
- ✓ *Mental health talk to your GP about any concerns*



# MEN'S

## *Lifestyle*



**THE WAY YOU  
LIVE AFFECTS  
YOUR HEALTH  
& HOW LONG  
YOU LIVE!**

**ONE-QUARTER OF YOUR LIFE  
SPAN IS AFFECTED BY YOUR  
GENETICS AND THE REST (75%)  
BY MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS.  
MOST OF THEM ARE DIRECTLY  
RELATED TO YOUR LIFESTYLE.**



**Moving  
is essential  
for good  
health.**

### **SLEEP**

Sleep is the time for your body to recover from a day's work. Decreased sleep has shown to increase weight gain, sensitivity to pain and affect appetite regulation and immune function. Also, it may increase the severity of age-related chronic disorders (such as diabetes). Get your eight hours worth of restful sleep – it's a good return on investment.

### **EAT**

You are what you eat – the food you put in your body (what and how much of it you eat) affects how it works and can increase or decrease your risk of disease.

### **MOVE**

A car sitting in your shed will get rusty – and your body will start to fail too if it is not used! Moving is essential for good health and can help you avoid much trouble. Move regularly: at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.

### **BALANCE**

We all get caught up in life – often work takes up more time than is good for you. Make sure you balance your work with your hobbies, friends, family and rest. It will leave you happier and better equipped for life.

### **LOVE**

Relationships – be it friends, family, or acquaintances – are a valuable asset, especially for men. Studies have shown social interaction to decrease with age and men with more social connections to have a happier, healthier life.

# YOUR **BRAIN** *Matters*

Brains are an extraordinary and fascinating organ and until recently were thought to be physiologically static. However, research has uncovered the fact that the brain is in fact plastic – which means it continually changes and grows according to the amount of stimulation.

## **YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR BRAIN FIT, WHICH REQUIRES SOME EFFORT.**

Importantly, scientific research suggests that living a brain-healthy life, particularly during your 40s and 50s, may help to reduce the risk of developing dementia later in life. Challenging the brain with new activities helps to build new brain cells and strengthen connections between them.

When we learn new things, our brains fire off new neural pathways in response. Try doing things that are unfamiliar, for example Sudoku puzzles or crosswords, learn to dance or try learning a foreign language. Alternatively, sign up to brain training activities online, new and different activities that reinvigorate your brain.

Being socially and physically active is associated with reduced cognitive decline and the risk of developing dementia. This includes going to clubs, visiting friends or being visited, playing cards and undertaking community or volunteer work. Loneliness (perceived isolation) was associated with more than double the risk of developing dementia.

Eating healthy nutritious food and participating in physical activity is important for both your body and brain and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and cerebrovascular disease. These conditions are all associated with increased risk and severity of cognitive decline and dementia.

Stress is also believed to have a negative effect on the brain as the stress hormone cortisol can damage and kill cells in the hippocampus (the brain area responsible for your episodic memory) and there is robust evidence that chronic stress causes premature brain ageing.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

[www.brainfacts.org](http://www.brainfacts.org)

[www.fightdementia.org.au](http://www.fightdementia.org.au)





# FUEL FOR LIFE!



**: THE WORLD HEALTH  
: ORGANIZATION (WHO)  
: DEFINES OVERWEIGHT  
: AND OBESITY AS  
: 'ABNORMAL OR  
: EXCESSIVE FAT  
: ACCUMULATION  
: THAT MAY  
: IMPAIR HEALTH.'**

## **TOP CAUSE**

The fundamental cause of obesity and overweight is an energy imbalance between calories consumed and calories expended.

This is due to:

- increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat and sugar
- decrease in physical inactivity due to the sedentary nature of many forms of work, changing modes of transportation and increasing urbanisation



## TOP TIPS FOR GOOD HEALTH

### TOP FUEL

Most Australians eat about half the recommended quantity of vegetables.

You need five to six serves of vegetables a day and two serves of fruit in a variety of colours to ensure you receive all essential nutrients.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A SERVE?

One serve is approximately 75 grams or:

- Half a cup cooked green or orange veg (e.g. broccoli, spinach, carrots, pumpkin)
- Half a cup cooked dried or canned beans, peas or lentils
- One cup of uncooked leafy raw salad vegetables
- Half a medium potato or sweet potato
- One medium tomato
- One medium banana, apple or orange
- Two small kiwi fruit, plums or apricots
- One cup diced or canned fruit (no added sugar)

- To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs
- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day:
  - 1 Vegetables of different types and colours, legumes/beans, pulses and fruit
  - 2 Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties such as bread, cereal, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
  - 3 Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds
  - 4 Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat
  - 5 Drink plenty of water
- Limit intake of processed foods containing fats, added salt, added sugars and alcohol
- Undertake physical activity every day

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)  
[www.shapeup.gov.au](http://www.shapeup.gov.au)

# MOVE *for Life!*

## **REGULAR HEALTH CHECKS AND A NUTRITIOUS DIET ARE IMPORTANT**

Equally important is activity. Exercise can alleviate stress and build strong muscles and bones, as well as reduce your risk of heart attack, stroke and some cancers and improve blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar levels and brain function. Moving will improve your energy, sleep and your looks all at the same time!

## **: BE ACTIVE MOST : DAYS OF THE WEEK!**

No effort is too small – start with simple options and you will have more energy and motivation to add more activity as you go – change one thing at a time – and more will follow.

Start off by changing your daily habits:

- Break up long periods of sitting – stand and stretch and go for a walk
- Take the stairs
- Turn off the TV and go for a brisk walk – you'll get to know your neighbourhood too
- Play with the kids or walk to the park and kick the footy
- Exercise with mates
- Get off public transport a couple of stops early or park your car further away
- Walk or cycle to work -no need to rush – enjoy the scenery
- Do some work around the house, such as gardening or DIY work
- Swim, dance, walk the dog

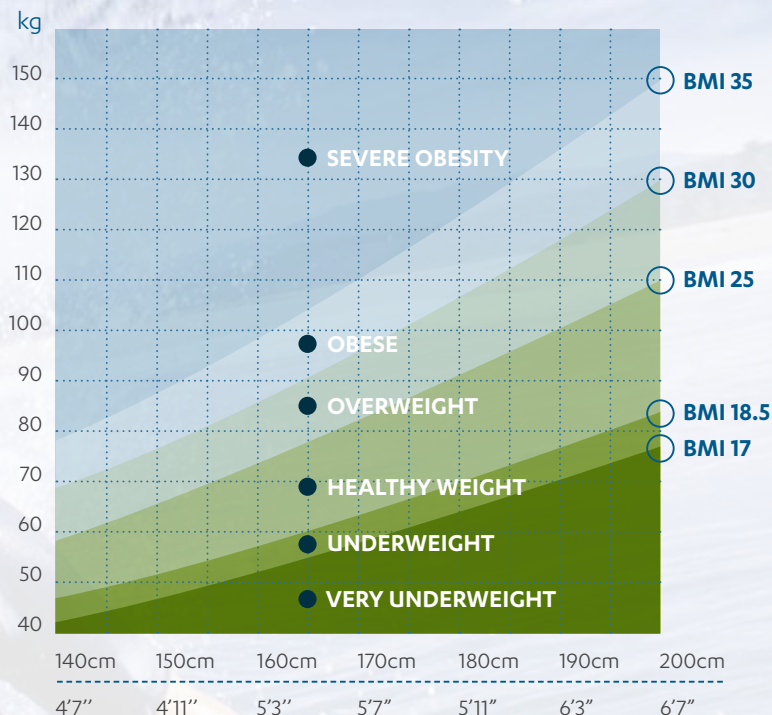
Remember – it is important to stretch your muscles after exercise to avoid injuries!



## AIM FOR A HEALTHY WEIGHT: BMI CHART FOR ADULTS

$$\text{BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)} = \frac{\text{WEIGHT (kg)}}{\text{HEIGHT}^2 \text{ (metres)}}$$

Weight in kilograms in light clothing without shoes



Height in centimetres (feet and inches) without shoes

### WHERE ARE YOU AT?

Check your waist with a tape measure – ideally for blokes 94cm (or less) around the belly button. If yours is over 103cm you are entering a dangerous zone...!

**MORE INFORMATION:**  
[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)  
[www.shapeup.gov.au](http://www.shapeup.gov.au)

# THE VICE *of Life* DRUGS & ALCOHOL



**IN 2013, 15% OF AUSTRALIANS USED AN ILLICIT DRUG (INCLUDING USING A PHARMACEUTICAL DRUG FOR NON-MEDICAL PURPOSES) IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS.**

## **MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION**

When deciding to take drugs, know the facts about the drug you choose and understand the risks. Drugs can appear initially to have positive effects – lifting your mood, relaxing you or even giving you more energy. However, they can also have negative impacts on your mental and physical health, your relationships and your life in general. Some, such as ice (or methamphetamine), are highly addictive.

## **STAY SAFE**

Don't drive if you have been using alcohol or other drugs and remember that even if you feel OK to drive, you are still likely to be affected and unsafe on the roads.

The only way to test negative on a drug test – other than not taking drugs – is to make sure your body has eliminated all of the drugs. This takes at least 24 to 48 hours and even if you are not drunk or stoned anymore combinations including alcohol may take even longer to be eliminated.

Alcohol and other drugs can continue to affect you the next day including fatigue, hangovers and 'coming down' which affects your ability to drive.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
Australian Drug Foundation  
1300 858 584  
[www.adf.org.au](http://www.adf.org.au)







# ALCOHOL & you

## • HOW MUCH • YOU DRINK • IS YOUR • CHOICE...

New national guidelines for alcohol consumption have been developed based on current and best available scientific research and evidence.

A standard drink contains 10 grams of pure alcohol.

Alcohol can affect your liver or cause brain damage, heart disease, high blood pressure and increase the risk of many cancers.

## WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT?

- Drink no more than two standard drinks on any day, in order to reduce your risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury over your lifetime
- Drink no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion, in order to reduce the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion

## TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK TO YOUR HEALTH WHEN DRINKING

- Set limits for yourself and stick to them
- Start with non-alcoholic drinks and alternate with alcoholic drinks
- Drink slowly
- Try drinks with a lower alcohol content
- Eat before or while you are drinking
- If you participate in rounds of drinks include some non-alcoholic ones

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.alcohol.gov.au](http://www.alcohol.gov.au)

# BUTT OUT

## *& buzz into life*

Most of us know we shouldn't smoke and know the risks involved – but how will you feel when you stop? What are the benefits?

As soon as you stop smoking your body begins to repair itself...

### **WITHIN 6 HOURS**

- Your heart rate slows and your blood pressure decreases

### **WITHIN 1 DAY**

- Almost all of the nicotine is out of your bloodstream
- The level of carbon monoxide in your blood has dropped and oxygen can more easily reach your heart and muscles
- Your fingertips become warmer and your hands steadier

### **WITHIN 1 WEEK**

- Your sense of taste and smell may improve
- Your lungs' natural cleaning system starts to recover and removes mucus, tar and dust from your lungs (also helped by exercise)
- You have higher blood levels of protective antioxidants such as vitamin C

### **AFTER 1 YEAR**

- Your lungs are now healthier and you'll be breathing easier than if you'd kept smoking

**Quit now because you owe it to yourself and your loved ones – buzz into life now!**

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

[www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au)

[www.quitnow.gov.au](http://www.quitnow.gov.au)

Quitline ph 13 78 48



# ARE YOU *Safe at work?*

## **: EVERYONE HAS A ROLE IN : WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY.**

**A SAFE WORKPLACE IS MORE EASILY ACHIEVED WHEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND WORK TOGETHER TO FIND SOLUTIONS.**

As an employer, talking to your workers about safety is a legal requirement and also smart management.

Workers can make a significant contribution to improving workplace health and safety by helping identify issues in the workplace and building a strong commitment to health and safety.

Effective consultation can lead to a stronger commitment to decisions because everyone's involved in reaching them. This encourages more openness, respect and trust because employers and employees have a better understanding of each other's points of view.

All workers have a duty of care to ensure that they work in a manner that is not harmful to their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.

Following safety policies and procedures, attending OHS training, adhering to advice you have been given and using safety equipment supplied by your employer are all no-brainers.

Workplace bullying is characterised by persistent and repeated negative behaviour directed at an employee that creates a risk to health and safety.

OHS law places duties on employers to eliminate, so far as is reasonably practicable, risks to the health and safety of their employees. It places duties on employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at a workplace.

To assist employers with a consistent approach, WorkSafe Victoria recommends developing and implementing a set procedure for responding to workplace bullying.

### **MORE INFORMATION**

WorkSafe Victoria  
[www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)  
1800 136 089

Fair Work Commission  
[www.fwc.gov.au](http://www.fwc.gov.au)  
1300 799 675

### **BULLYING**

Bullying behaviour may involve a variety of actions, including;

- aggressive or intimidating behaviour
- belittling or humiliating comments or actions
- practical jokes and teasing
- deliberate exclusion from work-related events
- pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner
- unreasonable work expectations

: DIABETES  
: AFFECTS  
: 1 IN 20  
: AUSTRALIAN  
: MEN (OR 5 %).

# DIABETES

## AVOID THE *Risk*

About 280 adults develop diabetes every day, yet research shows that most Australians think diabetes is not a serious illness.

**DIABETES IS A SERIOUS CHRONIC DISEASE, CURRENTLY AFFECTING AN ESTIMATED 1.7 MILLION AUSTRALIANS.**

Often there are no symptoms but diabetes can have devastating consequences. Heart attacks, strokes, trouble with the arteries in the legs, kidney disease, blindness and nerve issues in the feet are all common complications. Early diagnosis can prevent a lot of these problems.

Diabetes is the name given to a group of conditions that occurs when the level of glucose in the blood becomes higher than normal. Insulin is a hormone that moves glucose from your blood stream, into the cells of your body where it is used for energy. When you have diabetes, the body either can't make enough insulin or the insulin that is being made does not get transported properly. This causes your blood glucose level to become too high.

There are two main types of diabetes – type 1 and type 2. At this stage there is no known cure for either type of diabetes, although diabetes can be well managed.

Get checked once a year as you get older (40+) particularly if you are overweight, have high blood pressure or cholesterol or if there is a family history of diabetes.

Keeping active, eating healthy and nutritious fresh food and getting rid of the gut will help prevent diabetes.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au)

### BLINDNESS

**Risk:** Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness.

### Effective treatment:

Reduces deterioration of vision by more than a third.

### STROKE

**Risk:** Up to four times as likely.

### Effective treatment:

Reduces strokes by more than a third.

### HEART ATTACK

**Risk:** Three times as likely and heart disease is up to four times as likely.

### Effective treatment:

more than halves the risk of heart failure.

### KIDNEY FAILURE

**Risk:** Up to four times as likely.

### Effective treatment:

Reduces risk of kidney failure by more than a third.

### AMPUTATION

**Risk:** The leading cause of non-traumatic lower limb amputations.

## FACTS ABOUT DIABETES

- Over 100,000 Australian adults develop diabetes each year
- About 1.1 million Australians are currently diagnosed with diabetes
- With undiagnosed Australians included, it is estimated that about 1.5 million people in Australia have diabetes
- An estimated 2 to 3 million Australians have pre-diabetes and are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes

### DIABETES

A chronic disease, where blood sugar is too high either because insulin is not produced or sufficient.

### SYMPTOMS

Tiredness, increased thirst, frequent urination, blurred vision.

### COMPLICATIONS

Serious complications can result from elevated blood glucose, some of which are largely preventable, and can be delayed with early and effective treatment.

**EFFECTIVE TREATMENT CAN REDUCE COSTLY DIABETES COMPLICATIONS BY APPROXIMATELY 50%**



... **THERE ARE MORE  
... THAN 100 DIFFERENT  
... FORMS OF ARTHRITIS  
... AND IT CAN AFFECT  
... PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.**

# ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a condition that affects the joints. The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis. Other types include rheumatoid arthritis, gout and ankylosing spondylitis.

## **DIFFERENT KINDS OF ARTHRITIS**

**Osteoarthritis (OA)** mainly occurs in people 45 years and older. The risk of this condition increases with age. It most commonly affects the knees, hips and hands but can also affect the feet and the shoulders. Hand osteoarthritis often runs in families while being overweight and/or having a previous injury puts people at risk of knee and hip osteoarthritis.

Treatment varies depending on the joint affected and how severe it is. It can usually be managed with simple painkillers, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents and exercise. In people who are overweight, weight loss can improve symptoms and slow progression of the arthritis. Joint replacement may be needed for severe symptoms.

**Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)** can occur at any age and is more common among women. It is an autoimmune disease that causes pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints, often worse in the morning. Most commonly it is symmetrical (affecting the same joints on both sides). If untreated, the disease can cause damage to the joints therefore early diagnosis is crucial.



While there is no cure, treatments have improved remarkably over the past 20 years and early treatment can prevent or limit joint damage.

**Gout** occurs in middle-aged men and older people who take diuretic tablets (known as water pills). Gout most commonly occurs as a sudden attack in a single joint, often the big toe, which becomes red, swollen and extremely painful.

Gout is caused by a build-up of a waste product, uric acid, which forms crystals in joints. Highly effective treatment is available to treat both the acute attack and to prevent further attacks.

**Ankylosing spondylitis (AS)** is a condition that mainly affects the spine and usually affects young adults (15 to 45 years). Pain and stiffness in the back and buttocks are generally worse after rest and relieved by exercise. It is more likely if you have a family history and the HLA-B27 gene is associated with the condition.

Regular exercise is helpful as are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents and if needed, the newer biologic, disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARD)s are highly effective in controlling the symptoms.

## TIPS FOR MANAGING ARTHRITIS

- Stay active
- Learn ways to manage the pain
- Keep a healthy weight and eat nutritious food
- Protect your joints
- Work closely with your healthcare team
- Join a peer support group

## LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

Living with arthritis can differ from person to person and symptoms can vary from day to day. Treatment and management options vary with the type of arthritis, its severity and the parts of the body affected.

Learning to manage the condition is extremely important. A rheumatologist can diagnose arthritis and help you to decide upon the right treatment.

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au)  
[www.rheumatology.org.au](http://www.rheumatology.org.au)

# BONE HEALTH & *Sunshine*



**• MORE THAN 1 IN 3  
• MEN 60 YEARS AND  
• OLDER WILL FRACTURE  
• (BREAK) A BONE DUE  
• TO OSTEOPOROSIS.**

## **OSTEOPOROSIS**

Osteoporosis means ‘porous bones’. It is a progressive bone disease characterised by a decrease in bone mass and density and an increased risk of fracture. Osteoporosis fractures can be reduced with lifestyle changes and, for people who have previous osteoporosis related fractures, medications. Lifestyle changes include a nutritious diet with foods rich in calcium, regular exercise and preventing falls.

A healthy, calcium-rich diet and weight bearing exercise throughout life can help prevent osteoporosis and minimise the risk for osteoarthritis.

Food sources high in easily absorbable calcium include:

- Dairy foods
- Broccoli, cucumber, celery, chickpeas
- Nuts and seeds

## **VITAMIN D**

Vitamin D is produced when skin is exposed to ultraviolet B (UVB) light from the sun. It regulates the body’s calcium metabolism, so sufficient vitamin D is crucial. Some Aussies are deficient in this important vitamin, but you can do your bit to keep levels up:

- Eat foods high in vitamin D such as oily fish, liver, mushrooms, eggs, pumpkin seeds and dairy products
- Get some sun on your skin daily (of course responsibly)
- Take a supplement if needed as directed by your health practitioner – they are usually combined with calcium

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.osteoporosis.org.au](http://www.osteoporosis.org.au)  
[www.cancer.org.au/vitd](http://www.cancer.org.au/vitd)

# ARE YOU *Sunsmart?*

**: AUSTRALIA  
: HAS ONE OF  
: THE HIGHEST  
: RATES OF SKIN  
: CANCER IN  
: THE WORLD.**

**AT LEAST 2 IN 3 AUSTRALIANS  
WILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH SKIN  
CANCER BY THE AGE OF 70.**

Most skin cancers are caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun – but did you know that skin can burn in as little as 15 minutes in summer? Men have almost double the incidence because they don't protect themselves from the sun.

Construction workers and labourers can be exposed to ten times the recommended UV levels.

The good news is that skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer in Australia – more than 95 % of skin cancers can be successfully treated if found early.

## **MELANOMA**

Melanoma is the most deadly skin cancer and commonly found on the upper torso.

Be alert to changes on your skin and see your doctor if you find a new spot or lump, an unusual freckle, mole, a sore that does not heal, changes colour or has irregular borders. So, whether you are working, gardening or just hanging out, think before you take your shirt off.



### **SLIP ON PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

Use clothing to cover as much skin as possible.



### **SLOP ON SPF 30 OR HIGHER SUNSCREEN**

Make sure it's broad spectrum and water resistant.



### **SLAP ON A HAT**

Wear a broad brimmed hat that covers your face, head, neck and ears.



### **SEEK SHADE**

Make use of trees or built shade or bring your own.



### **SLIDE ON SOME SUNGLASSES**

Close-fitting wrap-around styles offer the best protection.

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

[www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)

[www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)

or ph 13 11 20

# BOWEL CANCER LETS GET TO THE *bottom of it*



**• BOWEL CANCER  
• IS PREVENTABLE,  
• TREATABLE AND  
• BEATABLE.**

## FACTS

- Australia has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world
- Bowel cancer is Australia's second biggest cancer killer after lung cancer
- There are around 15,000 cases of bowel cancer diagnosed in Australia each year
- Of the 286 cases diagnosed each week, 77 people will die from the disease
- If caught early enough, 90% of cases can be treated successfully
- 1 in 12 people will develop bowel cancer by the time they are 85 years of age

## ARE YOU AT RISK?

Certain factors are known to increase your chance of developing bowel cancer

- Being aged 50 years or over
- A personal or family history of bowel cancer or certain hereditary bowel conditions
- A history of bowel polyps or inflammatory bowel diseases
- Obesity, lack of exercise, lack of dietary fibre, a high intake of processed foods, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption

## SYMPTOMS

Bowel cancer can develop without any obvious warning signs or symptoms

Look out for:

- A persistent change in bowel habit
- Bleeding from the bottom or blood in the poo
- Abdominal pain, constipation or weight loss
- Unexplained tiredness or weight loss

## REDUCE YOUR RISK

Stay physically active, maintain a healthy weight, eat plenty of vegetables and fruit, cut back on processed meats and salami, quit smoking and moderate your drinking (alcohol).

## PREVENTION

Regular bowel screening is the key to preventing bowel cancer, using screening tools such as faecal occult blood (FOB) testing and colonoscopy.



## MORE INFORMATION

[www.letsbeatbowelcancer.com](http://www.letsbeatbowelcancer.com)  
[www.bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org)



# THE *Taboo issue!*

Men and women of all ages and backgrounds experience bladder and bowel control problems. Although it is a common complaint – experienced by 1 in 4 Australians, 15 years and older – incontinence is not normal or a natural part of ageing.

Some health conditions and life events put you at risk of developing incontinence. For men, these include obesity, constipation, diabetes, a chronic cough, heart conditions and some medications. An enlarged prostate (BPH) and prostate surgery are also common causes for urinary incontinence in men.

So, how do you know if you might have a bladder or bowel control problem? It is a good idea to consult a health professional if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- trouble starting the flow of urine
- slow urine stream once started
- the need to pass urine more often
- leaking between visits to the toilet
- an urgent need to pass urine
- burning sensation or pain when passing urine or blood in urine
- feeling that the bladder is not fully empty after going to the toilet
- inability to hold in bowel motions (poo)
- infrequent (less than three times a week) or hard bowel motions

So, what can you do to prevent, cure or better manage these issues?

Adopting the following daily healthy habits can help to improve bladder and bowel health:

**Eat well:** consume at least 30 grams of fibre each day (such as that found in leafy green vegetables)

**Drink well:** limit caffeine, alcohol and fizzy drinks and consume one-and-a-half to two litres of fluid each day unless advised otherwise by your doctor – fluid includes water, fruit juice, tea, coffee, milk, soup, jellies and icecream

**Exercise regularly:** aim to exercise for 30 minutes each day

**Keep your pelvic floor toned:** do pelvic floor exercises and make sure your fitness routine includes pelvic floor safe exercises (learn more at [www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au](http://www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au))

**Practise good toilet habits:** go when you need to and completely empty your bladder and bowel each time.

## MORE INFORMATION

For free information and resources  
phone the National Continence  
Helpline 1800 33 00 66  
[www.continence.org.au/men](http://www.continence.org.au/men)



# PROSTATE HEALTH

# WICKED WALNUT!



## **CANCER AND BENIGN ENLARGEMENT OF THE PROSTATE**

The prostate gland is the size of a walnut and sits just below the bladder, surrounding the urethra – the tube carrying urine from the bladder.

The prostate's function is to make seminal fluid to transport sperm during ejaculation. Unfortunately, it's very common for things to go wrong in the prostate, especially in men over 50.

Prostate cancer is the second highest cause of cancer death in Australian men, but low grade forms of the disease can be relatively harmless.

When prostate cancer is confined to the prostate, there are usually no symptoms, so to help check your risk of prostate cancer, you can get a simple blood test called the PSA. Because the prostate can be felt via the rectum, a brief rectal examination is often performed as well.

**: IF YOU'RE AGED  
: BETWEEN 50 AND 70,  
: AND WANT TO KNOW  
: YOUR RISK OF HAVING  
: PROSTATE CANCER,  
: TALK TO YOUR GP  
: ABOUT A PSA TEST.**

If prostate cancer is found early, it's much more likely to be curable. And remember that many prostate cancers don't even need treatment, but can be safely monitored.

At the same time of life as prostate cancer risk increases, your prostate can also undergo benign enlargement – also very common. Benign enlargement is an entirely separate process from cancer and does not turn into cancer. But it can cause troublesome symptoms like urgency to urinate, getting up to urinate at night, and a weak flow. If these symptoms are bothering you, you should see your GP, as there is a range of highly effective treatments available.

# Treatment

## OF PROSTATE CANCER

A wide range of treatment options are available for prostate cancer. The form of treatment depends upon the aggressiveness and extent of the disease, as well as the general health and life expectancy of each patient. Many prostate cancers don't need treatment at all but can be safely monitored using active surveillance.

### : ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS : IS VITAL IN HELPING : TO DECIDE THE : MOST APPROPRIATE : TREATMENT.

The initial diagnosis is made by needle biopsy (tissue sample) of the prostate. Biopsy can be performed via the rectum (transrectal) or via the nearby skin (transperineal). An MRI scan of the prostate may also help detect prostate cancer but its exact role in diagnosis is not yet clear.

If an aggressive cancer is found, scans are performed to see if it has spread beyond the prostate (staging). These include a bone scan and a CT of the abdomen. These scans are usually not necessary if only low-grade cancer is found.

If cancer is confined to the prostate (localised), the treatment options are surgical removal (radical prostatectomy) or radiotherapy. If it is only low-grade disease, active surveillance is usually the most appropriate option, where the cancer is closely watched and treated only if there are signs of disease progression.

Surgery is performed either using an open or keyhole (laparoscopic) approach. Keyhole prostatectomy often includes use of a surgical robotic device. Radiotherapy is delivered either from outside (external beam) or inside (brachytherapy) the body. These treatments for localised disease can affect quality of life by interfering with the function of erections, the bladder or bowel.

If prostate cancer has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic), currently it is typically not curable. The standard treatment to help control the disease is hormone therapy, which usually involves injections every few months. If hormone therapy fails, chemotherapy and other newer agents can still be used to prolong and improve quality of life.

There are often clinical trials available for patients with metastatic disease, testing out the latest treatments. Ask your specialist to see if you are eligible.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)  
[www.prostate.org.au](http://www.prostate.org.au)

# MALE INFERTILITY

## THE *Nuts & Bolts*

**THIS IS A COMMON PROBLEM AFFECTING AROUND 1 IN 5 INFERTILE COUPLES.**

The testicles (testes) are important for two main reasons:

- 1 The production of sperm
- 2 The production of the male sex hormone testosterone

In male infertility, the production and transport of the sperm is compromised and tests will be undertaken to find the cause.

Problems are categorised into:

- **Sperm production problems**, that is, low numbers of sperm or sperm that do not work properly
- **Blockage of the transportation process**, that is, blockages in the tubes leading the sperm away
- **Antibodies** in the semen or blood, which decrease sperm movement and prevent the sperm attaching to the egg
- **Sexual intercourse difficulties** such as erection or ejaculation problems
- **Hormonal** issues where hormones are not produced at the correct level to encourage sperm development (this is rare)



After the diagnosis is made and the cause of the infertility treated, a couple can try to achieve a natural pregnancy. In some cases, the couple may be offered assistance from reproductive technologies.

Male infertility is completely untreatable when there is no sperm in the semen and options for couples may include donor insemination, adoption or foster parenting.

### **CAN INFERTILITY BE PREVENTED?**

Scientific research suggests that quitting smoking, alcohol, avoiding anabolic steroids, sexually transmitted diseases and harmful chemicals is sensible advice. Eating healthy and nutritious food and undertaking adequate exercise helps to maintain a healthy body.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)  
or ph 1300 303 878



# THE NUT *Cracker*

## TESTICULAR CANCER

Testicular cancer occurs in the testicles (testes) and usually appears or is felt as a painless lump or swelling.

**: ALTHOUGH IT IS  
: A RARE CANCER,  
: APPROXIMATELY  
: 700 AUSTRALIAN  
: MEN IN THE 18 TO  
: 39 YEAR AGE GROUP  
: ARE DIAGNOSED  
: EACH YEAR.**

If detected and treated early, it has a good cure rate of around 95%.

**YOUNG MEN SHOULD  
REGULARLY EXAMINE  
THEIR TESTES FOR ANY  
LUMPS OR CHANGES IN THE  
FEEL AND CONSISTENCY.**

A good time is in a warm shower when the skin of the scrotum relaxes and it is easy to become familiar with the size of each testicle, which should be firm and smooth.

## WHAT IF I FIND A LUMP?

A man who notices or feels a lump in the testis should immediately see his GP who will refer him to an urologist. This is a specialist surgeon who treats problems in the genital and urinary tracts.

## FERTILITY

Cancer in a single testis may not affect fertility, as the remaining testis will continue to function normally. It is a good idea to speak to your doctor about fertility before the treatment commences. It is recommended that men produce some semen samples for sperm banking, which is frozen and stored for future use if required.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
Andrology Australia  
[www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)  
or ph 1300 303 878

# SEXUAL *Health*

Sexual problems and erectile dysfunction (ED, also known as impotence) are more common than most men like to admit. Erectile dysfunction is when a man is unable to get and/or keep an erection that allows sexual activity with penetration.

## • ABOUT 1 IN 3 • AUSTRALIAN MEN • OVER 40 HAVE • PROBLEMS GETTING • OR MAINTAINING • AN ERECTION.

It is common to have an occasional episode of ED, but persistent ED is an important medical symptom. Apart from the personal and relationship effects, ED may be a pointer to serious medical problems, such as diabetes and heart disease. Factors such as smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol are implicated in causing ED and heart disease.

Lots of other conditions may cause ED, including mental health disorders, stress, depression and anxiety. Men who develop persistent ED should see their family doctor to have this checked out and see if there is a treatable cause. The longer erectile dysfunction is left untreated, the greater the effect on your relationship.

There are treatments that will assist erections to happen and allow sexual activity to take place. There are also many companies willing to take advantage of men with ED, so stick with your GP who is best placed to help you work through your concerns.

Other sexual problems like early ejaculation, diminished interest in sex and an inability to come to climax are all areas that your doctor will be able to provide advice and assistance. Doctors are trained to deal with these issues – get help to sort it out.

The longer any of these problems go on, the more distressing it is for you and your partner and the harder it becomes to treat.

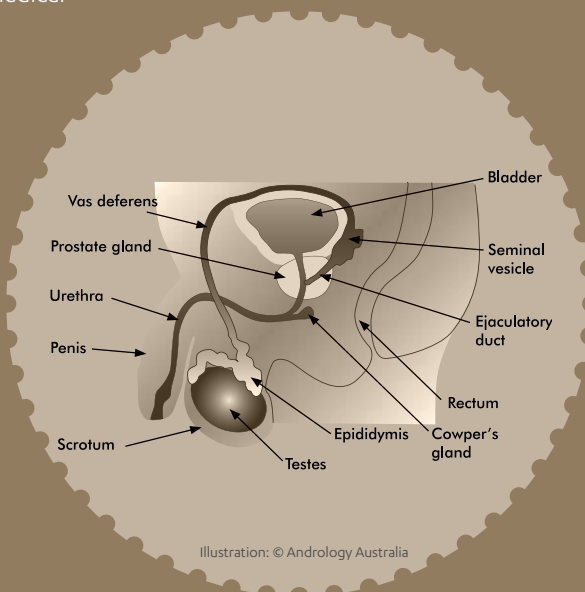


Illustration: © Andrology Australia



# SAFE *Sex*

A healthy sex life can make you feel good and improve your relationship. However, sexually transmissible infections are not good and are predominately contracted through unsafe sexual practices and can show no symptoms. If left untreated, STIs can have serious long-term consequences.

Unprotected sex and genital contact can put you at risk. It's not only HIV-AIDS or unwanted pregnancies you need to worry about, but common sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts and gonorrhoea.

Condoms don't eliminate the risks but they can drastically reduce them. This advice is important at all ages – STDs have greatly increased among older men recently. If you are sexually active with more than one person, have regular check-ups. Take care of yourself and your sexual partner.

#### MORE INFORMATION

**[www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)**  
has lots of information about men's sexual and reproductive health.

#### SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRES:

Melbourne sexual health centre  
**[www.mshc.org.au](http://www.mshc.org.au)**

Sydney sexual health centre

**[www.sshc.org.au](http://www.sshc.org.au)**

or find one via **[www.nhsd.com.au](http://www.nhsd.com.au)**

# BLOOD Cancers

**: EVERY DAY, 31 PEOPLE  
: IN AUSTRALIA ARE  
: DIAGNOSED WITH  
: BLOOD CANCERS.  
: THEY AFFECT MEN  
: AND WOMEN IN  
: EQUAL NUMBERS.**

Blood cancers are a group of diseases characterised by uncontrolled growth of abnormal blood cells produced in the bone marrow. They consist of leukaemias, lymphomas, multiple myeloma, myeloproliferative disorder, and myelodysplastic syndrome.

Symptoms of blood cancers include increased tiredness, weight loss, fevers, night sweats, bruising and bleeding, recurrent infections, shortness of breath and bone pain.

## **DIFFERENT KINDS OF BLOOD CANCERS**

**Leukaemia** starts in the bone marrow where developing blood cells, usually white cells, undergo a malignant change. The cells multiply in an uncontrolled way and crowd the marrow, affecting the body's ability to make normal blood cells.

**Lymphomas** are a type of blood cancer that affects the lymphatic system, which consists of lymph glands, liver, spleen, and bone marrow. There are many types of lymphoma, some very slow growing and others growing rapidly.

**Multiple Myeloma** is a cancer of the bone marrow. As it grows, it affects bone marrow function, damages the bones and causes increased risk of infection.

**Myeloproliferative disorders** are a group of diseases where the bone marrow overproduces one or more types of blood cells (red, white or platelets). Treatment depends on the type of excessive blood cell.

**Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS)** are a group of diseases that affect normal blood cell production in the bone marrow. It normally presents with anaemia and many people require regular blood transfusions.

## **TREATMENT**

Treatment for a blood cancer or a related blood disorder depends on several factors, including the type of disease, how fast it is growing, whether it has spread and a person's general health. Treatments can range from monitoring, to chemotherapy, radiotherapy, stem cell therapy, biological treatments, blood cell replacement and bone marrow transplantation.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.cancercouncil.org](http://www.cancercouncil.org)  
[www.leukaemia.org.au](http://www.leukaemia.org.au)

# THE HEART & CIRCULATION

## *Biological Plumbing*

### • **A MAN DIES • OF A HEART • ATTACK EVERY • 2 HOURS.**

Despite significant improvements in detection and treatment, heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Australian men.

#### **4 AUSTRALIAN MEN HAVE A HEART ATTACK EVERY HOUR.**

The human circulation functions as a series of connected pipes with the heart as the central pump. The heart and blood vessels are essential to transport blood containing oxygen and nutrients to tissues while simultaneously removing waste products.

Our arteries can narrow overtime, reducing the amount of blood flow through them. The narrowing of the arteries is typically due to cholesterol deposits, which form over many years.

Restriction in the flow of blood to the heart muscle itself may result in chest pain or shortness of breath, particularly with activity. This is because the heart has to work harder on exertion, so what the body may be able to cope with at rest is not possible with effort. This chest pain with effort is called angina and may be the only sign you get of an impending heart attack.

A heart attack is a sudden blockage of an artery that supplies the heart itself. This causes pain, as the muscle begins to die, and can also lead to fatal heart rhythm problems. Rapid recognition of the early signs of a heart attack can lead to earlier treatment or even prevent it from occurring, if you are worried, see your GP. Erection difficulties can also be a sign of heart disease, so if this is a problem, talk to your GP.

The good news is you can make changes that will help to keep your heart healthy. There are risk factors that influence the chance of a heart attack occurring, see the tips below for what you can do to reduce your risk.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
[www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)

#### **TIPS FOR HEART HEALTH**

- Exercise is good for the body and good for the mind – being active is essential for a healthy heart
- Avoid being overweight – see your GP to calculate your body mass index if you are unsure
- Eating fresh food with plenty of fruit and vegetables is the way to go
- Have your blood pressure checked often
- If you smoke – quit (see page 20)
- Get assistance for depression and anxiety (see page 38)

# DEPRESSION & ANXIETY *Common & treatable*

**IN GENERAL, MEN TEND TO PUT OFF GETTING ANY KIND OF ASSISTANCE BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE TOUGH, SELF RELIANT, ABLE TO MANAGE PAIN AND TAKE CHARGE OF SITUATIONS.**

This can make it hard for men to acknowledge they have any health problem, let alone one which affects their social and emotional wellbeing.

It is important to remember that anxiety and depression are illnesses, not weaknesses and effective treatments are available.

**: ON AVERAGE 1 IN  
: 8 MEN WILL HAVE  
: DEPRESSION AND  
: 1 IN 5 MEN WILL  
: EXPERIENCE ANXIETY  
: AT SOME STAGE IN  
: THEIR LIVES.**

Factors that can contribute to depression and anxiety in men include physical health problems, relationship problems, employment problems, social isolation, a significant change in living arrangements (e.g. separation and divorce), a partner's pregnancy and birth of a baby.

## **DEPRESSION**

Depression is a serious and common condition that does not get better by itself. On average 1 in 8 men will have depression at some stage in their lives.



## SUICIDE

Untreated depression is a high risk factor for suicide. In Australia, approximately 2200 suicides occur each year. 80 % of people who take their lives are men – with an average of 5 men dying by suicide every day. Suicide is the leading cause of death for men under the age of 44 years, which significantly exceeds the national road toll.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Depression in men is common and treatable
- With the right treatment, most people recover from depression
- It's important to seek help early, the sooner the better

More information is available.  
Visit [www.beyondblue.org.au/men](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/men)

## ANXIETY

Anxious feelings are a normal reaction to a situation where a person feels under pressure. For some people, these feelings happen for no apparent reason or continue after a stressful event has passed. An anxiety disorder can be a serious condition that makes it hard for a person to cope with daily life.

## IMPORTANT

- The first step is to seek help
- Your GP is a good starting point
- There is a range of effective treatments available

## SIGNS OF ANXIETY

### Physical

- pounding heart
- excessive sweating
- choking sensations
- dizziness and vertigo
- shortness of breath
- hot flushes or chills
- insomnia and exhaustion
- panic attacks

### Emotional

- feelings of dread
- poor concentration
- inner tension and nervousness
- catastrophic thinking
- irritability or edginess
- hyper vigilance towards danger
- absentmindedness
- fear of losing control

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.beyondblue.org.au/taking-action](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/taking-action)

email [infoline@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:infoline@beyondblue.org.au)  
or call 1300 22 4636

Lifeline 13 11 14  
[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

MensLine Australia  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

# One plus one = Three

## A NEW BABY

**Congratulations!** A new baby is very exciting and signifies a whole new chapter in your life – that of being a Dad. As a Dad, you want to be able to protect, provide and be in control of your baby's health. To be able to do this, you need to look after yourself at the same time.

The birth of a baby significantly changes relationships and affects you and your partner. Mostly this is a wonderful and happy event but it can also be stressful, during which many adjustments have to be made. The most important thing is to communicate your feelings and fears; your relationship can be a great source of strength and support.

Everyone's experience in the early months after the birth of their child is different. Many couples adjusting to parenthood find their relationship

blossoms as they become closer and enriched by their new circumstances. But for some couples, it can be a time of tiredness and stress that causes them to become anxious, distant and withdrawn.

Most importantly, share your feelings, thoughts and anxieties with each other and make time to talk, even about the most trivial concerns. You may find you both have similar worries and that you can laugh together as you resolve the issues.

**: DID YOU KNOW THAT  
: 1 IN 20 MEN SUFFER  
: FROM ANTENATAL  
: OR POSTNATAL  
: PATERNAL  
: DEPRESSION?**

**APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 20  
FATHERS (5%) WILL DEVELOP  
DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY AT  
ANY TIME DURING THE FIRST  
YEAR AFTER THE BIRTH.**

If your symptoms last longer than two weeks, ensure you take action and seek help. Your GP is a great starting place and further information can be found online.

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.howisdadgoing.org.au](http://www.howisdadgoing.org.au)

[www.panda.org.au](http://www.panda.org.au)

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)





# DAD...

## *it's a doing word*

Today's dads want to do a better job than our dads did with us. Many succeed, and their kids thrive as a result. Yet many of us struggle to live up to our own ideals. Why?

Firstly, we expect respect simply because we are 'Dad', without putting in much effort. Good fathering however, requires action and interaction. Some guys just aren't up to the challenge or sacrifice required, while some only focus on being a good provider. But you need to be around if you're going to fulfil the other aspects of the 'Dad job description': protector, playmate and promoter. It all takes effort but the outcomes for kids are enormous.

But the second reason some men struggle is they don't take hold of the tools now available to us. There's help out there... from our own dads, mates and mentors. There's some great stuff on the web, and guys these days see the wisdom in doing a parenting course, get counselling, or get connected in a men's group. Work places are becoming more flexible and family-friendly so Dads can bond with their newborns and be more involved at home.

Don't overlook perhaps the sharpest tool in the shed: You. Not 'the you' before kids, but the 'new improved' model, rewired by hormonal changes. Science can now measure hormone levels and it's a fact that around childbirth our testosterone drops and other hormones kick in, presumably to get us more focused and better equipped to be the doting dads our kids need us to be.

Nature has redesigned us for a greater purpose. You are more than a man now. You are a DAD.

If you want to be a good Dad, you have it in you to act like one! It's your responsibility to grab every tool at your disposal to be the best Dad you can be. Your kids are worth it... aren't they?

### **MORE INFORMATION**

[www.bettermen.com.au](http://www.bettermen.com.au)

[www.babycentre.com](http://www.babycentre.com)



# RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN –

HOW TO

# Survive

**RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE  
BRILLIANT – BUT WE DON'T  
ALWAYS GET THINGS RIGHT.**

“All couples experience problems in one form or another – its part of sharing your life with another human being. The difference between relationships that work, and relationships that don't, is how well couples deal with the challenges and problems they face in their life together. The first step to a healthy and happy relationship is our willingness to work on it.”

Relationships Australia

## **SURVIVAL TACTICS**

A relationship breakdown causes pain and hurt, and every other emotion imaginable. Practical arrangements, access to kids, money and assets have to be sorted, then there's the emotional fallout.

**THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT  
MEN FACE THESE INTENSE  
FEELINGS AND SURVIVE –  
BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME**

**: MOST PEOPLE WHO  
: SEPARATE HAVE  
: BEEN MARRIED LESS  
: THAN 10 YEARS**



## ADVICE FROM OTHER BLOKES

- Be clear that separation cannot be 'fixed' quickly
- Be honest with yourself and take responsibility for your life
- Be clear about where you have choices and where you don't
- Listen to what you are telling yourself. Be alert to signs of self pity, hopelessness or revenge
- Avoid the language of blame
- Think about the consequences of what you decide to do
- Don't shut down, talk to your mates
- Continue with normal activities (work, sport, hobbies)
- Accept offers from friends for help, dinners, social events etc – don't shut yourself away
- Identify new ways of doing things – like new routines



## APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 3 FIRST MARRIAGES END IN DIVORCE

### DURING THE TOUGH TIMES

- Select and eat nutritious food (fresh fruit and vegetables don't need much cooking)
- Exercise in ways you enjoy – ride a bike, go out for walks or runs, go to the gym, swim, better still, do it with a friend
- Watch for signs of ill health, including stress, anxiety, depression and take action
- Visit your doctor earlier rather than later
- Take care with alcohol, drugs and smoking

### MORE INFORMATION

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277  
[www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au)

Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

Dads In Distress Support Services  
1300 853 437  
[www.dadsindistress.asn.au](http://www.dadsindistress.asn.au)

# FAMILY VIOLENCE:

## *The choice is yours!*

### WHAT WE KNOW

Intimate partner violence is responsible for more ill-health and premature death in Victorian women under the age of 45 than any other of the well-known risk factors, including high blood pressure, obesity and smoking. We know that family violence has a significant negative impact on children and other family members. We also know that women are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence and are overwhelmingly more likely than are men to be the victims of this form of violence.

We know that family violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour through which a person seeks to control and dominate another person and can include physical violence, sexual violence, making threats, verbal abuse, name calling and controlling another person's financial and social circumstances.

Family violence affects men too. Some men experience family violence from other men in the family and occasionally from women. Men who use violence often destroy what they really want in their lives – love, intimacy, trust and respect from others, as well as their self-respect.

We know that men can change. We know that with support, men who use family violence can change if they are prepared to take responsibility. By taking responsibility, we can have respectful relationships.

### WHAT DOES A RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE?

- Being honest
- Taking responsibility for your thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- Supporting the needs of others without ignoring your own needs
- Communicating respectfully by listening attentively and speaking calmly
- Sharing the load and the decision making
- Not needing to have the last word

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

The starting point is to recognise that how we behave is a choice that we make. Although we may feel like we “snap” or “just go off”, ultimately we are responsible for our behaviour, the damage it can create and the choices we have made. Like other negative behaviours, we learn to use family violence and because it is learned, we can also learn new behaviours: respect, responsibility and non-violence. There is support available that can help you change.

### MORE INFORMATION

Men's Referral Service  
[www.mrs.org.au](http://www.mrs.org.au)  
1800 766 491



# STRESS

Stress is not a diagnosable mental health disorder but a symptom of difficulties with coping, a feeling of being overloaded, wound up, tense and worried. We all experience stress at times. It can sometimes help to motivate us to get a task finished or perform well and some people thrive on stress.

Stress can also be harmful – if you experience high levels of stress for a long period of time, or it interferes with your ability to enjoy a healthy life, seek professional help.

Your attitude, personality and approach to life will influence how you respond to stress; we all have different personalities and coping mechanisms, which are reflected in how we manage situations.

## STRESS AND PHYSICAL ILLNESS

When we feel under stress, our body responds with the fight or flight mechanism – increased heartbeat, blood pressure and breathing. This is hard on your body, using extra energy and may contribute to physical illness. If symptoms persist, see your doctor.

## TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

Prevention is better than cure for stress. The following tips will help you reduce or prevent stress:

- Exercise regularly
- Avoid unnecessary conflict
- Relax – take time out for yourself, enjoy the company of good friends, practise deep breathing exercises, yoga or meditation
- Eat nutritious food with plenty of vegetables and fruit
- Sleep well
- Enjoy your life – ensure you have a balance in life, with plenty of fun and enjoyable activities
- If you feel stressed, try to understand why and what makes you feel stressed and prepare for stressful events in advance
- Seek help from your GP, counsellor, psychologist or community mental health service

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

[www.mindhealthconnect.org.au](http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au)

**: HAVE A HEALTH  
: CHECK AT THE SAME  
: TIME EACH YEAR  
: – AROUND YOUR  
: BIRTHDAY, FATHER'S  
: DAY OR AT THE END  
: OF THE YEAR.**

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## SOURCES

Andrology Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Drug Foundation, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute, Better Men Australia, Better Health Channel, Beyondblue, Continence Foundation, Heart Foundation, Lets Beat Bowel Cancer, Mens Referral Service, No To Violence, Relationships Australia, Sunsmart, The Cancer Council Australia, Worksafe Victoria, Quitnow.



KEEP YOUR MEDICAL ASSESSMENT  
RECORDS STAPLED INSIDE HERE  
FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Foundation 49: Men's Health is a not for profit Men's Health promotion initiative of Cabrini, promoting good health and wellbeing in men.

## LIVE LONG, LIVE WELL

### CONTACT US

Foundation 49: Men's Health  
183 Wattletree Rd  
Malvern VIC 3144 Australia

T 03 9508 3549

F 03 9508 3501

E [admin@49.com.au](mailto:admin@49.com.au)

W [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)

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