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Part of **AlfredHealth**

Healthy men

2018 The Alfred talks about men's health

BECOME A Healthy HERO

**BUILDING A
HEALTHIER
YOU: TIPS FOR
EVERYDAY DADS**

THE ALFRED'S
GUIDE TO HELP YOU
KEEP A HEALTHY
BODY AND MIND
FOR THE FUTURE



un fake able™



**You can't fake families.
Like so many Australians, our
dads are our heroes and we want
to make sure that there is care
available if they need it.
So we're proud to be supporting
The Alfred Father's Day Appeal.**



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INTRODUCTION



As a general medicine specialist at The Alfred, I often see first-hand the devastating impact that chronic disease can have on a person's life.

For example, I remember recently treating a patient suffering from airways disease, caused by years of smoking. The chronic condition had completely ruined their quality of life, and had left them so debilitated that walking to their post-box to collect their mail was an effort.

This person had made poor choices earlier in life that they were now paying a heavy price for.

Chronic diseases – like diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease – rob people of their independence and exert a huge toll on the Australian community and healthcare system. The statistics are quite staggering – with half of all Australians having at least one chronic disease, and it stands as the single biggest killer of Australians each year.

But behind the depressing statistics is a ray of hope.

Chronic diseases share the same four behavioural risk factors: smoking, physical inactivity, poor nutrition and harmful use of alcohol. This means that by modifying our lifestyles, we can modify or minimise our risk of developing chronic diseases. They need not be an inevitability for us, provided we take the necessary steps before it is too late.

The other bit of good news is that there is no shortage of experienced and knowledgeable healthcare professionals available to provide support and encouragement. Nearly all of us will see a healthcare professional in the next 12 months – whether it's for a check-up, script or test. So what better opportunity to have a conversation about how we can improve our health?

It may be a chat with your GP, physiotherapist, pharmacist or dietitian. Each are well-placed to empower and guide you to make positive choices in your life – whether you are struggling with one or several aspects of your health including diet, fitness, smoking, depression or sleep.

Interactions with credible trusted health professionals open a door, but it is up to you to step through it. An investment in your own health will pay dividends in the future. The alternative is a loss of independence and disability that none of us wish to contemplate. Remember – any age is the right age to make a healthy change.

Men are particularly vulnerable to the threat of chronic disease. This is partly because of physiology, lifestyle choices but also their tendency to neglect themselves until a crisis supervenes. This is why The Alfred's Healthy Heroes campaign is so crucial. All of us should take responsibility for our own physical and mental health, and in doing so, become a role model to friends and family.

In what follows, Alfred staff present some strategies you can employ to not only prevent chronic disease, but build a more robust and resilient version of yourself. Take a moment to read their advice and be inspired.

Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah
General Physician, The Alfred

The logo for nikpol, featuring the brand name in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a black rectangular background.The logo for kaboodle KITCHEN, featuring a small cross icon to the left of the word 'kaboodle' in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, with 'KITCHEN' in a smaller font below it, all on a light green rectangular background.

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A photograph of a bouquet of white daisies with yellow centers, wrapped in brown paper, sitting on a light-colored kitchen countertop. In the background, a silver moka pot and a white teacup are visible.

The team at **kaboodle** and **Nikpol** understand that in this busy world, your time is precious! We've partnered together to produce benchtops that are cut to size, ready for installation for your next DIY—giving you more time to spend with friends and family!

The logo for Bunnings Warehouse, featuring the text 'Available at' in a small font above 'BUNNINGS' in a large, bold, red font, and 'warehouse' in a smaller, red font below it, all on a white background.

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SNAPSHOT: CHRONIC DISEASES

WHAT ARE CHRONIC DISEASES?

Chronic diseases are ongoing and are not cured completely. Some can be life-threatening, potentially leading to a heart attack or stroke. Others can last over time and need ongoing management (for example, diabetes, chronic pain or arthritis).

They are extremely common and cause serious health problems. In fact, **nine out of 10 deaths** in Australia are caused by chronic diseases – and many could have been avoided.

More men are living with chronic diseases because our lifestyles are changing. We tend to sit around more, eat food that makes us fat and drink too much.

Chronic diseases:

- can be caused by many different factors
- develop over a longer period of time
- may have no symptoms during their early phase
- cause long-term illness, and can lead to other health complications
- may cause disabilities.

WHICH DISEASES ARE CONSIDERED CHRONIC?

Chronic diseases range from mild to life-threatening. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the eight most common chronic diseases include:

- arthritis
- asthma
- back pain
- cancer
- cardiovascular disease
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- diabetes
- mental health conditions.

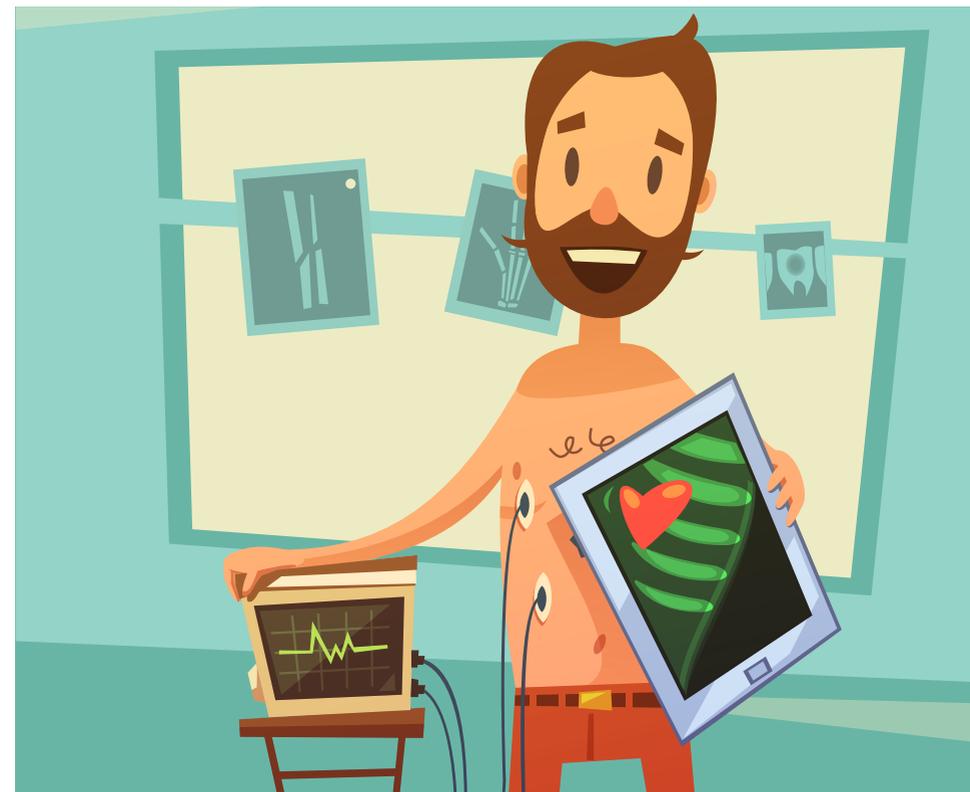
THE FAST FACTS

- 90% of deaths in Australia are caused by a chronic disease
- Chronic diseases can be prevented
- More than 11 million Australians have a chronic disease
- Someone with a chronic disease is more likely to develop a second chronic disease
- People with chronic disease are less likely to work and be employed full-time
- Absenteeism from work, due to chronic disease, costs Australia over \$7 billion each year
- Physical inactivity doubles the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity
- Every year, one in every five Australians will experience a mental illness

“Chronic disease places a significant burden on individuals, families and our healthcare system. Without intervention, that burden is only going to get worse.”

“There are huge benefits to be gained by looking after yourself, and unfortunately preventative health has slipped off many people’s radars. We want to put it back under the spotlight. It’s essentially an investment in our future self.”

Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah,
General Physician at Alfred Health



RISK FACTORS

So how do we develop a chronic disease?

Risk factors. There’s a direct link between risk factors and chronic disease. And the good news? By controlling them, we can reduce our risk of developing a chronic disease.

Behavioural risk factors are the ones we can change. Are you eating well? Do you exercise?

Biomedical risk factors are influenced by the way you behave, as described above. For example, if you are obese, then you are likely to have high blood pressure.

So let’s look at the big four. Basically, tackle these guys and watch your chances of a chronic disease drop.

Here they are:

- physical inactivity
- nutrition
- harmful use of alcohol
- smoking.

“It’s important that when we think about chronic disease, we don’t just think about its physical effects. It’s much more than that. It’s the way it affects you mentally, socially, and financially. It’s all about the quality of your life.”

Kia Noble, Population Health

MEN'S HEALTH AND CHRONIC DISEASE

OK, so here's the hard bit where we say it like it is. Bear with us and keep reading. The story will improve soon. But in the meantime let's face the fact that men are at greater risk of developing various health disorders across their lifespan than women – and chronic disease is the culprit.

Men are more likely to have serious health problems and have a higher death rate. In fact, men die in greater numbers than women from almost all health problems.

And men suffer from higher rates of substance abuse, suicide, and mental health problems.

THE DILEMMA

Here's something to think about. Despite knowing they are at a higher risk of suffering from serious illnesses, men:

- are less likely to see a health professional about their health
- are more likely to put off seeing a health professional about a health issue
- see their GP less often; and when they do, they have shorter appointments
- are lonelier and have fewer friends and family to help them cope with mental and physical health issues.

COMPARED TO FEMALES, AUSTRALIAN MEN:

- live six years less
- die more often from the leading causes of death
- are more obese – over 70 per cent of Australian men are overweight or obese
- have a higher risk of chronic disease
- have more heart disease and type 2 diabetes
- abuse more substances
- have higher rates of suicide.



MEN DON'T LIKE TO SEEK HELP



Men are not keen to see health professionals, and it's putting them at risk.

And when they do see a health carer, they are less likely to be open and honest about their problems than women.

According to a number of mental health experts, men are often influenced by cultural issues and the expected behaviour of the 'traditional' male.

Associate Professor Rob Selzer is a consultant psychiatrist at The Alfred and he explains that men are often too embarrassed to admit to health issues if these problems are something they feel they should be able to sort out themselves.

"If there is something bothering a man, he will usually search for a logical way to fix it," he says. "He's likely to be reluctant to discuss health issues – whether they are physical or psychological. And this delay reduces the opportunity for early diagnosis and intervention.

"Men are traditionally seen as being quite competitive – they don't want to expose anything about themselves that they

think could be perceived as a weakness. Traditionally, being seen as weak isn't a male quality, so that fear gets in the way of being open and honest."

Dr Paul Denborough, child and youth psychiatrist at The Alfred, echoes Rob's thoughts.

"You are taught from a young age that you should be strong, you should stick up for yourself and you should never show weakness," he says. "Whether it's through sport or other aspects of your life, this mindset is deeply set.

"It's not a bad way to live if things are going fine, but it can cause issues if things aren't going so well."

The Alfred's **Dr Nicolas Mims** says that while more men are able to express their thoughts and feelings, some groups of men are still deeply reluctant. And this is especially the case for those who come from cultures where open expression of feelings is not the social norm.

"Throughout their lives, men experience very strong messages about how they're supposed to behave, hiding their vulnerability. Pretty

much everything about going to a doctor's office goes against those lessons."

MEN WHO ARE PRIVATE ABOUT THEIR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS:

- are less likely to seek help
- are less likely to seek care to keep them well
- are slow to seek care when injured or ill
- are more likely to see male doctors however, they are less likely to be truthful when disclosing their symptoms, especially those they consider embarrassing (for example, diarrhoea, gas, mental health issues).

SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU TALK TO A DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTH CARER:

Try out a few doctors and health carers until you find one you feel comfortable with.

Try to be open and to share your thoughts. If you're not honest and accurate about your symptoms, you may not get the right treatment.

Seek regular check-ups and take up offers of health screening. This way, you'll avoid a chronic disease sneaking up on you.

"Put the effort in to find a health professional that you can trust and talk to easily. Always remember that health professionals DO hear it all – from the mundane to the whacky. Don't be afraid to open up and say what's on your mind! Rest assured that, as clinicians, we feel best when we are able to help someone. And we can't do that when we don't know the full story."

Kia Noble, Population Health

PICKING THE RIGHT GP

More often than not, your local doctor, a general practitioner (GP), is the first person you'll seek out to talk about your health. You might see the same GP for 10 years or more and they will get to know your background and health history. You'll be able to rely on their knowledge and guidance over the years because they know your story.

"It's important that you have a GP who you trust and can chat to. You want to find someone who you will stick with for a big chunk of your lifetime. Because if you are seeing somebody for the 20th time, you are much more comfortable talking to them about your health than the first or second time."

Associate Professor Rob Selzer,
Consultant Psychiatrist



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- 1 Find someone you can open up to. It's so vital that you get along with your GP. Everyone has their preferences – you could feel more comfortable seeing a male doctor, or you may prefer seeing a GP of a similar age to you. Some men may also have a cultural or language preference, depending on their own background.
- 2 Find someone who is easy to get to. You are more likely to see your GP if they are close to home. How do their opening and closing hours fit in with your own lifestyle? Many medical practices offer extended hours so you don't need to take time off work.
- 3 Listen to your friends. If you are in the hunt for a new GP, why not ask your friends or loved ones about their own doctor experiences? Word of mouth could provide a shortcut to a new GP.
- 4 Shop around. There is no harm in trying out other options. Nowadays it is easy to transfer your medical files from practice to practice.
- 5 Does it suit your family? More often than not, you will see the same GP or general medical clinic as your loved ones. Could be handy.
- 6 Cost. If the doctor's fees are a concern, find a practice that bulk-bills.

THE BEST MEDICINE



“They say that if exercise was a medicine, it would be the wonder drug, and it’s easy to see why,”

Dr Marco Bonollo, General Medicine Specialist at The Alfred.

“Regular exercise increases your ability to move, to balance, it boosts your mood and self-confidence, and helps you maintain a healthy weight. It’s something we should definitely keep doing in some shape and form for the rest of our lives.”

Regular physical activity:

- reduces your risk of cancer, particularly bowel cancer
- reduces your risk of heart disease
- reduces your risk of type 2 diabetes
- reduces the chance of depression
- improves your ability to quit smoking
- increases the chance of living longer.

Not only does routine exercise make you feel better physically, but it also improves the way your brain works, your focus and sleep. It also improves your mood by altering serotonin levels in your brain.

FIVE TIPS TO GET MOVING:

- 1 Find the time; make it a priority.** Schedule time for physical activity in your life.
- 2 Build a routine.** The best exercise is the one you enjoy and will do again tomorrow and then the day after.
- 3 Recruit a mate.** Or join a team sport. You’re more likely to turn up if others are expecting you.
- 4 Get walking at work.** Commit to being active on your feet at work. Try to get moving after sitting for an hour, consider standing workstations, and split your workday in two with a brisk walk.
- 5 Vary your fitness routine.** Keep your body guessing – mix up your running with weights sessions, or go for a hit of tennis.

KEEP ACTIVE AS YOU AGE

In his day-to-day work, Dr Marco Bonollo will often see older patients who say they have had to give up physical activity as they’ve aged. No way. “There are so many things they can do to ensure age isn’t a barrier to the pursuit of good health,” he says.

Here, he shares some of his favourite tips:

- remember that some activity – however light – is better for you than none at all
- be smart and flexible. Even if you have a history of being fit and active, remember it’s only normal for your body to not be able to do the same things, or perform to the same level, as it once did. That’s fine; keep moving
- get your heart rate going. If you are a bit older, start off with low-impact activities like walking, cycling and swimming



- you don’t have to aim to become an elite athlete. In fact, research has shown that the greatest health benefits can come from a moderate increase in exercise
- use a pedometer in your smartphone (or buy one) and use it each day to count your steps. Studies have shown that by using a pedometer, you will significantly increase physical activity and weight loss.

Open to love

The team at Thomson are proud to help The Alfred. By supporting the hospital’s Father’s Day Appeal we’re ensuring everyone gets home sooner.

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BACK FROM THE BRINK

At the end of June last year, Andy was placed in an induced coma. His condition dire, his wife was told to prepare for the worst.

Fast forward 12 months, and Andy has made a truly remarkable recovery. So much so, he took part in Run Melbourne – running 10km in support of the Alfred staff who he says saved his life.

With winter fast approaching, Andy thought his sore throat was the result of one of those bugs that “tend to float around each and every year”.

Little did he know that within a matter of days, his life would be hanging by a thread.

As Andy’s sore throat got worse and worse, his health began to completely deteriorate. His wife, Serena, recognised that something was dreadfully wrong, and the pair soon rushed to The Alfred’s Emergency and Trauma Centre.

Andy’s memory of his time in emergency is patchy to say the least. He remembers arriving at The Alfred, being brought through the hospital’s large doors, and talking with an emergency nurse.

Then his memory fades to black.

Andy was placed in an induced coma – where he would stay for 29 days while Intensive Care physicians worked tirelessly to save his life.

Of course, at the time, Andy wasn’t to realise just how sick he truly was. But now, in reflection, he explains his condition:

“I had picked up some bad bacteria, which had bored a hole in the back of my throat. This set off streptococcus and an abscess had formed. The reason I was so sick and needed to be put in a coma was because it had burst,” he recalls.

“When the Alfred surgeons began to operate, the damage was already very severe. They found stenosia down the right-hand side of my body. It had even reached my lungs. This meant they had to scrape the lining of my lung. My kidneys had also shut down and I had to go on dialysis for a period of time.

“I had six operations during the 29 days I was in the coma.”

So grim was Andy’s condition that Serena was told to prepare for the worst – on multiple occasions while Andy’s failing health had him on the brink.

However, she was constantly by his side. “She was unbelievable,” Andy now beams. “She was there every day at 6am and wouldn’t leave until 2 o’clock the next morning. I owe her everything.”

Fortunately for Andy and Serena, Alfred clinicians were able to save Andy’s life. However, when he was finally brought back to consciousness, he was some 23 kg lighter and with a seven-inch scar running down his neck.

Thus began Andy’s gradual road to recovery. Extremely frail, he spent a further three weeks on-ward at The Alfred, regaining his strength and wellbeing. A testament to his willpower, and the support of those around him, he was soon able to regain his health and return home.

“We owe everything to The Alfred and their incredible staff,” he says. “There are some unbelievably great people there. Everyone associated with the hospital should be very proud to have such inspiring and dedicated people as part of their team.

This sense of gratitude drove Andy to agree to participate in July’s Run Melbourne – in an effort to raise funds for the hospital. And while he admitted before the race that his current condition may not allow him to run the full 10km uninterrupted, he was determined to do what he could.

“Not only was the race an amazing opportunity to give back, but it was a date on the calendar that I could point to, step back, and say ‘I’m extremely lucky to be here’,” he says.

Andy’s participation in Run Melbourne represented an immense physical and emotional challenge. In fact, the race took

place only a couple of days to the year that he was finally brought out of his coma, and welcomed back into the world by Serena.

Through his involvement in Run Melbourne, Andy reached (and comprehensively exceeded) his fundraising goal of \$8000. The Alfred thanks Andy and his supporters for his incredible contribution.



OPENING THE DOOR TO GREAT HEALTH

The following pages provide essential info to help your body thrive. Alfred health experts hope you're inspired to make healthy and long-term changes. And remember – find a GP who can help you make lasting changes. Live long and live well.



EATING THE GOOD STUFF

"Practicing healthy eating habits is vital for overall health," The Alfred's Kia Noble says. "Not only will a well-balanced diet help you achieve and retain a healthy weight, but it assists in reducing your risk of chronic disease."

Currently, 70 per cent of Australian men are overweight or obese – putting them at risk of a range of harmful conditions, including colorectal cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Excess body weight accounts for 55 per cent of the cases of people living with type 2 diabetes, 20 per cent of those with cardiovascular disease, and 4 per cent of those with cancer.

NUTRITION AS YOU AGE

We know your risk of chronic disease increases as you get older, so keeping a healthy diet as you age is important.

"As men age, their metabolism slows down," Kia says. "This can happen as early as their 20s, but particularly in their 40s, so this is the period in their lives when they should be eating less, as their bodies will naturally use less energy."

However, contrary to common belief, Kia says men's appetites commonly begin to drop off when they reach about 70 years of age.

"That's why we generally see a lot of men putting weight on in their 30s and 40s," she says.

"My advice is: if you notice you are gaining weight, then that's the signal that you need to tighten your belt. Cut out the discretionary foods and limit your alcohol."

Kia also says that physical frailty can become a concern for men in their older age.

"When men reach around 70 years of age, their muscle mass really drops off," she says. "To minimise muscle loss at this time, it's really important that you eat two or three large meals each day and keep physically active."

"Once you lose your muscle mass, it's difficult to get back."

Meg Skelton, Alfred dietitian, says that for this reason, older men actually require a higher amount of protein in their diet than younger males per kilogram of body weight.

Meg recommends high-protein foods like eggs, lean meat, poultry, dairy, nuts and legumes.

Gut issues are also common as you age. To counter these, such as constipation, Meg recommends you make high fibre foods a key part of your diet.

"Just make sure you drink plenty of water as well," Meg says. "This will assist with your digestion as well as maintain your fluid status."

"You actually tend to lose more fluid as you age due to your skin becoming thinner."

10 DIET TIPS TO TIGHTEN THE BELT

Here, Kia shares 10 tips on how you can lose or maintain a healthy weight through good eating habits.

1 DRINK WATER



Our bodies often mistake thirst for hunger. So if you're craving that 3pm snack, try guzzling a large glass of water first. Drinking between 1.5 litres and 2 litres a day is ideal.

"Drinking a glass of water before or during meals is actually a great strategy to maintain or lose weight. It's been shown that drinking water with a meal can actually reduce what we eat by 13 per cent – it fills us up so we eat less," Kia says.

2 LIMIT DISTRACTIONS



Research tells us that those who eat while watching TV not only eat more during a meal, but are more likely to eat more later in the day.

Kia says: "Put your phone down, turn the TV off, and savour every bite of your meal."

3 PORTION YOUR PLATE



Just as portion sizes have increased over the last 40 years, so too have our waistlines. Did you know that since the early 1900s, the size of what is considered a 'normal' plate has increased by 23 per cent?

To combat this trend, Alfred dietitian Meg Skelton recommends Australian men question what's on their plate.

"One of the major issues with Aussie diets is that the portion sizes are off," Meg says. "But if you are actually a bit more mindful of the amount of food on your plate, rather than focussing on cutting foods out completely, a nutritious meal is a lot easier to achieve."

TRY THESE CLEVER TIPS:

- Fill half of your plate with vegetables like leafy greens, carrots, tomatoes and other coloured vegies
- Meg recommends high-protein foods like eggs, lean meat, poultry, dairy, nuts and legumes
- The last quarter could be carbohydrates like rice, pasta, couscous and starchy vegetables like potatoes or corn.

4 EAT MORE VEGETABLES



Vegetables are low in energy but packed full of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Fibre fills us up and leaves us satisfied until the next meal, so vegies are a great snack option between meals.

Kia recommends you fill half of your plate with vegetables each big meal. Limit the starchy versions like potatoes, corn and peas though if you're trying to keep your weight under control.

The good guys include mushrooms, cucumber, carrots, leafy greens and celery.

5 LIMIT DRINKS WITH HIGH CALORIES – EVEN COFFEE!



Drinks that contain calories include soft drinks, flavoured mineral waters, milks and juices. One 250ml glass of orange juice can contain up to five oranges – this adds a lot of extra calories to our diet without filling you up.

"Water is always the best choice for weight management. If you want to trim down, limit milky coffees to the small size and drink no more than two a day," Kia says.

6 LIMIT YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE



Alcohol is high in calories and distracts your body from burning fat. Not only does it cause weight gain, but it can just as easily undo your weight loss efforts.

Kia explains: "Two pints of beer contain more energy than a fast-food cheeseburger. As well, we often make poor food choices when we drink."

QUICK TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR INTAKE:

- have at least two alcohol free days per week
- drink light beer instead of full-strength
- drink water in between alcoholic drinks (this will also rehydrate you)
- use sparkling mineral water, soda water or sugar-free diet drinks as mixers
- limit the amount of cocktails you drink – they can be high in energy, sugar and sometimes even fat.

7 ADD SPICE TO YOUR LIFE



"Use chili, ginger, herbs and spices to add flavour to your food. These are healthier alternatives to salt and high-in-sodium sauces. A high salt diet can lead to high blood pressure," Kia says.

8 SCALE BACK THE SNACKS



We often snack between meals without realising how much extra energy we are consuming. A biscuit here, a slice of cake there, it all adds up.

Kia says: "Try to limit snacking – if you're hungry between meals, try a glass of water, a piece of fruit, a boiled egg or some vegetables to get you through to your next meal."

9 BE AWARE OF SOME SURPRISING HIGH-ENERGY FOODS



We know that our bodies store unused energy as fat. However, there are some foods that while extremely healthy, are particularly high in energy and sometimes – without even realising – we can take in more energy than we need.

- avocado (serve = ½ avocado, 684kJ)
- nuts (serve = 30g or a small handful, 751kJ)
- oil (serve – 1 tablespoon, 612kJ)

Kia explains that the recommended daily energy intake for the average Australian male is approximately 8700 kJ.

10 LISTEN TO YOUR BODY



So often we make the mistake of not listening to our bodies. Before you reach for that easy snack, think to yourself 'am I really hungry?'

"Many of us eat out of boredom, procrastination, feelings of happiness or sadness – it's important to recognise this and find ways to stop sabotaging your health," Kia says.



CUT BACK ON DRINKING

Men are more likely to live with addictions than women—ranging from drinking and smoking to gambling and drug use.

Alcohol is by far the most common and damaging to men's health. And when we think about the way alcohol is part of our day-to-day life, it's not hard to see how it has a huge impact.

Alcohol increases your chances of developing:

Cancer: It is a group 1 carcinogen according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer. This is the highest rating for cancer-causing substances. Any level of alcohol consumption can increase your chronic disease risk – and this is the case for all types of alcoholic drinks.

Heart disease: Alcohol can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk of all sorts of heart problems including heart failure. Binge drinking also increases your short- and long-term risks of having a heart attack.

Diabetes: Drinking can increase your chance of developing type 2 diabetes, including high blood pressure and obesity.

Stroke: Excessive drinking can cause stroke including in young adults.

Chronic kidney disease: Excessive drinking increases your risk of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and liver disease. All of these are major risk factors for the development of kidney disease.

Obesity and unhealthy weight gain: As we know, excess body weight is a major risk factor for chronic disease. Alcohol causes weight gain and stops the body breaking down food into nutrients.

And so how much do healthy Australians drink? No alcohol is better than some but generally, no more than two standard drinks per day is recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Below is their chart with guidelines:

HOW MUCH IS A STANDARD DRINK?



Can/Stubbie low-strength beer	= 0.8 standard drink
Can/Stubbie mild-strength beer	= 1 standard drink
Can/Stubbie full-strength beer	= 1.4 standard drinks
100ml wine (13.5% alcohol)	= 1 standard drink
30ml nip spirits	= 1 standard drink
Can spirits (approx 5% alcohol)	= 1.2 to 1.7 standard drinks
Can spirits (approx 7% alcohol)	= 1.6 to 2.4 standard drinks

STUB OUT THOSE CIGGIES FOR GOOD

We all know that smoking can have disastrous effects on your health – but many men continue to smoke regularly. Nicotine is one of the toughest addictions to beat but it can be done.

Just some of the diseases caused by smoking include:

- cancer
- heart disease
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- chronic bronchitis
- stroke
- type 2 diabetes
- eye disease.

Smoking is also a risk factor for a range of health problems and chronic diseases. This includes:

- back pain
- cirrhosis of the liver and pancreatitis
- Alzheimer's disease and dementia
- autoimmune diseases, including multiple sclerosis
- tooth decay and loss.

Research tells us that tobacco smoking is one of the largest causes of preventable illness and death in Australia – estimating that two in three lifetime smokers will die from a disease caused by their smoking.

SUPPORTING AUSTRALIANS TO QUIT SMOKING

Not surprisingly, 80 per cent of Victorians who smoke want to quit. And for a range of reasons, they have run into problems.

One of the most effective ways to quit smoking is to work with your GP. A doctor can provide medicines to support quitting, and a referral for behavioural support. Did you know that this combination helps one in four to quit? There is real hope.

Alfred Health is committed to helping you quit. When you come to us for care, we want to know exactly how much you're smoking so we can swing into action.

Led by Alfred Health's pharmacy department, the initiative provides patients with support before, during and after their admission. **Emma Dean**, Acting Population Health and Health Promotion Coordinator at Alfred Health, says the hospital is committed to help patients who smoke to quit, and ensuring those who do, don't start again.

"We know that people accessing health services are more likely to demonstrate higher rates of smoking than the general population. And we also know that something as simple as a one-minute conversation with a health professional could be the thing that triggers a change," she says.

"Since starting this service, we have found that inpatients are four times more likely to quit than those who received no treatment."

"Realistically, when you decide to give up smoking, it will often take many attempts before you succeed. But each time you are unsuccessful, you will learn a whole lot more about your trigger situations and gain a valuable insight into what can help you next time."

Emma Dean, Population Health and Health Promotion



QUITTING FOR GOOD

If you've decided to quit smoking, you can anticipate facing some pretty strong cravings and tough situations in the near future. Here, Emma explains how you can quit forever.

- Take the time to enjoy the benefits of being a non-smoker – more money, more control, more time. You will even find your fitness base has improved!
- Formulate an emergency stress plan if you feel the temptation is too much to deal with on your own. This could be as simple as calling Quit on 13 78 48, calling a friend or visiting a health professional that you trust.
- When you have a craving, stop and think exactly what you would have "got" from a cigarette. Are you really missing anything by not smoking? Would it really have made you feel better? Think about keeping a diary to record when you get your cravings. Are there any links?
- Think of a craving like a wave. It will build, but know that eventually it will break.
- Keep yourself busy – take up a hobby, participate in a new sport or pastime, or even learn an instrument. Find something you like that distracts you.
- If you feel like smoking, refer to it as a 'memory' and not a 'craving'.
- There are many resources to help you quit. Find the support that works for you. For more information on quitting and staying quit, go to quit.org.au

MAKING POSITIVE CHANGE

Whether it's smoking or snacking while watching TV – so many of our unhealthy behaviours come down to our habits and routines.

But habits can be changed, as difficult as that may seem sometimes.

Here, Alfred psychiatrists share some of their tips on how to transform your bad habits into positive outcomes.

Write it down. When we write down our goals, we are more likely to make them happen. You may also like to write down a plan. Why do you want to change? What's stopping you? What triggers a bad habit? Who are your greatest supporters?

Start small. One change at a time! Keep it easy and be kind to yourself.

Stay positive. Whether you are quitting cigarettes or cutting down on sugar, it's normal to have negative thoughts. Focus on the positives, and remind yourself that you're worth it. Check your plan again and again. Call a friend.

Identify your triggers. Depending on the habit that you're trying to stop, recognise what you can do to lessen the urges. For every single trigger and urge you feel, identify a positive habit you're going to do instead. Some examples include exercise, meditation, reading a chapter of a book, or breathing techniques.

MAKING A HEALTHY CHANGE

STEP 1. Plan: Choose three important changes you want to make and plan how you can keep them going. Perhaps less sugar in your diet, a 15-minute daily walk or a call to the QUIT helpline.

STEP 2. Get started: set small and easy goals. Perhaps find a healthy, quick and easy lunch to prepare. Ask a mate to go to the footy on public transport so you manage a walk and some fun.

STEP 3. Reflect: look at the changes you have made in the last week. Pat yourself on the back and reward yourself for your success.

Reward yourself... regularly! Give yourself positive feedback and celebrate milestones and wins.

Do your best to share your experience with others. Draw on support networks and bring others along for the journey. Not only will they help hold you accountable, but often the support of others can put things in perspective and remind of you why you're trying to change.



GETTING HELP



The diagnosis of any acute or chronic condition is a major life-changing event. Whether it's a cancer diagnosis or a heart attack, it can often send ripple effects through your life and those who care about you. As a result, you might feel quite vulnerable – an uncomfortable feeling for many of us.

“A chronic disease diagnosis affects your family, your relationships, and your work,” Dr Nicolas Mims says. “It forces you to make changes and can trigger some emotional issues. And so often for men, the common response is depression.”

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

- talk to others about what you are feeling
- be patient with your own feelings and ways of coping – don't expect too much, too soon
- ask for help to understand mental health issues (including grief) and how it affects you
- make time for yourself and give focus to your own mental and physical wellbeing
- seek professional help.

If you have a chronic disease and feel that you may be struggling with the associated emotional challenges, then always know that help is available.

Your GP is your number one resource if you feel you might need to talk to someone. GPs see a lot of people going through tough times. They know how to find help that will meet your own needs.

A number of crisis support services are available for those in desperate need of someone to talk to. Lifeline Australia can be reached on 13 11 14 and is a 24-hour service for those in distress. Mensline Australia – contactable on 1300 78 9978 – is a counselling service for men with family or relationship concerns.

Beyondblue.org.au, sane.org and minetworks.org.au are some of a number of great online sources of information.

“As males, we sometimes forget how our kids and important people in our lives look up to us. So yes, if you make a positive health change in your life, you are doing it for yourself. But maybe you are doing it for others too – whether it's your son, your father, your brother. They will notice. They are not always going to say it, but you will be setting a great example.”

Don't underestimate the power of building a better you. It just may influence the others around you in more ways than you think.”

Dr Nicolas Mims, Consultant Psychiatrist

SUPPORTING LOVED ONES

If a loved one or friend is making poor lifestyle choices, it can sometimes be difficult to tell them you're worried about their health.

When supporting a loved one to make positive change, our psychiatrists suggest you:

- create an environment of encouragement: make healthier food choices and exercise together
- acknowledge their commitment, and celebrate milestones
- stay positive: understand there will be slip-ups and breaking habits takes time
- make your own lifestyle change and join in on the journey to better health.



MORE INFORMATION



QUIT: a support line to help you stop smoking
www.quit.org.au

Movember: men's health discussed in an open and friendly way
www.movember.com

Foundation 49: lots of great advice for men who want to live healthy lives
www.49.com.au

Hello Sunday Morning: a new way to think about alcohol including tips to limit your drinking
www.hellosundaymorning.org

Health Direct: An Australian Government website with loads of health advice, simply explained
www.healthdirect.gov.au/mens-health

Mensline Australia: a telephone and online counselling service if you have family and relationship concerns
www.mensline.org.au

Lifeline: support when you are in crisis and perhaps thinking about suicide.
www.lifeline.org.au

ABOUT ALFRED HEALTH

We provide a comprehensive range of healthcare services in Victoria through our three hospital campuses in Melbourne, Caulfield and Sandringham, a large network of community programs and 14 statewide services.

We offer emergency and trauma care, aged care, community services, diagnosis and investigation, medical and surgical, mental health and rehabilitation services.

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The information in this booklet is a general health guide and does not take the place of regular medical advice and treatment from a GP.

The information does not constitute personal medical advice and does not take into account your particular circumstances. We recommend all men consult a doctor or health professional for a thorough personal examination.

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