



STAYING HEALTHY AT ANY AGE

The how, what and why of Ageing Well

Ageing may increase the risk of some diseases and conditions however nutrition, activity and a positive attitude can help keep you healthy. Learn about how exercise, a good diet and how to manage conditions like arthritis, menopause, osteoporosis and depression.

Healthy ageing - stay physically active

Exercise is important for all ages and various studies show that it is never too late to get fit. The human body responds to exercise, no matter what age, and there are many health benefits. Walking, cycling and Tai Chi are some low impact activities to boost your health. It is a good idea to check with your doctor before embarking on any new exercise routine.

Some evidence suggests that about half of the physical decline associated with old age may be due to a lack of physical activity. It has been suggested that people over the age of 65, more than any other age group, require adequate fitness levels to help them maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their high risk of disease.

Food & nutrition

Many people eat less as they get older and this can make it harder to make sure your diet has enough variety to include all the nutrition you need. It is important to be as active as possible to encourage your appetite and maintain muscle mass.

Limit the use of table salt, especially during cooking and choose from a wide variety of foods and drink adequate fluids. Eat foods that are nutrient dense including eggs, lean meats, fish, liver, low fat dairy foods, nuts and seeds, legumes, fruit and vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals. Limit foods that are high in energy and low in nutrients such as cakes, sweet biscuits and soft drinks. If possible, try to spend some time outside each day to boost your vitamin D synthesis for healthy bones.

Falls prevention

Falls are a major cause of injury for older people. They are the leading cause of injury-related hospital admissions in people aged 65 years and over. It is estimated that at least one-third of people aged 65 years and over fall one or more times a year. Although many of these falls do not result in injury, they can cause:

- > Hip and wrist fractures
- > Hip and shoulder dislocations
- > Head injuries and abrasions
- > Bruising and sprains
- > Fear of falling that can result in loss of confidence and restriction of activities.

To avoid falls and injuries from falls, exercise to improve your balance, strength and flexibility. Home or group exercise programs and Tai Chi are good examples. Wear shoes that are comfortable and fit well – they should be wide enough in the toe area, have low or no heels, and have slip-resistant soles.

Diabetes and over 60's

Currently more than 1 million Australians have type 2 diabetes, however half have yet to be diagnosed. As we get older, our risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases. Although we can't stop getting older, we can change the other important risk factors associated with type 2 diabetes, such as:

- > Overweight
- > Inactive
- > Not treating high blood pressure and raised cholesterol
- > Smoking and drinking too much alcohol

Ask your doctor at least once a year to order a fasting (before breakfast) blood glucose level at the pathology centre, which can be done at the same time you have your cholesterol measured. This can determine if you have diabetes or pre-diabetes. Lifestyle changes when you have pre-diabetes can mean significantly delaying and maybe even preventing the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Hearing loss

One in six Australians has a hearing loss - it is more common than you think. Over half the population aged between 60 and 70 has a hearing loss.

Hearing loss is a social loss and many people start to avoid activities they used to enjoy, like playing bowls or going to a social club because they cannot hear in background noise. Hearing loss does not have to get in the way of your ability to stay independent and enjoy life. The first step is to have your hearing tested. Taking action sooner rather than later usually achieves the best results as hearing can be tested and helped at any age.

Where to get more information & help

- > Your doctor
- > 24 hour 'Nurse on Call 1300 606 024
- > Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

How can Barwon Health help?

Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre

If you are uncertain about aged care services and how to find them, the Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre can help you. Experienced workers are available to talk with you about your needs and options, and help work out what's right for you. In the Barwon region, Barwon Health operates the Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre. This free service can be contacted on FreeCall 1800 052 222* between 8.30am–5pm, Monday to Friday.

Residential Respite Booking Service

This service provides information and support to older people and their family members to access a respite bed in a residential aged care facility. It also maintains a respite vacancy register across the Barwon South West region. Contact this service on FreeCall 1800 059 059*.

Hydrotherapy

McKellar Hydrotherapy Centre provides an aquatic therapy service to people with injury, disability and illness. 80% of our clients are over 55 years and attend for various reasons including pain, falls, rehabilitation pre/post surgery or general conditioning. Admission to the service is by referral from a GP or physiotherapist. For further information, contact 5279 2428.

Audiology

The Audiology department at Barwon Health can provide free comprehensive hearing tests by university qualified Audiologists and independent advice on your hearing needs. For further information contact Audiology on 5226 7285.

Quickscreen

QuickScreen© is a program which has been set up to assess your risk of falls. If you're over 60 and have never had a fall,

however would like to prevent falls from happening. There is no charge to have an assessment done and it is offered through all Barwon Health's Community Health Centres:

Belmont
Phone 5260 3778

Corio
Phone 5260 3800

Newcomb
Phone 5260 3333

Torquay
Phone 5260 3900

Barwon Regional Aged Care Assessment Service

Aged Care Assessment Services help older people and their carers work out what kind of care will best meet their needs when they are no longer able to manage at home without assistance. The Barwon Regional Aged Care Assessment Service (BRACAS) is located at McKellar Centre, 45-95 Ballarat Rd, North Geelong.

For information, advice and referral, contact 5279 2246 between 9.00am-4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.



Sources: Barwon Health, Better Health Channel, Department of Human Services, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, Nutrition Australia, VicHealth, Diabetes Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

"Staying healthy at any age" is a five part health promotion series produced quarterly by Barwon Health, promoting health services available in the Geelong region and is an initiative of the Barwon Health Community Engagement Committee. For more information or for copies of the fact sheets, please visit our website www.barwonhealth.org.au or contact 03 5226 7111.

