

Pfizer Australia

HEALTH REPORT

ISSUE #17

HEALTHY AGEING

Most Australians agree with the need to plan for retirement and to have their finances in order, but new research shows that one-in-three needs a shake-up when it comes to planning a healthy and happy life as they age.

That's one of the findings in the latest Pfizer Australia Health Report from national polling by The Jean Hailes Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation providing research, education and clinical care on healthy ageing, and healthcare company Pfizer Australia.

Our polling shows that although 66 percent of Australians are planning to retire by 65, a third of them are not actively considering important health and lifestyle choices that can make a world of difference to a happy retirement.

The study shows that twice as many people have financial plans in place versus other retirement plans, like transitional easing into retirement, maintenance of social contact, lifestyle planning and prevention of disease.

The Jean Hailes Foundation says no matter your age or stage of life, it's never too late to

plan and modify lifestyle and relationships to make the most of your health and wellbeing.

Jean Hailes has come up with comprehensive information and tips on planning for a healthy retirement, many of which you'll find in this booklet.

Findings inside on Australian perceptions of healthy ageing are based on responses from 1456 Australians aged 18 years and over. The research was conducted in April 2005 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.

The Pfizer Australia Health Report is produced monthly, in partnership with health consumer organisations and medical experts, and provides information and news to help you and your family to live a healthier, happier lifestyle.

The Pfizer Australia Health Report is always available free from www.healthreport.com.au where you can sign-up for e-mail alerts of future editions. You can also request additional copies by calling **1800 675 229**.

www.healthreport.com.au





BE READY TO AGE WELL

The Australian population is ageing. The proportion of our population aged over 65 is increasing, and the proportion of the population aged over 85 has increased by 163 per cent during the last few years.

Medicine is helping us live longer and many of us can expect to live a third of our lives in retirement. Sounds good!

To make sure we enjoy those 30 years or so, The Jean Hailes Foundation's Dr Helena Teede offers some essential advice to help Australia's ageing population live well.

The reality is that if we want to stay healthy as we age, we have to actively make it happen. Unlike younger generations who often appear to take their good health for granted, as we age we all need to work at it.

Are you ready to change?

How?

By developing a positive, motivated attitude and taking small, simple and sustainable steps to improve your health. Changing your lifestyle can only be addressed in a lasting way by accepting it as your own responsibility and challenge.

So what small steps can I take?

Incidental activities

- Welcome chances to physically move around – rather than ways of avoiding effort;
- Vacuuming is not a pain, it's fantastic exercise – *really!*
- Mow the lawns yourself;
- Throw away the remote control on the TV - *you won't miss it after a week;*
- Every time you get in the car, ask yourself if you could walk instead;
- Walk the children/grandchildren to or from school - *they need it too!*



- Walk to the park every weekend;
- Get a dog and walk regularly;
- Always take the stairs when possible;
- Park further away in the car park;
- Walk with a friend (*you are six times more likely to persist with any activity if you have a commitment to others*);
- 30 minutes every day is great (*BUT 5 - 10 minutes here and there throughout the day is a good start!*);

The message is simple. Use it or lose it!

Health holds key to happy retirement

Research for this edition of the Health Report shows that one-in-three Australians needs a shake-up when it comes to planning a healthy and happy retirement.

Our research reveals that 66 percent of today's Australians are planning to retire by 65, but a third of those surveyed are not even thinking about health and lifestyle choices which can make a world of difference to a happy retirement.

Twice as many people have financial plans in place versus other retirement plans, such as transitional easing into retirement, maintenance of social contact, lifestyle planning and prevention of disease.

According to The Jean Hailes Foundation, financial planning is important as we age, but we need to broaden our planning to encompass other aspects of our lives when it comes to moving towards retirement.

"Many people make the mistake of solely focusing on financial planning for their later years, but being proactive about your health, lifestyle and relationships throughout your life is crucial to reaping the benefits of a successful retirement," says Director of The Jean Hailes Foundation, Janet Michelmore.

When it comes to ageing, the Health Report survey reveals that 88 percent of people consider losing loved ones as their greatest fear. This is followed by losing independence (77 percent), fear of physical health-related issues (68 percent) and fear of mental health-related issues (65 percent).



Despite this, Australians report that they are neglecting their relationships with loved ones through overwhelming work and life commitments.

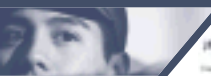
Interestingly, older Australians are more likely to share regular intimacy with their partners than younger Australians. Regular intimacy with partners increases after 50 years of age, with almost two-thirds of Australians aged over 50 years making a specific effort to have special time with their partner.

A key finding is that those aged 31-50 years are more likely than other age groups to feel that work, family and everyday life interferes with time alone with their partner.

"It's important for people to realise that finances aren't paramount. Maintaining healthy relationships and caring for your partner's health is just as important when it comes to lasting the distance," said Ms Michelmore.



The Jean Hailes Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation providing research, education and clinical care on healthy ageing. The Foundation provides a unique response to the needs of women and their families through excellence in research, community and professional education, and clinical care. For information on The Jean Hailes Foundation and its activities, call them toll free on **1800 151 441**.



A HEALTHIER YOU – DECADE BY DECADE

Here is a set of tips to help women and their families age well. Could it be easier? The Jean Hailes Foundation's dietitian Cate Lombard, offers some essential advice to share with your friends.

It's no surprise to Australians that we lead busy lives, often juggling a variety of responsibilities including children, ageing parents, domestic duties, work outside the home and community involvement. The health and wellbeing of our families is paramount, as is our own physical and mental health.

In your 20s - 30s:

Prevention is the key. At your peak mental and physical health, now is the time to develop lifelong healthy habits.

FACT An Australian study has shown that over a four year period only 41 per cent of young women aged 18-24 were able to maintain their weight.

Health Tips

- **Stop smoking.** Each year approximately 6,000 Australian women die prematurely from tobacco related illness;
- **Learn to cook new foods.** You may be relying on take away food more often, especially if living away from home;
- **Be active.** Now is the time to form good physical activity habits for life.

In your 30s - 40s:

There are now lots of distractions and barriers to prevent you maintaining a healthy lifestyle. There is not much time for yourself as you devote more time to family or work. You might find your weight sneaks up if you are not careful and you can't seem to find time to be active even though you know you should. You may feel a bit run down and tired.

FACT The VicHealth *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey* indicates walking is the most popular activity chosen by Victorians.



Health Tips

- **Eat energy foods.** Drink low fat milk for calcium and include small serves of lean meat for iron and zinc, include wholegrain cereals each day;
- **Enjoy regular physical activity.** Making time for regular physical activity must be a priority now;
- **Develop a support network around you now.** This will be important to assist with your mental health throughout the future decades. Join a sporting group, a community group or volunteer organisation;
- **Dedicate time to your relationships.** Social networks and partnerships are often neglected during these busy years.

In your 40s - 50s:

Your weight has jumped up a few kilograms and you can't understand why. Life is still busy. You are entering midlife and changes may be occurring to your body. Eating well, being active and managing stress will help you manage symptoms and changes that are beginning to occur now.

FACT Research tells us even small changes to lifestyle can lower the risk of Type 2 Diabetes and other diseases.

Health Tips

- **Try some moderate activity.** If you haven't been active start with some walking;
- **Keep up the vitamins and minerals.** Maintain calcium intake, eat fish and other foods high in omega 3 fatty acids, as these may help with mood swings and mild depression;
- **Develop a proactive and individual health plan.** Discuss your individual risks with your health practitioner and plan when and what you need to have screened or tested and how often. Prevention is better than cure!

In your 50s - 60s:

A few aches and pains might restrict your activities and you don't recover from injury quite as well as you used to. Your sleep might be affected so you feel tired during the day. Weight gain may still be a problem, particularly around the waist. This increases your risk of diabetes and heart disease. Effort needs to go into protecting your health now.

FACT Regular physical activity may be as effective as medication for mild depression and low mood.

Health Tips

- **Keep active.** Low impact and resistance type activity with weights are particularly helpful, as is walking;
- **Enjoy the activity you choose.** Make it a social and enjoyable event;



- **Protect yourself through diet.** Start pumping in the antioxidants with lots of fruit and vegetables, your need for calcium is higher now. Aim for three serves of dairy foods per day;
- **Plan to transition into your retirement.** Physical activity, emotional and social interests as well as relationships and health all need planning to minimise stress and optimise enjoyment at this time of life and beyond.

In your 70s plus:

You hopefully can now find time for some of those activities you have always wanted to do. Join a club, take up art, enjoy some concerts, or as some people do, try something wild like hot air ballooning. Plan some trips. Volunteering is a great way to help people and meet new friends.

Health Tips

- **Modify your diet** if there's a need. Some people will experience problems with chewing, swallowing, digestion, and loss of taste and will need to alter their diet;
- **Keep up the fibre.** Keep fibre intake high to ensure a healthy bowel and to avoid constipation and bowel problems;
- **Maintain strength and flexibility** through walking and resistance exercises lifting small to moderate weights. Probably best to do this under supervision.



LIVING A LIFE WITH LESS ANXIETY

Sadly, a lot of Australians live with varying degrees of anxiety.

Do you ever have extreme feelings of fear and worry? If so, you can probably identify with the description of possible symptoms – racing heart, palpitations, rapid breathing, sweating and dizziness. You may recognise the notion of panic attacks or phobias – or perhaps you have a more general anxiety festering away inside you.

If you are worried about your symptoms, do seek some help as you simply do not have to live with anxiety.

According to The Jean Hailes Foundation's Psychologist, Dr Amanda Deeks, and Research Director, Dr Helena Teede, anxiety is a condition which often responds really well to assistance from your doctor or a psychologist.

As well as seeking professional help, try:

- Keeping a diary to help you identify thought patterns so they can be challenged;
- Relaxation techniques including yoga or slow breathing exercises;
- Talking to friends or family.

What role might stress be playing in your life?

Stress occurs when we feel threatened or cannot cope with a situation. Life is busy and it's important to take time-out to deal with influences causing your stress. We all know them! Traffic, crowds, technology, family, work deadlines and cooking Christmas dinner can all take their toll.

So, what are your triggers? Once you know, you can begin to reduce their impact. A few general tips include:

- Increase your activity – going for a walk can work wonders;



- Get plenty of sleep;
- Eat regularly and eat a balanced diet;
- Seek additional support.

Many people say they have mixed feelings about their relationships with their partners. Are you one of them? Are you close to your partner as you approach retirement together, or do you feel you have grown apart? If ever there was a potential for anxious feelings, this must be it.

It's important that you talk about your feelings and seek help when necessary. Talk to your partner. Be honest. There is potential for this person to be your best friend. Vary the routine. There are some great books and resources to help us with these sorts of problems like, www.jeanhailes.org.au

If the problem is affecting your quality of life, maybe seek out a psychologist who specialises in working with couples.

Anxiety is treatable. Why not tackle that tight feeling that we so often tolerate? The great news is, you don't have to.

Making informed health decisions

How many of us used to visit our doctor and not ask questions or seek out further information?

Today we are more confident, ask more questions and educate ourselves by seeking answers to complement and help us understand what our health professionals tell us.

There has definitely been a generational shift from being reactive to becoming proactive, when it comes to our own health.

Sarah Hardy, Director of Education at The Jean Hailes Foundation, believes there is a growing sense of "shared responsibility" between patients and their health professionals.

She offers these tips so you can be on your way to making informed health decisions for you and your family:

Your relationship with your health practitioner should be based on:

- Mutual respect;
- Clear communication;
- Shared responsibility;
- Regular interaction.

While it may take time and effort to establish this partnership, in the end it will be in your best interests to choose carefully.

When choosing a health practitioner you could take into account:

- Their expertise;
- How accessible they are (eg location, appointment times and fees);
- Their ability to listen, empathise and communicate skilfully;



- Their willingness to involve you in decision-making.

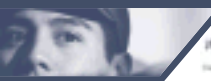
Questions to ask yourself and your health practitioner when you have a health issue:

- What could happen if I did nothing at all?
- What treatment or intervention choices are available to me?
- What are the possible risks and benefits of the different choices?
- How do the benefits and risks weigh up for me?

Remember, at the end of the day, you are a very good judge when it comes to your body. Be informed and involved in health decisions.

Don't be guided by stories. Speak to your health practitioner and question the evidence. If you don't understand, ask for it to be explained again.

If you need to seek additional information, ensure it is from a reputable source.



READ FOOD LABELS FOR A HEALTHY CHOICE

Ever wondered what all those numbers on a food label really mean?

These days, we have so much more understanding of the need for a low fat, high fibre diet. We know that fresh whole foods provide the best fuel for our bodies. But manufactured foods are also a daily fact of life for many of us, so it pays to understand what's inside those tins, boxes or packets. They often contain high levels of fat, sugar and salt. So when we asked The Jean Hailes Foundation for some tips on reading food labels, they gave us a fabulous snapshot, which we think is worth popping in your wallet.

Tip: When looking at labels don't just look at the kilojoules and the fat content, also compare the fibre, sugar and salt or sodium content.

10g sugar or more per 100g is a lot, 2g sugar per 100g is a little

20g of fat per 100g is a lot, 3 g of fat per 100g is a little

500mg sodium per 100g is a lot, 100mg per 100g is a little

10g fibre per 100g is a lot, 2g per 100g is a little

USEFUL CONTACTS

THE JEAN HAILES FOUNDATION | www.jeanhailes.org.au | Tel: 1800 151 441

This useful and comprehensive website has a diverse, broad and understandable wealth of health related information, links to other disease specific resources (e.g. Diabetes Australia and the National Heart Foundation) and also translates the latest research findings into practical health and lifestyle approaches for women, their families and their health professionals.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL | www.nhnrc.gov.au

This portal provides quick connection to a comprehensive range of topics relevant for everyday Australians, including families, seniors, parents and carers.

www.australia.gov.au/368 | The Australian Federal Government's information for seniors portal.

www.seniors.gov.au | The online source for all Australians over 50.

ANDROLOGY AUSTRALIA | www.andrologyaustralia.org

The Andrology Australia public website provides quality and evidence-based information for men and their families on a range of male sexual and reproductive health disorders, including prostate disease (incl. prostate cancer), testicular cancer, male infertility, erectile dysfunction and androgen deficiency.

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A U S T R A L I A

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