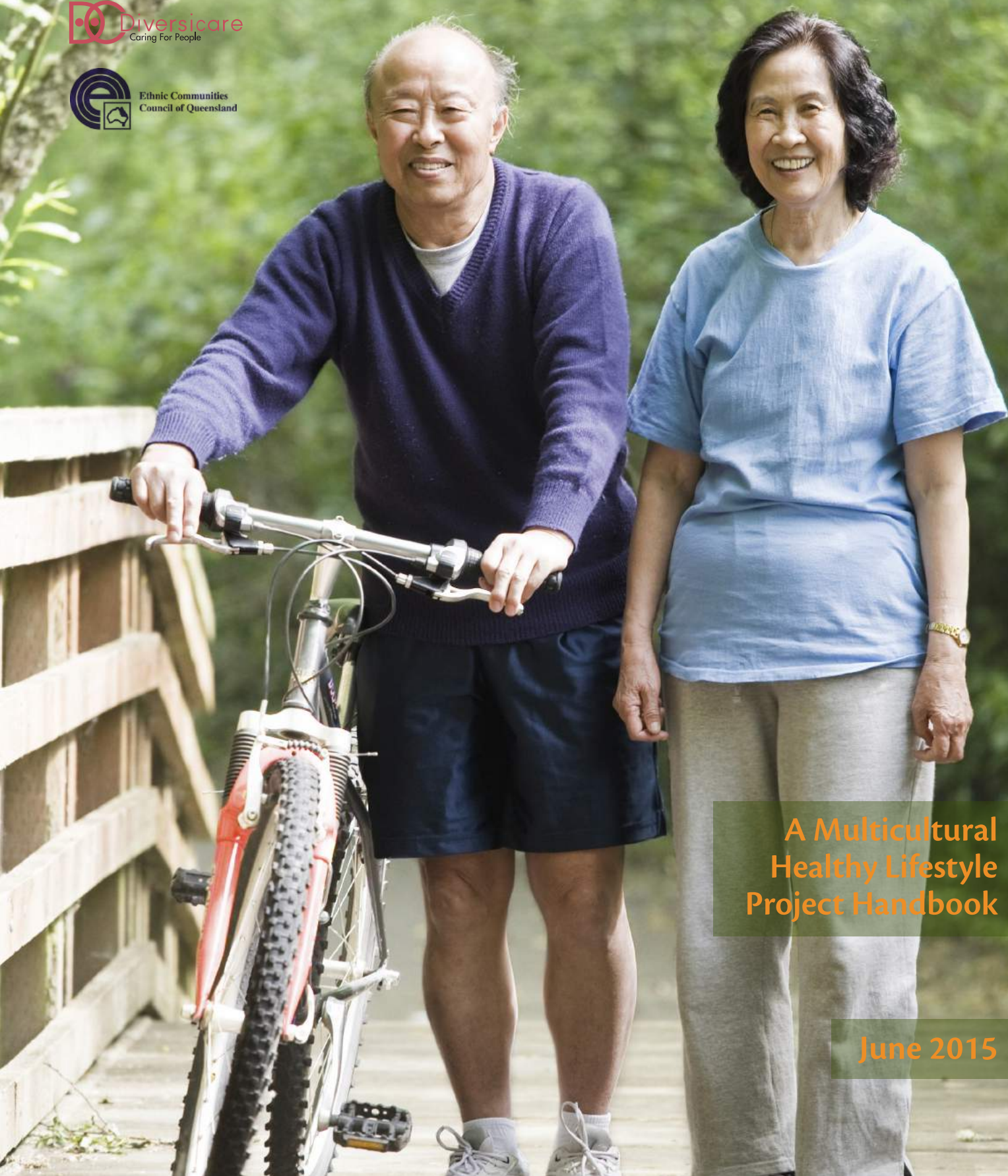


Feel Good, Age Well.



A Multicultural
Healthy Lifestyle
Project Handbook

June 2015

Disclaimer

This publication is aimed at increasing awareness of health conditions and management strategies for maintaining a healthy lifestyle as you age. This is a summary of information from a range of sources believed to be reliable. Diversicare gives no guarantee that the sources are correct and accepts no responsibility for any resultant errors contained herein or for decisions and actions taken as a result, and any damage that may result.

Please note there may be costs associated with some of the resources and services listed in this document. This resource does not replace advice from your doctor or health care professionals.

Please note this book contains information and graphics relating to the human body. While all care has been taken to remain culturally sensitive, please be advised there are some brief references to the human anatomy that may confront some readers.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are given to the people and organisations that have contributed to the creation of this resource.

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Introduction

Welcome

This book provides information about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle as you get older.

We discuss the key health conditions you need to be aware of and highlight a variety of things you can do to support your health.

We also include information about the Australian medical system. At the back of the book you will find a list of helpful organisations that can support you in your health journey.

The accompanying Feel Good, Age Well DVD is available free of charge through our Diversicare offices. The DVD explores many of the health conditions outlined in this book.

Our aim in sharing this information is to support you to feel good and age well.

Thank you.

The Multicultural Healthy Lifestyle Project Team



Contact Diversicare on 1300 348 377



The Australian Medical System



The Australian Medical System

Our medical system aims to provide quality health care.

All doctors and health care providers, such as nurses and dentists, must meet professional standards. This means they are properly trained and have to follow rules about how they look after you. You are entitled to receive the best available care.

If you are unhappy with the service you receive from your medical professional:

1. Talk with your medical professional.
2. If you are not satisfied, complain through your state health ombudsman. They will advise you of your rights and ensure that professional medical standards are followed.

Privacy of your medical information

Any information you provide to your doctors is confidential. They cannot share your medical information with anyone.

The only time a doctor will share information about you is when they send you to a specialist. The doctor will only share the information about your health that will help the specialist with your treatment. This process is called a referral.

You have the right to discuss your treatment options with your doctor.



Interpreting services

If you need someone to interpret for you when you visit a doctor, please use free professional interpreters instead of using family members. Using family members as interpreters can result in the lack of certain topics being discussed due to cultural protocols. It may also result in the exchange of incorrect information.

Having an official interpreter with you when you visit your doctor can be helpful. You can arrange with the receptionist to book this service before your visit.

In Australia doctors have access to a free interpreter service over the phone, called **Doctor's Priority Line (DPL)**. If you need help to understand your doctor you can ask for this service. It is best to ask the receptionist at your doctor's clinic to book this service when you make your appointment. This is usually a few days before you see the doctor. It is important to inform the receptionist early to ensure your doctor is registered with the Doctor's Priority Line.

If you need to see your doctor quickly because you are sick, you can use a phone interpreter, but you need to let the receptionist know that you need an interpreter when you arrive.

To contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) phone 131 450

When you buy your medication you can ask the pharmacist to access the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)**. This will help the pharmacist to explain the medication and answer any questions you may have.



If you need to go to the hospital or use a public health service such as a hearing test, there is a free interpretation service you can use by phone, video link or face-to-face. You can access this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is important to let the staff know that you need an interpreter before you arrive if possible.

The Australian Medical System

Doctors and Medical Centres

Use the phone book or search on the Internet to find your local medical centre and doctors' practices.

The doctor/ patient relationship is important. You should feel comfortable discussing your private and personal concerns with your doctor.

In Australia you can choose your own doctor. It is your choice whether you see a male or female doctor. You can also change your doctor if you are not happy.

The only time you may not have a choice is when you are in a public hospital.



Generally, there are several doctors working at each medical centre or practice. If you would like to see a particular doctor, you need to let the receptionist know when you are booking an appointment.

If you are very sick and need to see a doctor immediately, you can go to the emergency department at your local hospital. You can also call an ambulance. (See page 18). Sometimes you may have to wait at the hospital because people are treated in the order of the seriousness of their illnesses.

There are also doctors who can visit you in your home. This service is generally used for after hours (night time or weekends) and you may be charged an extra fee.

Cost

The cost of health care in Australia varies from medical centre to medical centre and depends on the treatment you require. Some practices offer pensioner or senior discounts. There are also special fee support options for people who have a chronic illness or need to see a doctor regularly.



Medicare

Medicare is the Australian Government's health insurance scheme.

To access Medicare you need to have a current Medicare card. You need your Medicare card every time you go to a doctor or health care professional so it is good to keep this card in your wallet.

You are eligible for a Medicare card if you meet one of the following criteria:

- Are an Australian or New Zealand citizen
- Hold or have applied for a permanent visa
- Can prove a family relationship with an Australian citizen
- Have permission to work in Australia
- Come from a country that holds a reciprocal health agreement with Australia

The Medicare Card allows you to:

- Access free treatment as a public patient in public hospitals
- Visit a doctor that bulk bills
- Access some cheaper medications
- Receive some money back on the cost of health care such as
 - consultation fees
 - medical tests
 - surgeries and operations

If your doctor does not bulk bill, ask the medical receptionist how to access the Medicare rebate when you pay.

To receive a Medicare card you need to fill out a form and take your passport or birth certificate to your local Medicare branch.

It is also important to keep the information on your card up to date. If you move house, you need to let Medicare know.

The Australian Medical System

Bulk Billing

Some medical practices bulk bill. This means they claim the fee for your visit directly from Medicare, so you only have to pay a very small fee or none at all.

Other medical practices offer a bulk billing service at certain times of the day or week. This can help people who may have difficulty affording health care.

Private Health Care

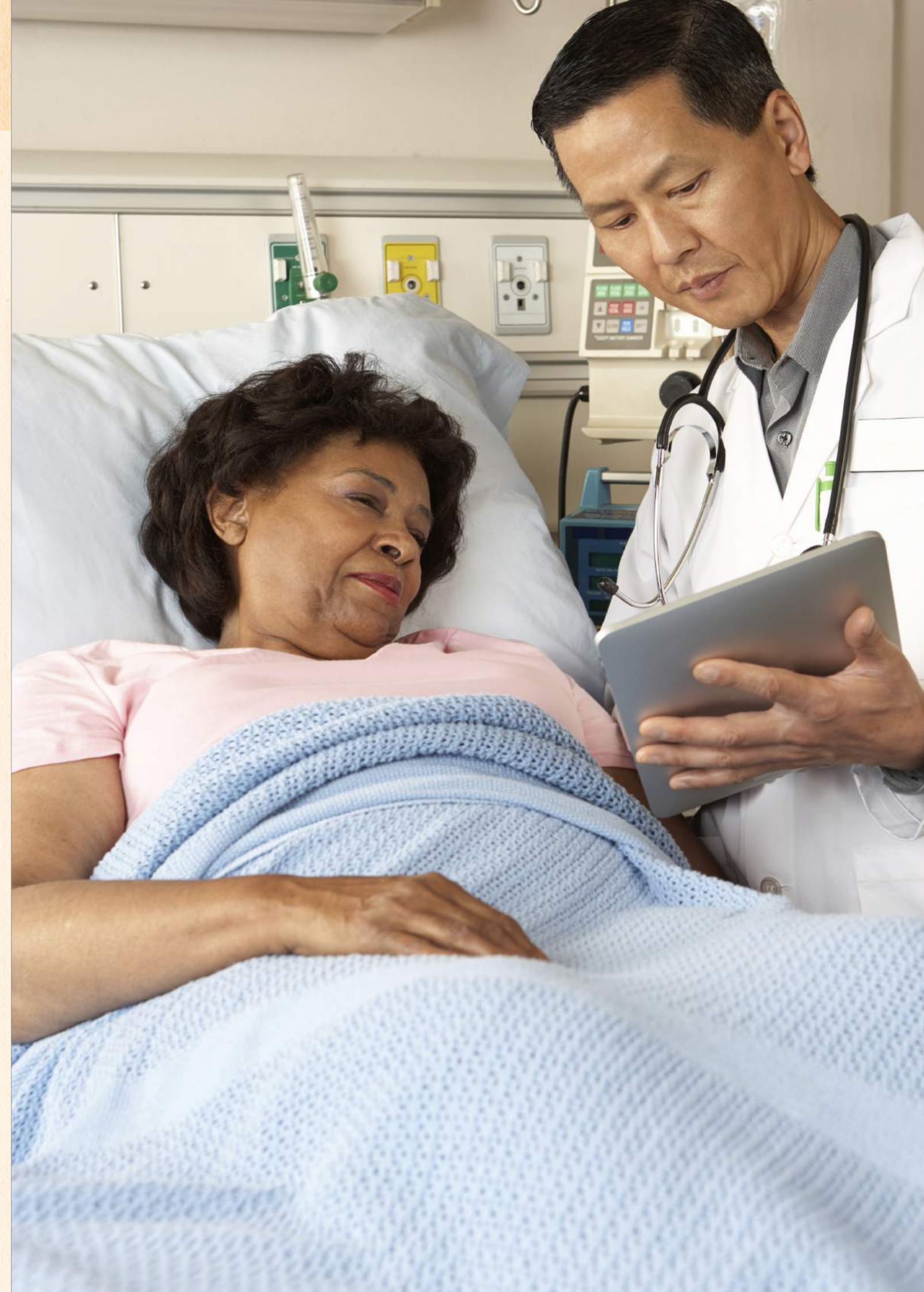
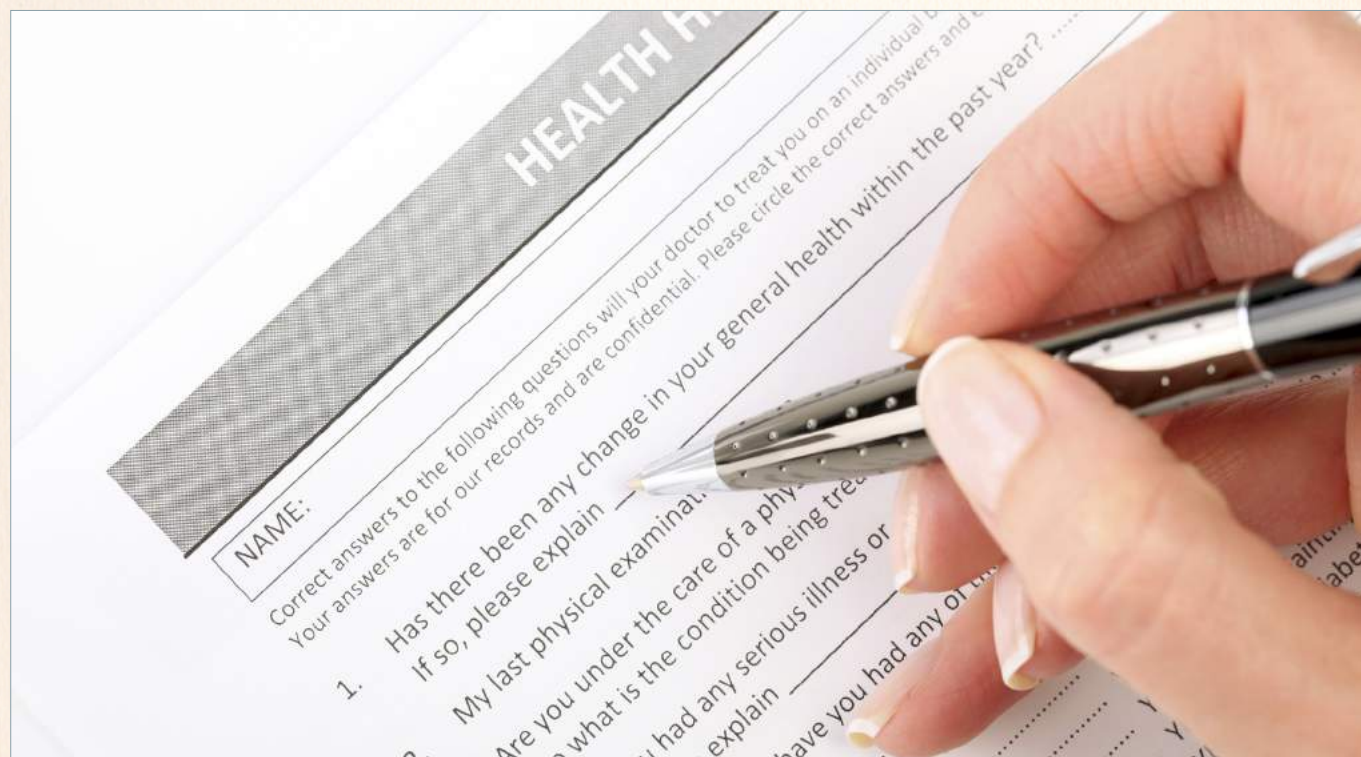
In Australia you have the option of buying private health insurance. There is a variety of registered health funds offering private health insurance services.

Private health insurance allows you to:

- Go to a private hospital or be treated as a private patient in a public hospital.
- Choose which specialist or doctor you wish to see if you are in hospital.
- Receive rebates or money back on various other health care costs such as spectacles, dentistry and physiotherapy. This is in addition to your Medicare rebates.

There are many different policies and products offered by private health care funds that cover various aspects of health care.

It is important to 'shop around' to find a service that best suits your needs and budget, before you choose to invest in private health care.



Key Health Care Professionals

This is a short list of some of the most common health care professionals you may see in the Australian health care system. This list does not include all the medical professions.

Cardiologist

A doctor who specialises in heart conditions.

Counsellor

A trained professional who helps resolve personal and emotional problems through discussion and strategies.

Doctor or General Practitioner (GP) or Physician

A qualified and registered medical professional who can diagnose and treat a variety of illnesses.



Dentist

A person qualified to treat diseases and conditions of the teeth and gums.

Dietician / Nutritionist

A qualified person who is an expert on diet and healthy eating.

Endocrinologist

A doctor who specialises in glands and hormones, such as for people with thyroid conditions and diabetes.



Geriatrician

A doctor who specialises in the health care of the elderly.

Gerontologist

A doctor who plays a supportive and educational role for the elderly.

Gynecologist

A doctor who specialises in women's reproductive organs and women's health.

Hematologist

A doctor who specialises in blood.

Nephrologist

A doctor who specialises in kidney disease.

Nurse

A person qualified to provide medical care and assistance in your home, at a hospital or at a doctor's office.

Key Health Care Professionals

Occupational Therapist

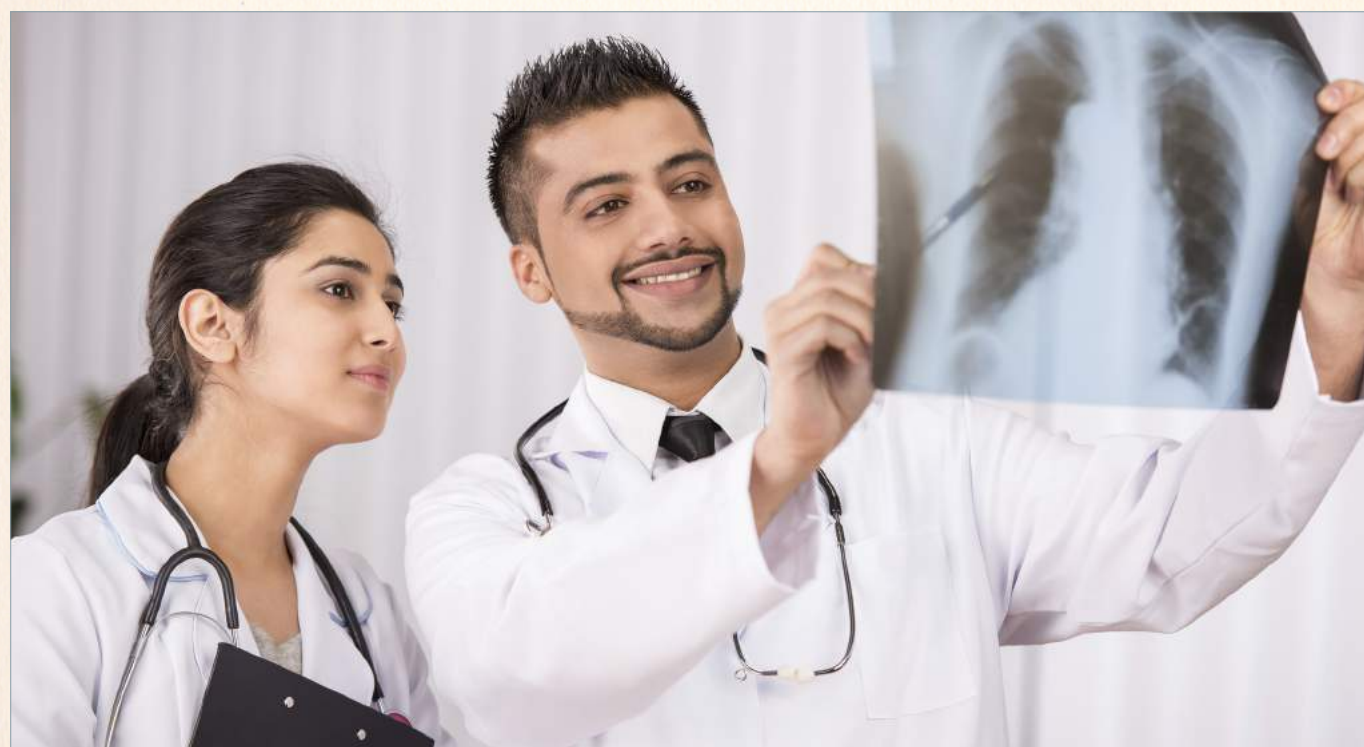
A qualified person who develops ways to assist people get back to their daily tasks after injury or sickness.

Optometrist

A person qualified to diagnose and treat problems with the eyes and eyesight.

Paramedic or Ambulance Officer

A person trained to do medical work including emergency first aid, but who is not usually a fully qualified doctor.



Pathologist

A medical scientist who diagnoses your test results.

Pharmacist or Chemist

A person trained and licensed to prepare and sell medication.

Physiotherapist

A physiotherapist helps people dealing with injuries and pain through exercise and physical movement.

Podiatrist

A doctor who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of conditions of the feet and lower limbs.

Psychiatrist

A doctor who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.



Psychologist

An expert or specialist in the human mind, behaviours and emotions.

Radiographer

A person trained to use x-ray machines and other medical imaging equipment.

Rheumatologist

A doctor who specialises in diseases associated with the bones, joints and muscles.

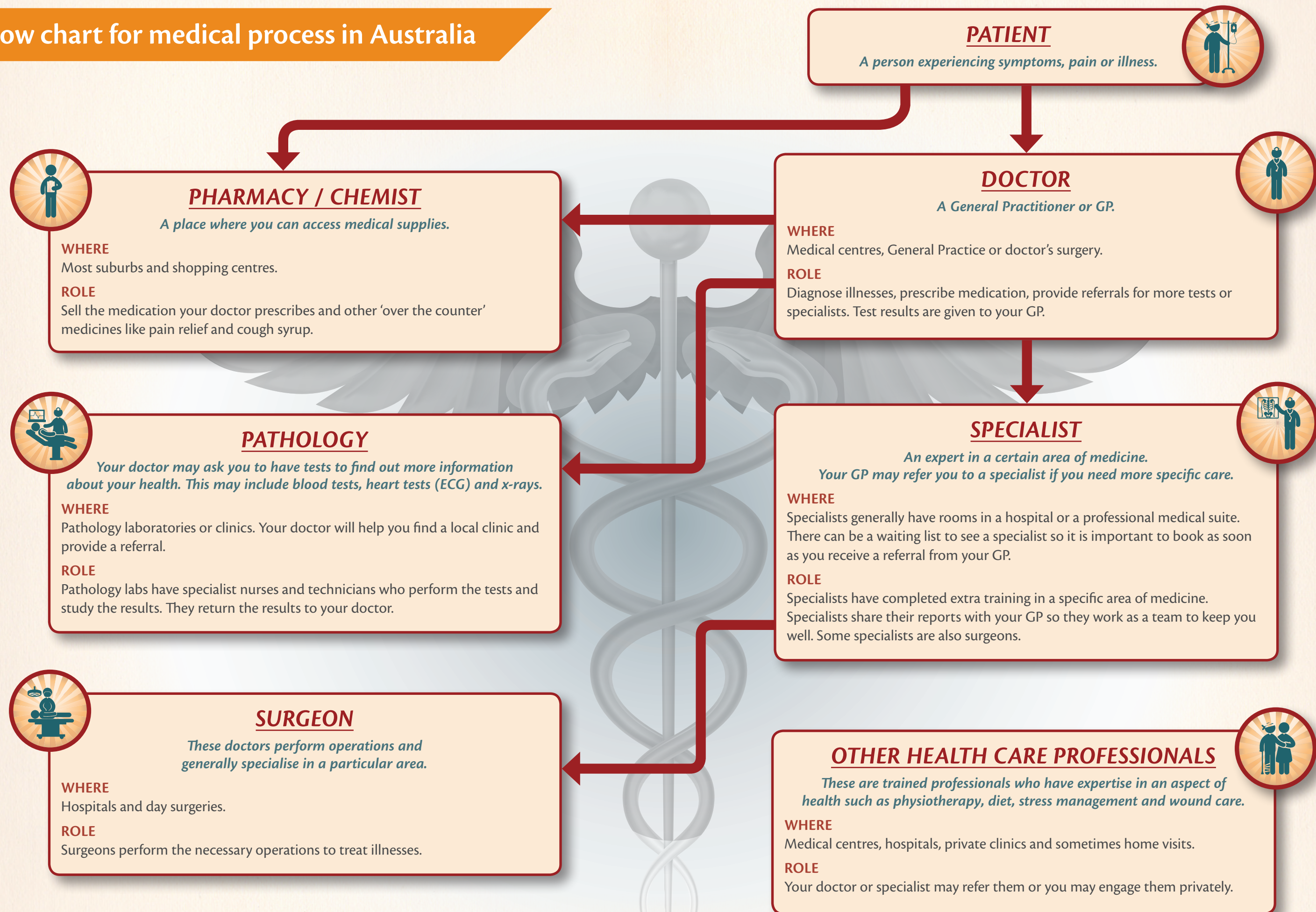
Surgeon

A doctor qualified to perform surgery and operations.

Urologist

A doctor who specialises in the functions and disorders of the urinary system.

Flow chart for medical process in Australia



AUSTRALIA'S EMERGENCY NUMBER IS 000

**If someone is seriously injured or sick, phone 000.
Even if you have no credit on your mobile phone,
you can still call 000.**



What happens when you call 000?

1. You hear a recorded message saying you will be connected.
 2. An operator will ask, 'Do you want police, fire, rescue or ambulance?'
 3. Ask for ambulance.
 4. The operator will ask you some questions:
 - Your name
 - The name of patient (if it is not you)
 - The phone number you are calling from
 - The address (the number, street and city) or closest landmark to where you are
 - The patient's age
 - The patient's symptoms
- NB. If you need an interpreter, ask for one at this point.
Stay calm and answer the questions as clearly as possible.**
5. If you can't talk, an ambulance will be sent to the location of the telephone, so stay on the line and don't hang up.
 6. The operator may give you some first aid instructions to help the person.
 7. Stay on the line and don't hang up the phone until the operator tells you to or the ambulance arrives.

When To Call Emergency Services

If someone is seriously sick or injured you should call emergency services and ask for an ambulance.

People sometimes hesitate to call if they are unsure about whether the situation is an emergency, but it is better to be cautious and call rather than cause delay.

The emergency services telephone staff are trained to help you, and ambulance officers can check the person's health and provide advice.

YOU SHOULD CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES IF SOMEONE HAS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- Unconsciousness
- Chest pain
- Severe headache
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe stomach pain
- Major or uncontrolled bleeding from an injury
- Severe back pain
- Large or deep burns
- Convulsions or fits
- Electric shock
- Difficulty walking, standing or sitting after a fall
- Stroke (the symptoms include a drooped mouth, numbness, loss of function in hand or arm or slurred speech.)

When the ambulance arrives, the ambulance officers will check the patient. They may take the patient to hospital. Sometimes they provide first aid and leave the patient to recover.

Ambulance officers are not doctors and cannot prescribe medication.

If you go to hospital by ambulance

In hospital, people are treated in order of the seriousness of their illness. This is called triage.

This could mean that someone who has come in after is seen before you. It may appear that the doctors are not treating anyone or you may have to wait for a long time. This can be because people arriving by ambulance may be in a more serious condition than you and need to be seen immediately.

Please wait patiently, but if your condition worsens or you become concerned you may ask the staff at the counter for assistance.

**When you arrive at the hospital,
remember to ask for an interpreter if you need one.**

Common medical terms

Angiogram

This is a special x-ray that shows whether or not the coronary arteries are narrowed or blocked. Under a local anesthetic, a small tube is inserted into an artery in a person's arm or groin and guided into the heart.

Angioplasty and stent implantation

This is a procedure that restores blood flow to the heart by opening the blockage using a small balloon that is inserted into the artery. A small metal tube called a stent is also inserted and then left in the artery to keep it open.

Blood Pressure

Is the measure of how hard (pressure) the blood is being pumped around your body by the heart and can indicate problems with either the heart or arteries.

Blood Test

A sample of your blood is taken from your veins to test and diagnose disease or illness.

Cholesterol

A fatty substance that can be found in the cells of the body. Eating unhealthy food can cause high cholesterol. There is 'good cholesterol' and 'bad cholesterol'. Too much bad cholesterol can block and damage your arteries.

Diagnosis

Identifying an illness or other problem by examining the symptoms.

Dialysis

The process of artificially removing waste and fluids from the body when the kidneys can no longer do so. A special machine completes this process.

Electrocardiogram (ECG)

A test performed by placing special leads on a person's chest, arms and legs. These leads look at electrical impulses around the heart and check heart function.

Fatigue

Extreme tiredness or exhaustion.

Fever

A body temperature that is higher than normal (37°C) and may indicate an infection or illness.

Hypertension

High blood pressure.

Hyperglycaemia

High blood sugar or high blood glucose levels, common in people with diabetes.

Hypoglycaemia

Also known as low blood sugar or low blood glucose, common in people with diabetes.

Hypotension

Low blood pressure.

Prescription

A doctor's written authorisation for medicine or treatment.

Referral

A doctor may request you see a specialist or another doctor for further treatment or a second opinion on their diagnosis.

Stools

Another name for faeces or 'poo'.

Symptom

Something experienced physically or mentally that indicates the body is not well.

Temperature

The measure of a person's internal heat that may indicate illness. Normal adult temperature is approximately 37°C.

Vaccine

A medicine, usually given via injection, that provides immunity against one or more diseases.

X-ray

An x-ray is a medical image of the body's internal organs and bones that helps diagnose disease or illness.

Good questions to ask your doctor

It is important you feel safe and comfortable with your doctor.
You should feel you can communicate honestly.

Although a doctor is a professional, it is your right as a patient to ask any questions concerning your health, medication or any other treatment your doctor recommends.



Some people find it helpful to have a trusted family member accompany them when they visit a doctor.

This can help ensure you clearly understand what the doctor says and support any decisions regarding treatment options. You can take this person for support but not to interpret for you.

Conclusion

In Australia we have a health care system that has:

- Well-trained doctors
- Public health care providers
- Affordable access to medication

Even though health care professionals are experts, you also have many rights as a patient.

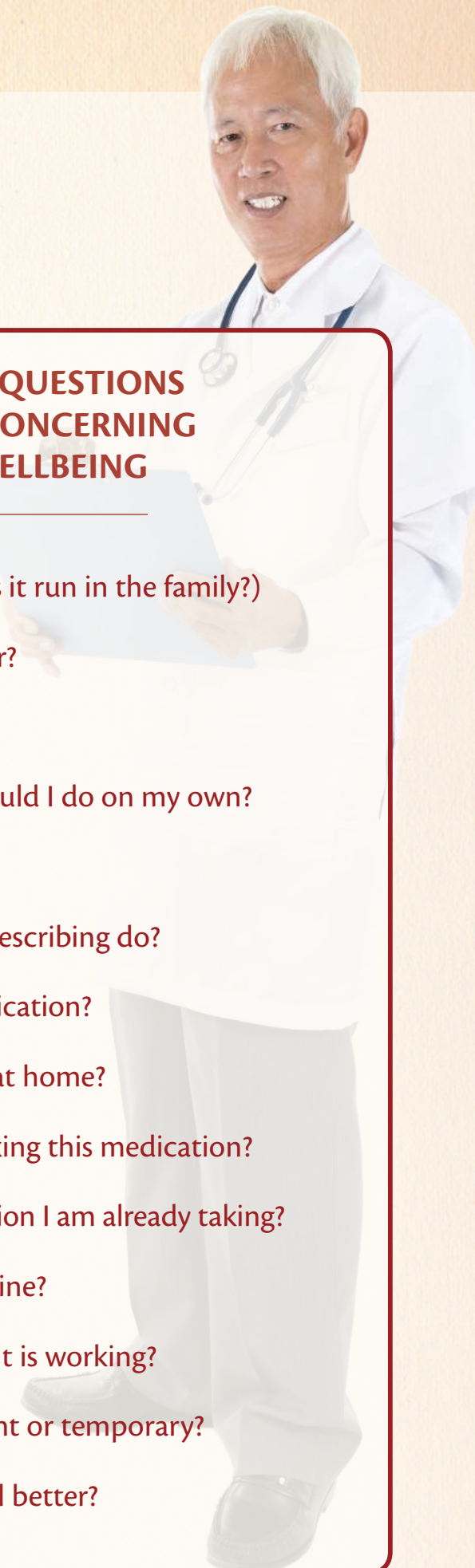
Information on health conditions and prevention strategies is available and can support you to manage your health. There are also many organisations and support networks designed to support you to live a healthy lifestyle, particularly as you age. (See page 77).

Write a list of the questions you would like to ask your doctor before you visit them. Take this list with you to help you remember during your appointment.



HERE ARE SOME USEFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR CONCERNING YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

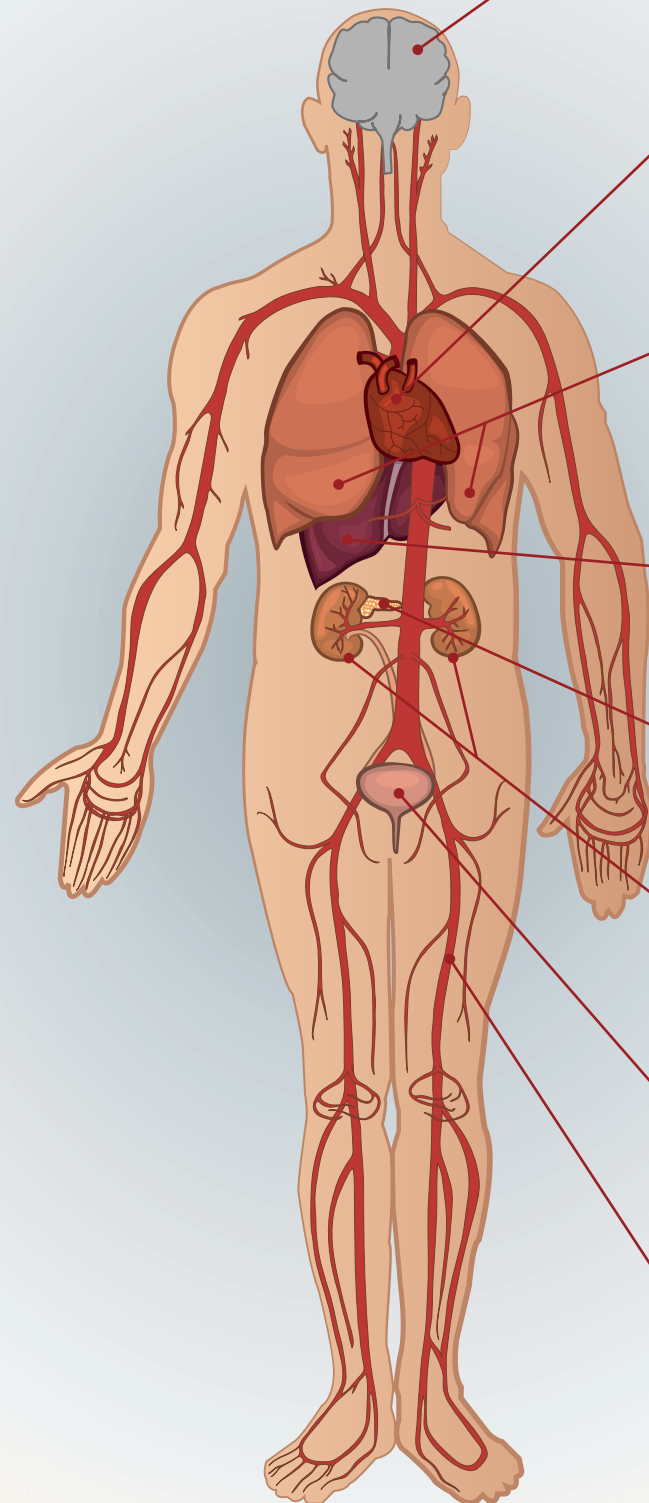
- Is this condition hereditary? (Does it run in the family?)
- When should I next see the doctor?
- What are my treatment options?
- If my symptoms worsen, what should I do on my own?
- When should I contact a doctor?
- What will the medicine you are prescribing do?
- How and when do I take this medication?
- Where do I store this medication at home?
- Are there any side effects from taking this medication?
- Will this be okay with the medication I am already taking?
- Do I need to change my daily routine?
- How will I know that my treatment is working?
- Is my medical condition permanent or temporary?
- How long will it take for me to feel better?



The Body and Healthy Ageing



Body systems and common conditions of ageing



BRAIN

The central nervous centre for all bodily sensations and thoughts.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Stroke, Alzheimer's disease, dementia and mental health conditions.

HEART

Pumps blood around the body
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Cardiovascular conditions and heart attack.

LUNGS

A pair of organs that extract oxygen from the air and transfer it to the blood at the same time as they expel carbon dioxide from the body.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Pneumonia, emphysema.

LIVER

Produces bile, stores and releases vitamins into the bloodstream. It also removes toxins such as alcohol from the blood.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Cirrhosis, hepatitis.

PANCREAS

Produces the hormone insulin.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Diabetes.

KIDNEYS

A pair of organs that filter waste products from the blood and produce urine.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Renal disease.

BLADDER

A hollow organ that stores urine from the kidneys.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
Cystitis, urinary incontinence.

ARTERIES

The tunnels by which blood is transported around the body.
COMMON CONDITIONS OF AGEING:
High blood pressure.
Blocked or clogged arteries resulting in stroke or heart attack.
Linked to cholesterol buildup.

Common health conditions fact sheet

DIABETES

BRIEF OUTLINE

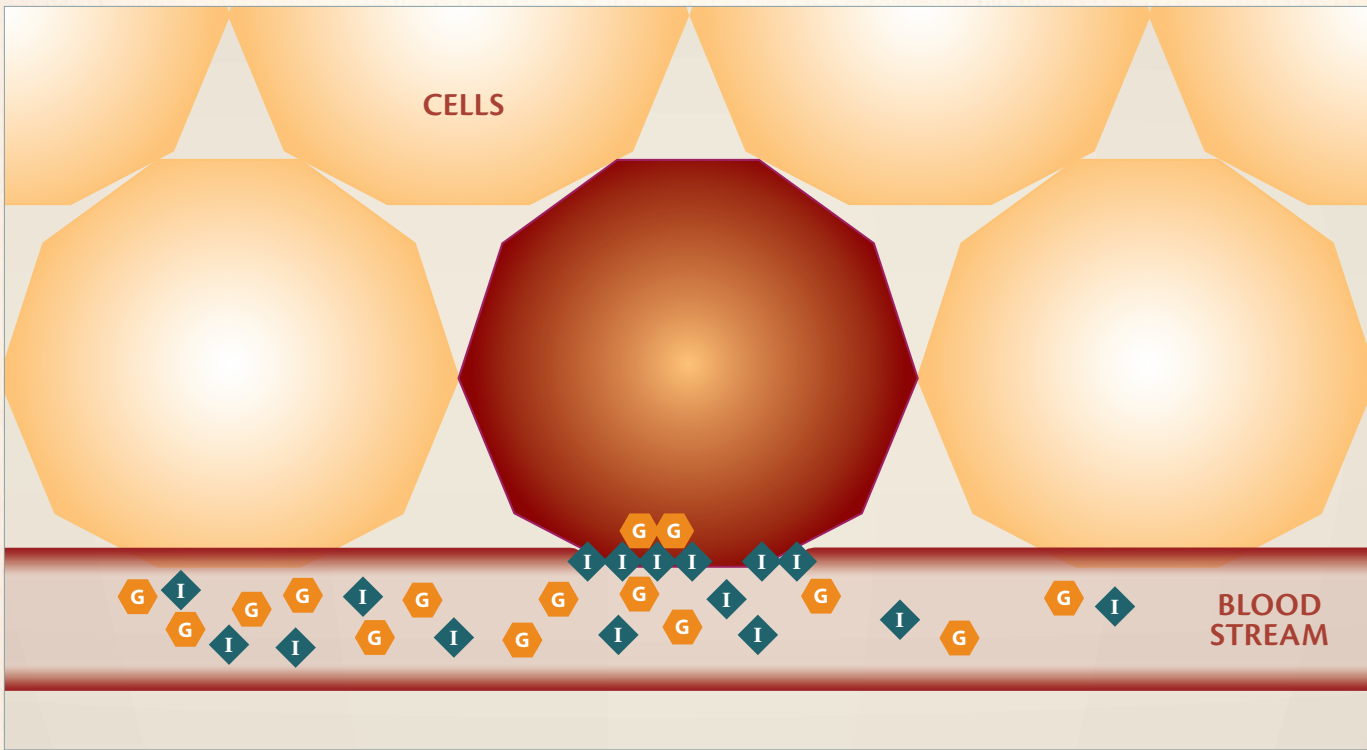
Diabetes means too much sugar in your blood.

This is because an organ in your body called the pancreas does not make enough of the hormone insulin.

Your body turns the food you eat into glucose, a type of sugar. Both glucose and insulin travel in the blood.

Insulin allows glucose to leave the bloodstream and move into your cells.

Cells need this sugar to work properly.



Both glucose and insulin travel in the blood. Insulin allows glucose to leave the bloodstream and move into your cells.

Insulin helps keep your blood sugar levels normal. Not too high, nor too low. Without insulin, sugar builds up in your blood. This is called diabetes.

There are two main types of diabetes. The first, type 1 diabetes, is also known as insulin-dependent diabetes. People are generally born with this type of diabetes or develop the condition early in life.

The second type of diabetes is called type 2 or diet-controlled diabetes. The likelihood of developing this type of diabetes increases with age. Type 2 diabetes can be caused by unhealthy habits such as poor diet, obesity, smoking and lack of exercise.

Common health conditions fact sheet

DIABETES

RISK FACTORS

Some cultural communities in Australia are at greater risk of developing diabetes than others.

Women who had diabetes during their pregnancies are also at higher risk.

Other risks include:

- Unhealthy lifestyle
- High blood pressure
- Inactivity
- Too much sugar
- Smoking

STATISTICS

Diabetes is increasing all over the world, including Australia, where it is now considered an epidemic.

Type 1 diabetes accounts for 10% to 15% of all cases and is typically diagnosed before the age of 40.

Type 2 diabetes accounts for 80% to 85% of all diagnosed cases.

SYMPTOMS

- Always feeling hungry
- Unexplained weight loss
- Excessive thirst
- Passing more urine than usual
- Feeling tired and lethargic
- Mood swings
- Headaches, blurred vision or feeling dizzy
- Leg cramps, pain or numbness in your hands or feet
- Itching and skin infections, or wounds that heal slowly

If you are in a high-risk category or have experienced any of these symptoms, please visit your doctor for a health check.

Common health conditions fact sheet

DIABETES

DIAGNOSIS

Your doctor will conduct simple blood and urine tests to check your blood sugar levels.

TREATMENT

Diabetes cannot be cured, but it can be effectively managed. The first goal of treatment is to lower your blood sugar levels.

Treating **Type 1 diabetes** usually requires daily injections of insulin.

Type 2 diabetes can often be managed with lifestyle changes, such as healthy diet and regular exercise. Medication is also sometimes prescribed.

It is important to see your doctor regularly if you have diabetes.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

The long-term goal of treating diabetes is to prevent other health problems from developing.

If you are diagnosed with diabetes you will need to see your doctor regularly.

They will monitor:

- Your blood pressure
- Your legs and feet
- The back part of your eye
- Your kidney function

These are the areas most affected by diabetes.

There are many support networks available to provide information and resources relating to diabetes in Australia. If you would like more information, please ask your doctor.

Common health conditions fact sheet

DIABETES

SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

There are many things a person living with diabetes should be aware of, including:

1. BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

Check your blood sugar levels daily using a special medical kit.

A doctor or diabetes nurse will show you when and how to test your blood sugar levels. Your doctor may want to see a record of your daily blood sugar levels to help manage your condition.

2. WOUND CARE

Be very careful with cuts, scratches and insect bites so they don't become infected.

Diabetes can affect circulation and the body's ability to heal. The feet and lower legs are particularly susceptible so check your feet regularly. Treat any infections quickly.



If you have limited mobility, use a large mirror or ask family and friends to check your feet often.

3. DIET

It is extremely important to watch what you eat if you have diabetes. Please follow the advice given by your doctor or dietician about when and what to eat.

4. EXERCISE

Living a physically active lifestyle is also important. This helps blood circulation, strengthens the body and supports general wellbeing.

Doctors, physiotherapists and occupational therapists can recommend the best way to exercise if you are living with diabetes.



Many people visit a dietician when they are diagnosed with diabetes.

A dietician will help you develop meal plans and help you eat healthier foods.

Common health conditions fact sheet

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

BRIEF OUTLINE

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a common condition of the circulatory system. When your heart beats, it pumps blood around the body through your arteries. Hypertension means that blood consistently pumps through your arteries at a higher pressure than normal.

Two readings measure blood pressure:
The **normal** blood pressure range is approximately 120 over 80.
A reading of 140 over 90 is considered **high**.

Blood pressure is naturally higher during:

- Exertion
- Exercise
- Stressful situations

If blood pressure is still high when you are resting, your heart is overworked.



Some people have low blood pressure. This is called hypotension and occurs when there is too little pressure to pump blood adequately around the body.

Common health conditions fact sheet

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

RISK FACTORS

The risk of high blood pressure increases as we age. This is because arteries harden and become less flexible. Your body detects this change. This makes your heart pump harder and your blood pressure rise.

Other risk factors include:

- A family history of high blood pressure
- Poor diet and lack of exercise
- Smoking
- Heavy drinking (six or more standard drinks a day)

There is also a relationship between some health conditions and high blood pressure, including:

- Kidney disease
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol

High blood pressure is also closely linked with heart disease and may be one of the warning signs.

STATISTICS

High blood pressure is a very common condition. One in seven Australians are diagnosed with hypertension.



Common health conditions fact sheet

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

SYMPTOMS

There are usually no symptoms of hypertension. You can have high blood pressure, and not know it. For this reason, it is important to visit your doctor regularly to check that your blood pressure is not rising as you grow older.



Chemists can also test your blood pressure for free.

DIAGNOSIS

Your GP will check your blood pressure with a special instrument or machine. If your blood pressure is high, your doctor may order further tests including:

- Wearing a monitor that measures your blood pressure over a 24-hour period
- Asking you to test your blood pressure at home

Blood pressure machines can be hired from many chemists or you can purchase one.

TREATMENT

If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure, your doctor may prescribe medication to help lower your blood pressure. This is very important because, left untreated or unmanaged, high blood pressure can lead to serious health conditions. These include:

- Heart attack
- Kidney disease
- Eye damage
- Stroke

THINGS TO REMEMBER

High blood pressure has no symptoms. It can be the cause or result of some serious health concerns. By having regular health check ups with your doctor, you can diagnose and monitor high blood pressure before it becomes a problem and affects other areas of your health.

Common health conditions fact sheet

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

There are many things you can do to minimise high blood pressure including:

1. EATING WELL

Eat a healthy diet and avoid processed foods.

Cut down the salt in your diet. Salty foods make your body retain water. Too much water stored in your body makes your blood pressure rise.



Salt is hidden in many foods – like bread, noodles and packaged foods.

Some soy sauce is also very high in salt, and should be avoided. Using herbs and spices, such as ginger, can be an effective substitute for flavoured foods.

2. EXERCISING

It is important to increase your physical activity or to exercise. If you are overweight, it can be helpful to lose some weight.

NB: Check with your doctor before changing your exercise routine.

3. RELAXING

Minimising stress is another positive step. Make lifestyle changes that encourage relaxation. Participating in Tai Chi, meditation or in social activities that make you happy can help you deal with stress in your life.



Common health conditions fact sheet

STROKE

BRIEF OUTLINE

A stroke can also be called a cerebrovascular accident (CVA).
A stroke happens when the blood supply to the brain is suddenly disrupted.
A stroke is a medical emergency.
There are two types of stroke:

- 1. **Ischemic stroke**
When an artery becomes blocked and stops the blood flowing to the brain.
- 2. **Hemorrhagic stroke**
When there is a break in an artery wall.

Over time, untreated high blood pressure can weaken the walls of your arteries. Sometimes the walls break, and blood damages the surrounding tissue or organs.
When this occurs in your brain it causes a stroke.
Some strokes are fatal, while others cause permanent or temporary disability. The longer a stroke goes untreated, the greater the chance of brain damage. If you suspect a stroke or heart attack you need to call an ambulance immediately on 000.

RISK FACTORS

The risk of stroke increases with age. Other risk factors include:

- Gender – men are more at risk than women
- A family history of high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke
- Existing health conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol)
- Poor diet and lack of exercise
- Smoking
- Heavy drinking (six or more standard drinks a day)

STATISTICS

One in six Australians will have a stroke in their lifetime.
51,000 people suffered a stroke in 2014. That equates to someone having a stroke every ten minutes.

Common health conditions fact sheet

STROKE

SYMPTOMS

Getting help quickly for someone suffering a stroke is very important.
Symptoms include:

- Weakness, numbness or paralysis of the face, arm or leg
- Difficulty speaking or understanding
- Dizziness, loss of balance or an unexplained fall
- Sudden loss of vision or blurred vision
- Severe and abrupt onset of headache
- Difficulty swallowing
- Sudden unconsciousness



*How do you know if someone is having a stroke?
Think F-A-S-T.*

The FAST test is the easiest way to remember the most common signs of stroke.

F	is for Face	Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
A	is for Arm	Can they lift both arms?
S	is for Speech	Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
T	is for Time	It is critical to call emergency services on 000 immediately if you see any of these signs.

Common health conditions fact sheet

STROKE

DIAGNOSIS

The majority of people who have had a stroke are admitted to hospital. Here they receive a variety of tests and treatments.

Some people can suffer a series of small strokes called **transient ischemic attacks (TIAs)**. These have the same symptoms as a stroke but may last a shorter time.

If your doctor suspects you have had TIAs they will send you to hospital to conduct tests and check your brain, heart and arteries.



TREATMENT

It is vital that someone suffering a stroke is treated promptly in a hospital. The initial treatment for a stroke is to minimise the damage to the brain. This may be done by medication and surgery.

Unfortunately, there is no treatment available to repair damaged brain tissue.

When someone is recovering from a stroke there is a variety of rehabilitation and treatments available to support them to regain aspects of their health. These can include:

- Speech therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Working with a dietician
- Medication

Lifestyle changes may be recommended to prevent the risk of having another stroke.

Common health conditions fact sheet

STROKE

THINGS TO REMEMBER

A stroke is a serious health condition and needs emergency care. Many valuable resources provide free information about stroke. If you would like to know more about this condition, please ask your doctor. Getting your blood pressure checked regularly and living a healthy lifestyle are important.

SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Living a healthy lifestyle, including:
- Regular health checks
 - Eating a balanced diet
 - Remaining physically active
 - Maintaining a positive outlook on life
 - Quitting smoking
 - Reducing how much alcohol you drink



Common health conditions fact sheet

HEART CONDITIONS

BRIEF OUTLINE

Illnesses or conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels are called cardiovascular diseases.

The most common cardiovascular condition is coronary heart disease.

Coronary heart disease can cause a heart attack. This occurs when an artery becomes blocked and stops blood from reaching the heart muscle. The longer an artery remains blocked, the more damage is done to the heart muscle.

Another common heart condition is hypertensive heart disease.

This refers to heart problems that occur because of high blood pressure.

Hypertensive heart disease is the leading cause of illness and death from high blood pressure.

Other common cardiovascular conditions include:

- **Angina**
which causes chest pain because the heart muscles do not get enough oxygenated blood
- **Atrial fibrillation**
where an irregular heartbeat causes the heart to pump erratically.
This irregular heart beat can feel like a flutter in your chest.

RISK FACTORS

The risk of developing a heart condition increases as we age.

Other risk factors include:

- A family history of heart disease
- Cultural background
- Pre-existing health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes
- Unhealthy lifestyle and diet
- Too much alcohol
- Smoking

STATISTICS

Heart disease affects one in six Australians, and is the leading cause of death in Australia.

Over 35% of Australians aged 55 to 64 have a long-term heart condition, and this number rises to 63 percent of people aged over 75 years.

Common health conditions fact sheet

HEART CONDITIONS

SYMPTOMS

A heart attack is a medical emergency – phone 000, the emergency number.

- Chest pain, pressure or discomfort
- Pain or aching in the shoulders, neck, arms, jaw and back
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Cold sweats
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid, irregular heart beats

**If these warning signs are present,
call an ambulance immediately.**

Other heart conditions may have symptoms such as:

- Weakness and fatigue
- Palpitations or a pounding feeling in the chest
- Dizziness
- Chest discomfort
- Shortness of breath

**If you experience any of these symptoms,
it is important to see your doctor for a check up.**

Common health conditions fact sheet

HEART CONDITIONS

DIAGNOSIS

There are many tests available for your doctor to assess your heart.

Your doctor will listen to your heart with a special instrument called a **stethoscope**.

You may also be asked to have blood tests. It is also common to have an **electrocardiogram (ECG)** test that may reveal any heart problems.

There is also a variety of x-ray and imaging tests available using special machines such as **cardiac computed tomography (CT)** and **magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**. These scans take accurate and detailed pictures of your heart and arteries.

Your doctor may also arrange for a **Holter heart monitor** to be worn over a 24-hour period to test your heart during daily activities. This test is usually performed at home and does not interfere with your day-to-day life.



TREATMENT

If you are diagnosed with a heart condition, your doctor will often prescribe medication. It is important to take this medication, sometimes for the rest of your life.

Surgery is commonly used to repair heart damage.

Common health conditions fact sheet

HEART CONDITIONS

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Knowing you have a heart condition helps you take action before your heart is damaged or before a heart attack occurs.

Regular check ups with your doctor or health care professional are recommended.

There are many support networks available to provide information and resources relating to heart health in Australia. If you would like to know more, please ask your doctor.

SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

These positive steps can reduce the likelihood of developing a heart condition:

- Regular exercise
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Lowering cholesterol
- Regular blood pressure checks
- Reducing your consumption of alcohol
- Avoiding smoking



Making small changes can have a big impact on improving your health.

Common health conditions fact sheet

KIDNEY CONDITIONS

BRIEF OUTLINE

Health conditions relating to the kidneys are also called renal conditions.

The kidneys are two bean-shaped organs located below the rib cage. They filter and clean the blood. Damaged kidneys cannot filter and clean blood effectively. This creates a build-up of waste and fluids inside the body.

It is important to drink plenty of fluid, preferably water.

Kidney function is measured in stages.

Losing more than one third of your kidney function is called **chronic kidney disease**.

Kidney failure occurs when the kidneys can no longer remove waste from the blood or control fluid levels in the body.

As we age, the build up of cholesterol and fatty deposits in the renal artery can result in less blood reaching the kidney. This may lead to high blood pressure and reduced kidney function.

The leading causes of chronic kidney disease are:

- **Diabetes**
High sugar level in your blood can damage the filtering units of your kidneys.
- **High blood pressure**
The force of the blood flow stretches and weakens the blood vessels and this reduces the kidneys' ability to remove fluid.

RISK FACTORS

People are at increased risk of developing kidney disease if they:

- Are overweight
- Are over 60
- Have a family history of kidney disease
- Have had a stroke, heart problems or high blood pressure
- Have diabetes
- Smoke

STATISTICS

Chronic kidney disease affects one in ten Australians aged 18 years and over. 42% of people over 75 have kidney damage.

Common health conditions fact sheet

KIDNEY CONDITIONS

SYMPTOMS

The early stages of kidney disease have few symptoms.

A person can lose over 90% of kidney function before they experience symptoms.

Symptoms include:

- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Lack of concentration
- Vomiting
- Changes in the amount and number of times urine is passed
- Blood in the urine
- Pain in the kidney area

DIAGNOSIS

If you experience any of these symptoms, please see your doctor.

There are simple tests to check your kidney function, including a urine test and a blood test.



Common health conditions fact sheet

KIDNEY CONDITIONS

TREATMENT

When kidney disease is diagnosed early it can be treated with medication, diet and lifestyle changes.

Treatment for kidney failure requires **blood dialysis** using a special machine.

Some people may require a kidney transplant.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Your health care professional can recommend organisations that provide free advice and support for you and your family on kidney health.

As we age, we are more at risk of experiencing urinary **incontinence**. Incontinence means involuntary leakage of urine or faeces. If you experience either of these, please discuss this with your doctor or health care professional. Support is available to manage incontinence.

It is important to stay hydrated. Drinking water is the best way, but eating certain foods such as fruit and vegetables or drinking tea and juice also helps.



SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

There are many positive steps you can take to prevent or slow the progress of kidney conditions:

- Eating a healthy balanced diet
- Regular exercise
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Lowering cholesterol and high blood pressure
- Maintaining healthy blood sugar levels
- Avoiding smoking and alcohol

Common health conditions fact sheet

KIDNEY CONDITIONS

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) may be linked to kidney health. Urinary tract infections are common in women and older people. They can occur in the urethra, bladder and kidneys. It is important to treat urinary tract infections immediately.

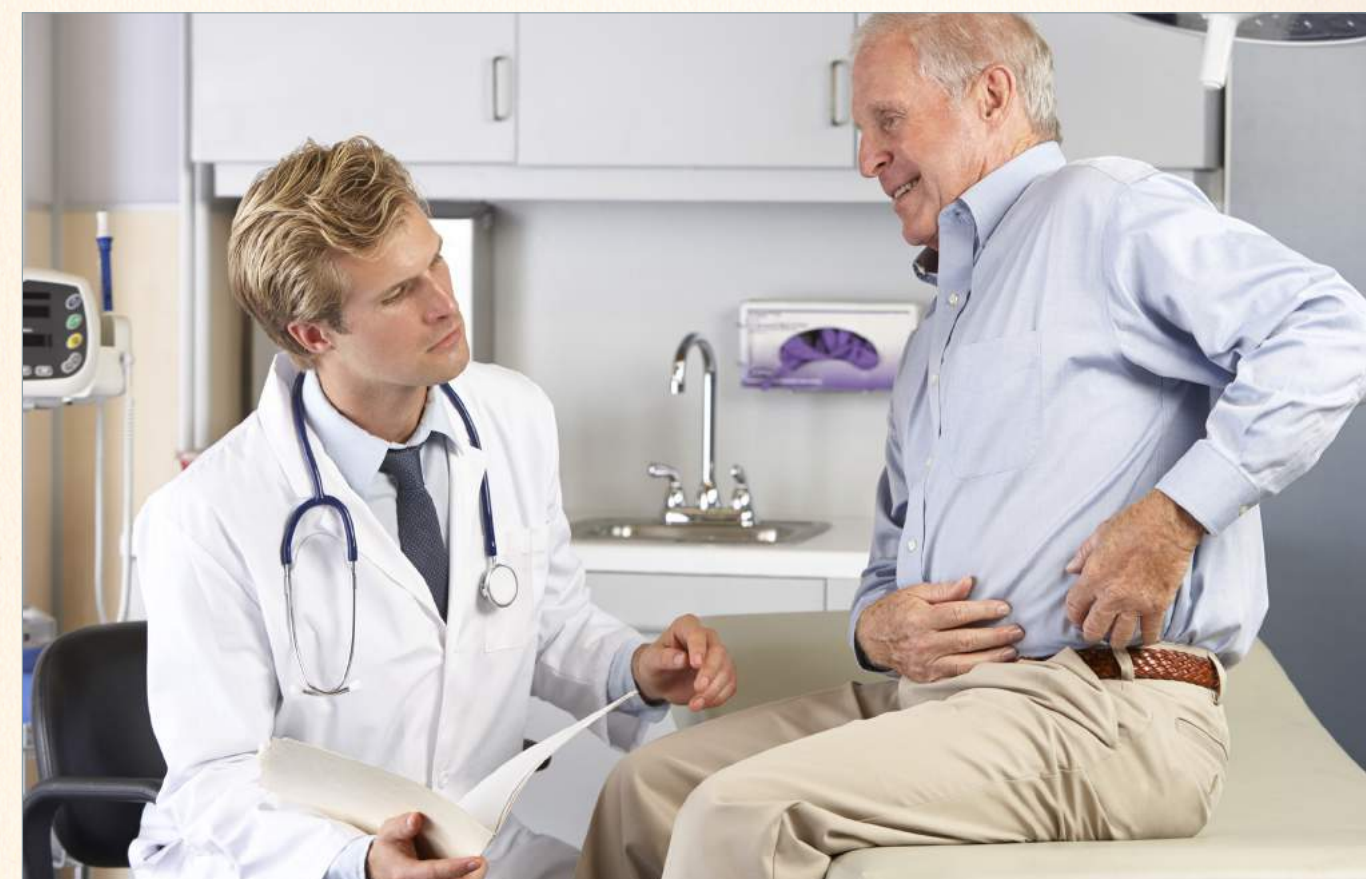
SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of a urinary tract infection include:

- A burning sensation when passing urine
- Needing to urinate urgently
- Strong-smelling urine
- Urine that is cloudy, bloody or dark
- Having a temperature

TREATMENT

Urinary tract infections can be treated with antibiotics to prevent infection damaging the kidneys.



Common health conditions fact sheet

MENTAL HEALTH

BRIEF OUTLINE

Mental health and wellbeing involves a person's:

- Sense of confidence and self-esteem
- Thoughts and perceptions
- Feelings and moods
- Behaviour
- Enjoyment of day-to-day life

Good mental health allows us to maintain positive relationships and overcome challenges.

Mental illness occurs when a person's mood, thoughts or behaviour change or become abnormal and affect their ability to function.

In Australia, the medical profession recognises many conditions that affect your mood, behaviour and mental health. The main categories of mental illness that effect older Australians are:

- **Anxiety disorders**
Where a person experiences fear and worry that are excessive in the circumstances. They may find it difficult to control their fear and the worry may interfere with everyday life.
- **Mood disorders**
Where a person experiences moods and feelings that are beyond the normal range of day-to-day ups and downs. They may become deeply sad or depressed and even consider ending their life.
- **Substance abuse**
Where a person may be addicted to the use of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medication.
- **Schizophrenia/psychotic disorders**
Where a person's ability to think about, perceive and respond to the world around them are affected by serious brain conditions. This can affect their moods and behaviour.

Dementia is sometimes considered a mental illness although this is not the case.

People with dementia experience changes in the brain that make it difficult for them to understand daily events.

Dementia may affect memory and the ability to think clearly, as well as a person's physical health.

Common health conditions fact sheet

MENTAL HEALTH

People diagnosed with an anxiety condition called **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** are likely to have experienced extreme conditions such as:

- Hardship
- Trauma
- Crisis
- Living under threat
- Long-term stress

STATISTICS

Every year approximately one in five Australians experiences a mental health condition.

**Mental wellbeing is a legitimate health concern.
Some people delay seeking help, as they fear shame or discrimination for being unwell.
This can be influenced by culture.
There is no shame in requesting professional or medical advice for mental health concerns and
Australia provides many specialist services in this area.**

RISK FACTORS

Mental health conditions have many causes.

As we get older different factors can trigger mental conditions including:

- Physical illness
- Loss of friends and family
- Changes in lifestyle and physical ability
- Chronic pain
- Medication and side-effects
- Social isolation

Common health conditions fact sheet

MENTAL HEALTH

SYMPTOMS

ANXIETY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panic attacks• Extreme worry, nervousness and fear• Obsessive compulsive behavior• Not wanting to leave the house• Nightmares or problems sleeping• Fatigue• Headaches and nausea• Cold or sweaty hands and feet• Racing heart• Shallow breathing• Muscle tension• Dry mouth• Inability to be calm and still	DEPRESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extreme sadness, heavy heartedness, numbness or hopelessness• Loss of pleasure from daily life• Feelings of guilt and negativity• Suicidal thoughts• Sleeping too much or too little• Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain• Decreased energy and fatigue, feeling 'slowed down'• Restlessness and irritability• Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nightmares• Flashbacks or memories of trauma• Numbness or no feeling of emotions• Depression• Feeling angry and irritable• Easily startled or scared	SCHIZOPHRENIA / PSYCHOSIS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't there)• Delusions (believing things that are untrue)• Inability to show feelings• Inability to start or maintain conversations• Lack of motivation• Inability to feel pleasure• Minimal self-care and grooming

If you are concerned a friend or family member may be experiencing emotional distress, please do not ignore these warning signs.

Equally, if someone voices concern about their feelings and mental wellbeing, please listen and support them in seeking professional help.

Common health conditions fact sheet

MENTAL HEALTH

TREATMENT

You may be prescribed medication to help support your mental wellbeing. However, many kinds of treatment are available for mental health conditions and not all involve medication.

Examples of other treatments include:

- Counseling and psychology consultations
- Therapy (including psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural, arts and music)
- Group and community support programs

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Good mental health involves a sense of confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment in day-to-day life. These allow us to maintain positive relationships and overcome challenges.

Mental health conditions are very common and there is no shame in seeking help and support for your moods, behaviour or mental wellbeing.

There are many support networks available to provide information and resources relating to mental health in Australia. If you would like to know more, please ask your doctor.



SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

There are several things you can do to help your mental wellbeing.

- Exercising and healthy eating
- Spending time with friends and community
- Relaxing with hobbies and interests
- Having adequate sleep
- Sharing emotions
- Talking to a counselor or health care professional

Common health conditions fact sheet

GENERAL SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

If you are diagnosed with a medical condition, there are many simple strategies you can implement to support your treatment and improve your health.

In addition to the steps outlined in this book, it can be helpful and empowering to ask your doctor, specialist or health care professional what you can do to support your health beyond their care.

REGULAR CHECK UPS

Many health conditions can be treated effectively if they are diagnosed early.

One of the most important things you can do for your health is have a yearly general check up with your doctor. They will assess your:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Blood sugar levels
- Heart health
- Kidney function
- Other important measures of your health

If you have been diagnosed with an illness or health condition, it is important to visit your doctor regularly so that they can monitor your treatment. Your doctor will tell you how often they would like to see you.

Once you are over 70 you may be eligible for the Government-provided free yearly check up. For more details please ask your doctor.

You should also visit your dentist and your optometrist at least once a year.

If you are feeling unwell or are having symptoms, see your doctor. Don't wait until you feel very ill or you have a medical crisis as you may end up in hospital unnecessarily. It can also be harder to make decisions if you are feeling very unwell.

Common health conditions fact sheet

GENERAL SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

YOU CAN USE THIS CHART TO KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR MEDICAL VISITS

[illegible]

Common health conditions fact sheet

GENERAL SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

MEDICATION

It is important to take the medication you are prescribed by your doctor or specialist, even if you are feeling better.

Your doctor will give you instructions on when to take your medication. You may need to take it with food or at certain times of day. These details are very important. Some medications are less effective if they are taken incorrectly.

Your chemist is trained to administer and discuss medications. If you have any concerns about your medication or would like to know more about them, ask your chemist.

It can also be helpful to ask your doctor about any side effects you may experience when taking medication.



There is a pre-pack medication service for people who take a lot of different medications.

For a small fee your chemist or pharmacist can prepare your medication in daily push packs. This saves time and effort in preparing medications and also ensures the correct dosage.



Common health conditions fact sheet

GENERAL SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

It is important to keep a record of all the medication you take. This includes any vitamins or natural remedies. If you are sick or need to go to hospital, it is very helpful to take this record with you.

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Common health conditions fact sheet

GENERAL SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

WOUND CARE

As we age it can take longer for cuts, scratches and insect bites to heal. Some people are at high risk of infection, such as those living with diabetes. It is important to treat any wounds appropriately.

- Keep wounds covered with appropriate dressings
- Keep wounds and dressing clean and change when necessary
- Make a note of the date when the dressing was changed
- Watch a wound carefully for signs of infection, including:
 - pus or discharge from the wound
 - redness or swelling
 - fever

See a doctor if any of these occur.

A chemist or health care professional can advise on the best wound treatments.

In Australia a variety of health care organisations provide nursing services such as wound care. Speak to your aged care provider or doctor if you require access to these services.

BODY AWARENESS

No one knows your body as well as you do.

If you are unwell or have a feeling that something is not 'right' with your health, don't hesitate to see your doctor to discuss your concerns.

Many people ignore important warnings signs dismissing them as 'just old age'.

The body does slow down as we age and can take longer to heal, but you do not have to suffer pain or illness without support.

There are also many self-checks that can assist in managing your health. These include:

- **Skin checks** – regularly monitor your moles, freckles and skin tags for any changes in appearance. You are advised to get a skin check at a professional clinic or at your doctor's every two years.
- **Breast checks** for women and **testicular checks** for men – observe these areas for any lumps or swelling. Also check for any changes in shape, size or tissue consistency. Again, it is advised you have a professional screening every two years.
- There are also other tests recommended for women. Please discuss these with your doctor.

Common health conditions fact sheet

GENERAL SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

YOU CAN USE THIS CHART TO KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR MEDICAL VISITS

Health Area	Date	Doctor / Clinic	Notes
Dentist (1 year)			
Optometrist (1 year)			
Doctor – full check up (1 year)			
Skin check (2 years)			
Breast / testicular screening (2 years)			

ACCESS SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

There are many health support networks in Australia. These organisations provide information, advice and support.



We have provided a list of key support organisations at the back of this book, but there are many more available.

It can be helpful to access and share the information from these organisations with your family.

There are also other organisations that can give you physical support. As you age you may need access to these services. Ask your aged care provider or your doctor about these services.

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Another important step in self-managing your health is maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle through:

- Diet
- Exercise
- Stress management and mental wellbeing

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle



Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

There are many things you can do to maintain a healthy lifestyle as you age.

These include:

- Keeping physically active
- Eating a healthy and balanced diet
- Staying connected to friends, family and community

In this section we explore some of the simple ways you can improve your health, feel good and age well. It can be empowering to take charge of your health and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Taking a holistic approach to health care can be beneficial. Holistic health care incorporates the mind, body and spirit and looks at all aspects of your lifestyle.



Staying Physically Active

It is important to stay physically active as you get older.

Physical activity is anything that:

- Gets your body moving
- Raises your heartbeat
- Burns energy in the form of calories

Physical activity is often called 'exercise' when it is structured, planned or has a set routine.

If you have lived an active life, there is no reason to stop just because you are getting older.

Ways to keep active include: walking, dancing, gardening, Tai Chi, swimming, aquatics, stretching, playing with your grandchildren, shopping, cleaning and playing sports like tennis, golf or bowls.

You may need to change the way you exercise as your body changes. However, maintaining some level of physical activity is important for your health and happiness.

It is recommended that everybody participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day. If you can do more it is even better!

The good news is you don't have to do your 30 minutes all at once. Being physical for 10 to 15 minutes three times a day is just as good as doing all your activity in one go.



It is important to speak to your doctor before making changes to your daily routine or increasing your physical activity.

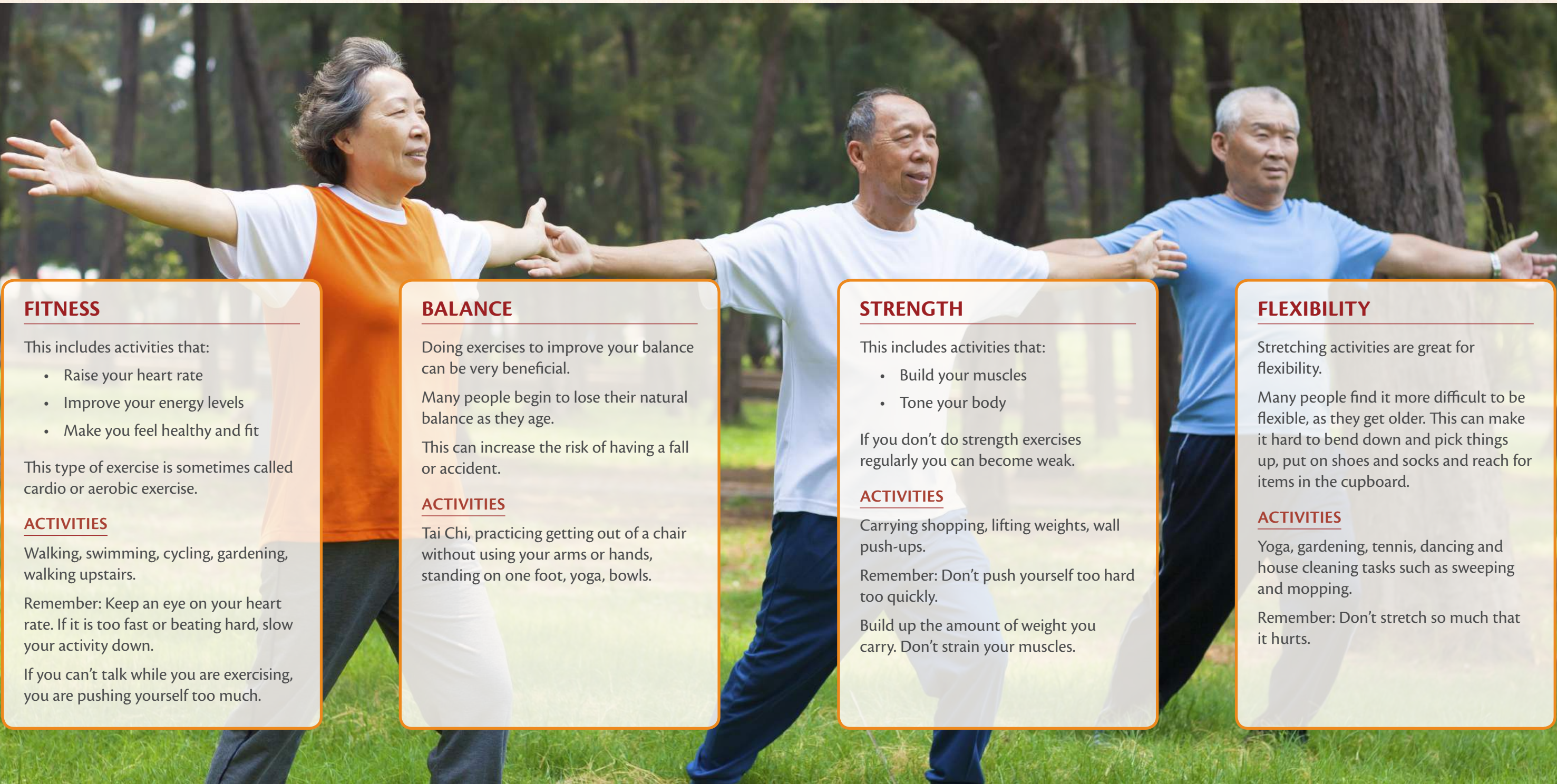
Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

THE FOUR KEY AREAS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There are four key areas of activity to focus on as you age.

These are **fitness**, **balance**, **strength** and **flexibility**.

Every day you should try to be active in a variety of ways.



FITNESS

This includes activities that:

- Raise your heart rate
- Improve your energy levels
- Make you feel healthy and fit

This type of exercise is sometimes called cardio or aerobic exercise.

ACTIVITIES

Walking, swimming, cycling, gardening, walking upstairs.

Remember: Keep an eye on your heart rate. If it is too fast or beating hard, slow your activity down.

If you can't talk while you are exercising, you are pushing yourself too much.

BALANCE

Doing exercises to improve your balance can be very beneficial.

Many people begin to lose their natural balance as they age.

This can increase the risk of having a fall or accident.

ACTIVITIES

Tai Chi, practicing getting out of a chair without using your arms or hands, standing on one foot, yoga, bowls.

STRENGTH

This includes activities that:

- Build your muscles
- Tone your body

If you don't do strength exercises regularly you can become weak.

ACTIVITIES

Carrying shopping, lifting weights, wall push-ups.

Remember: Don't push yourself too hard too quickly.

Build up the amount of weight you carry. Don't strain your muscles.

FLEXIBILITY

Stretching activities are great for flexibility.

Many people find it more difficult to be flexible, as they get older. This can make it hard to bend down and pick things up, put on shoes and socks and reach for items in the cupboard.

ACTIVITIES

Yoga, gardening, tennis, dancing and house cleaning tasks such as sweeping and mopping.

Remember: Don't stretch so much that it hurts.

Benefits

Participating in physical activity has many health benefits.

Keeping active can help you:

- Recover from illness
- Prevent disease
- Maintain independence and physical ability for longer

Other benefits include:

- Improved muscle and bone strength
- Improved balance, flexibility and mobility
- Decreased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke
- Improved fitness and energy levels
- Maintaining a healthy weight range – not too heavy and not too light

Physical activity is good for your mind as well as your body.

It can help:

- Build confidence
- Reduce stress, anger and sadness
- Improve concentration and thinking



Many people feel happy and positive after exercise.

Reasons people may limit physical activity as they age

There are many common beliefs about exercising that may stop you staying physically active.

- 'I'm too old, frail and weak to exercise.'*
- 'I don't need as much physical activity as I get older.'*
- 'Because I can't exercise as hard or for as long as I used to, there's no point trying.'*
- 'I shouldn't exercise because I may hurt or injure myself.'*
- 'I'm too busy.'*

Illness may have caused you to stop physical activity at one time and you have never started again. It is important to talk to your doctor about what exercises will benefit your health if you have any concerns.

Changes in your lifestyle can also have an affect on your physical activity levels.

Research shows some exercises are both safe and beneficial for people with arthritis, osteoporosis, joint replacements and other chronic illnesses such as diabetes.

N.B. This must be monitored by a health professional.

For example, you may no longer be looking after a growing family with tasks such as cooking, growing food and cleaning. Or you may have retired from a job that kept you active.

Alternatively, if you are living a very busy lifestyle it can be helpful to schedule exercise and make physical activity a priority. If you have a family or a home care worker helping you with household chores, it can be useful to make an effort to do more activity with their help.

Use the chart below to start thinking about how you can improve your physical activity.

1. Think about why you have stopped or slowed down your physical activity.
2. Discuss these reasons and how to improve your activity levels with your family, community and doctor. This can be helpful for your health.

Reason I stopped exercising	Benefits to me of exercising again	Activities I enjoy	Family / friends / community ideas	Doctor's recommendations

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

Motivation

It can be hard to be motivated to be physically active when you are feeling unwell or tired.

Some good ways to improve motivation is to make exercise enjoyable.

Finding physical activities you like is a good start.

Some people enjoy participating in an organised exercise class or club such as:

- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Bowls
- Tennis
- Dancing
- Going to a gym

Being active with others can be very social and fun.



If you have mobility problems there are lots of exercises you can do from a chair.



Ask your doctor, physiotherapist or occupational therapist to help you design an exercise program that you can do sitting or lying down.

Hydrotherapy, water and heated pool based activities can also be helpful.

You can also hire or buy exercise equipment, such as an exercise bike or treadmill, to use in your own home.

Some people prefer to increase activity in their daily lives by making a set time to sweep the floor or go into the garden every day.

Listening to your favourite music can help make activities more enjoyable.

The key is to do something you enjoy and do it regularly. Some people like to do several different activities to stay motivated.

Ways to include physical activity into your day

OUTSIDE

Taking your dog for a walk, washing your car, hosing your driveway or sweeping the footpath

SHOPPING

Parking a little further away than usual, walking every aisle of the supermarket

CLEANING

Vacuuming, mopping, dusting or washing the dishes

GARDENING

Raking leaves, weeding, pruning or digging garden beds

WHILE WATCHING TV

Neck rolls and light stretching, lifting weights (if you don't have weights you can use tinned food!), knee bends, watching and following an exercise video

WHILE WAITING FOR THE KETTLE TO BOIL OR WHILE ON THE PHONE

Wall pushups, toe raises, balancing or stretching



There are lots of great free resources available on the Internet about exercising as you age.

Alternatively, ask your doctor or physiotherapist for more information.

You can use the chart below to help plan your daily exercise

MY ACTIVE LIVING CHART

Date	Activity	Intensity	Duration	My Feelings

Important things to remember

When starting to increase or maintain an active lifestyle there are several important things to remember:

- Always consult your doctor before changing your activity levels
- Exercise at a level that is comfortable for you and don't push yourself
- Increase your activity levels gradually over a period of time
- Be active in a variety of ways
- If an activity hurts, stop and try something different
- Warm up and stretch gently before any physical activity
- Cool down with a slow march and gentle stretching at the end of a physical session
- Check your pulse frequently to make sure you are not overdoing things
- Choose appropriate clothing and footwear when being physically active
- Drink plenty of water – don't wait until you are thirsty

The final important thing to remember when maintaining a physically active lifestyle is eating a healthy and balanced diet.

When you exercise you use energy that you need to replace in the form of healthy food.

Food and Healthy Eating

Eating a healthy and balanced diet is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Some people eat too much as they get older, especially if they are not living an active lifestyle.

However, many other people do not feel as hungry when they get older and they may not eat enough healthy food. Not eating enough can cause just as many health problems as eating too much.

As we age, our body takes in fewer vitamins and minerals from our food. However, the need for these nutrients stays the same and sometimes even increases. For this reason it is very important to eat a healthy and balanced diet.

Healthy and Balanced Diet

Another name for healthy foods is nutrient dense foods.

This means foods that have more vitamins and minerals than others.

Doctors recommend we eat a variety of foods to make sure we are getting as many nutrients as possible.

There are five general food groups recommended for a healthy diet. These are:

1. Vegetables, legumes and beans
2. Grain and cereal foods, mostly wholegrain and high fibre varieties
3. Fruit
4. Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds
5. Dairy, including milk, yoghurt and cheese



It is recommended you eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit every day.



One serve of vegetables is 1/2 cup of cooked green, red and orange vegetables, cooked dried or canned beans, peas or lentils or one cup of green leafy or raw salad vegetables.

One serve of fruit is 150 grams of fresh fruit. This is equal to:

- one medium apple, banana, orange or pear, or
- two small apricots, kiwi fruit or plums, or
- one cup of diced or canned fruit

We have to be careful about how often we eat sweets and oily foods.

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

Foods to eat occasionally

Foods such as lollies, chocolate, biscuits and cakes are not included in the five food groups. Our body does not need them to function.

They should only be eaten in small amounts or as a treat every now and then.

SUGAR

Processed or refined sugar found in jam, soft drink and sweets should only be eaten occasionally. You need to be very careful when eating sugar if you have diabetes.

SALT

You can get all the natural salt you need from eating a fresh, balanced diet.

There is no need to add salt to food for flavour. Many processed and packaged foods are high in unhealthy salt. It is important to limit these foods in your diet, particularly if you have high blood pressure.

Some people lose their sense of smell and taste as they get older. Because of this, they may find themselves adding extra salt or sugar to foods for flavour.



You can use herbs, spices, lemon, ginger, honey or mustard as a healthier way to add flavour to your food.

SATURATED FATS

There are healthy fats and unhealthy fats. It is better to eat fresh, home-cooked meals. Avoid packaged food and fast food because of their high fat content.

Choose lean meat where possible and boil your food rather than deep fry it.

Saturated fats are often hidden in biscuits, fast or junk foods such as pizza and processed meats such as deli meat.

Limiting saturated fat is better for weight management and keeping your bad cholesterol levels low.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol in moderation generally does not cause any harm. Some research even suggests it can lower blood pressure.

'In moderation' means no more than two standard drinks a day with several alcohol-free days a week. Drinking any more than this can damage your liver.

For people living with health conditions like diabetes or who are taking medication, it is important to ask your doctor if there is any risk of drinking alcohol.

RECIPE – NO-BAKE SUGAR-FREE CHOCOLATE COCONUT BALLS

Cook time: 15 minutes

Makes: 20-24 small pieces

Ingredients:

- 1 cup soy milk, unsweetened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 to 2½ tbsp xylitol or stevia powder
- ½ cup pure cocoa/carob powder, unsweetened
- ½ cup coconut, shredded
- 1 cup quick oats





Method:

1. Combine soy milk, vanilla, and xylitol or stevia in a pot. Bring to a simmer over medium heat.
2. Add chocolate powder and shredded coconut and stir well.
3. Add in oats and mix well.
4. Scoop out the mixture by tablespoonful onto a plate and make into ball shape with hands. Chill in the fridge for 30-60 minutes and serve.



This recipe is rich in fibre, low in calorie and sugar-free, which is excellent as a healthy treat. It's quick and easy to make and is nice served for guests on special occasions.

The key to a healthy balanced diet is to eat fresh, home-cooked food as much as possible. If it comes from your garden, even better! You don't have to eat healthily all the time but make sure you only have sugar, salt and fatty foods as a treat every now and then.

SWAP THIS:

White rice	Potato chips	Sweet fruit yoghurt	White bread, noodles and flour	Sweet coffee
				

FOR THAT:

Brown rice or wild rice	Dried vegetables or nuts	Natural Greek yoghurt	Whole grain bread, noodles and flour	Green tea
				

Easy grab-and-go healthy food

- Nuts
- Natural Greek yoghurt with fruit
- Vegetable sticks such as carrot and celery
- Fruit like apples and bananas
- Hard-boiled eggs

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

Diet and Ageing

As we age our dietary needs can change. Our bodies can become less efficient at absorbing certain vitamins and minerals from our food.

Some of the common nutrients that are affected by ageing are listed below.

Calcium – Important for strong bones and teeth.

Foods

Dairy – milk, cheese, custard and yoghurt
Leafy green vegetables – spinach, kale, bok choy
Seafood and fish – salmon or sardines
Legumes and fruit

Vitamin B12 – Supports healthy blood and nerve cells.

Foods

Red meat
Fish
Eggs
Dairy products

Protein – Helps wounds and injuries heal.

Foods

Red meat
Fish
Poultry
Eggs
Soybeans and nuts

Iron – Helps blood cells transport oxygen throughout the body.

Foods

Dark green vegetables
Red meat
Nuts and lentils
Tofu

Iron absorption is improved by eating foods rich in Vitamin C at the same time as foods rich in iron. Peppers, broccoli, berries, citrus fruits, tomatoes and peas are high in Vitamin C.

Vitamin D – Important for bone health.

Your body makes vitamin D from sunlight so it is important to get outside for 20 minutes or so a day (preferably not in the middle of the day). Expose your arms and face to the sun's rays.

Foods

A small amount of Vitamin D is found in eggs, mushrooms and some fish.

Fibre – Keeps the body going to the toilet regularly.

Foods

Vegetables
Fruit
Beans and lentils
Wholegrain breads
Oats and brown rice

If constipation is a problem a small glass of prune juice in the morning can help.

Your doctor may ask you to have a blood test to check your vitamin and mineral levels. If you are lacking any nutrients they may prescribe a vitamin supplement. It can also be helpful to see a dietician. They specialise in designing a healthy and balanced diet to meet your health needs.

RECIPE – LEMON TAHINI DRESSING

Dressing:

1 tbsp tahini
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
½ tbsp olive oil (optional)
1 tbsp hot water
1 small clove garlic, minced
⅛ tsp salt
Zest of ¼ of a lemon

Method:

Make the dressing by whisking everything together until smooth.

This recipe is excellent used as a dressing for savoury dishes or as a salad dressing.

Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle

It is also important to eat at least three meals a day to ensure you are getting enough nutrients in your diet.

If you are not very hungry, eat smaller meals more often. Having a set time each day when you eat your meals can help.

If you are feeling tired or less hungry than usual, eat something soft and easy to eat such as soup.

Finally, drink plenty of water and fluids to keep you hydrated. Soup, tea, coffee, juice and milk are all considered fluids, but it is good to drink water throughout the day too.

If your urine is dark yellow, it may mean you are not drinking enough fluids. However, it should be noted some medications may also discolour your urine.

Try drinking more water and see if that makes a difference.

If not, consult your health care professional.

RECIPE – CURRIED VEGETABLE SOUP

Serves: 8 people

Vegetable Serves: 20

Ingredients:

2 tbsp oil
1 onion, chopped
½ green capsicum, chopped
1 large carrot, chopped
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon turmeric
2 teaspoons curry powder
1 teaspoon mustard seed
2 cloves garlic, minced
1kg of potatoes, cubed
¼ of a pumpkin, cubed
4 cups vegetable broth
2 cups water
½ head chopped cauliflower
1 cup corn kernels
2 yellow squash, chopped
1 can of chickpeas
1 bunch of spinach
½ cup chopped coriander

Method:

1. Peel and chop vegetables
2. Heat oil in saucepan
3. Add capsicum, carrot and onion and ground cumin and cook until lightly browned
4. Add garlic
5. Add curry powder, tumeric and mustard seeds and cook for two minutes
6. Add vegetable stock and water
7. Add potato, pumpkin, cauliflower and simmer for 20 minutes
8. Add squash, corn and chickpeas and simmer for a further 10 minutes
9. Pour half the soup into another bowl and blend until pureed, add back to soup
10. Stir in spinach
11. Serve with coriander



Other tips for maintaining a healthy diet

As you age, preparing meals can be tiring, especially if you are not very hungry.

Some tips for food preparation include:

- Having a supply of healthy pre-made foods such as frozen vegetables, tinned fruit, microwave rice and frozen meals for when you feel tired or unwell.
- Keeping a variety of foods in your cupboard so you don't have to go to the shops all the time.
- Preparing and sharing your meals regularly with friends, family and community.
- Preparing and storing food safely to avoid spoiling or food contamination.
- Maintaining a small vegetable patch or garden with herbs and green leafy vegetables.

If it is too hard to bend down or dig a large garden, consider growing vegetables in broccoli boxes or small pots. These can be placed on a table or close to the kitchen.

Conclusion

By eating a balanced diet, keeping physically active and seeing your health care professional regularly, you can maintain a healthy lifestyle that will support you to feel good and age well.



Additional Information



Additional Information

Key national health support networks

Diabetes Australia: 1300 136 588 | www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

Heart Foundation: 1300 362 787 | www.heartfoundation.org.au/

National Stroke Foundation: 1800 787 653 | www.strokefoundation.com.au/

Kidney Health Australia: 1800 454 363 | www.kidney.org.au/

Lifeline: 13 11 14 | www.lifeline.org.au/

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636 | www.beyondblue.org.au/

References

INTERPRETATION SERVICES

www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/interpreters/QHIS_home.asp

www.datsima.qld.gov.au

www.tisnational.gov.au/Non-English-speakers/Help-using-TIS-National-services/Agencies-and-businesses-using-TIS-National-interpretters

www.racgp.org.au/download/documents/AFP/2010/April/201004phillips.pdf

www.tisnational.gov.au/~media/Files/Non%20English%20FAQ/PDF/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20in%20English%20v3.ashx

MEDICARE CARD

www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/medicare-card

MEDICAL INFORMATION

www.justlanded.com/english/Australia/Australia-Guide/Health/Doctors

EMERGENCY SERVICES

www.qld.gov.au/emergency/emergencies-services/what-happens-triple-zero.html

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Medical_emergencies_when_to_call_an_ambulance?open

[www.triplezero.gov.au/Pages/HowtocallTripleZero\(000\).aspx](http://www.triplezero.gov.au/Pages/HowtocallTripleZero(000).aspx)

Additional Information

DIABETES

www.diabetesaustralia.com.au
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
www.healthdirect.gov.au/diabetes
www.diabetesqld.org.au
www.aihw.gov.au/diabetes
www.dhi.gov.au
www.diabetes.org.uk
www.diabetesinfo.org.au/for-researchers/research-literature/diabetes-and-cald-populations

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND STROKE

strokefoundation.com.au/health-professionals/tools-and-resources/facts-and-figures-about-stroke
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
www.heartfoundation.org.au
www.bloodpressureuk.org
www.healthdirect.gov.au

HEART CONDITIONS

www.aihw.gov.au/cardiovascular-health/populations-of-interest
www.abs.gov.au
www.heartfoundation.org.au
www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au
www.mcwh.com.au
International Journal of Vascular Medicine Volume 2013 (Article ID 786801)

KIDNEY HEALTH

www.kidney.org.au
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

MENTAL WELLBEING

www.chf.org.au
www.mhima.org.au
www.health.gov.au
www.beyondblue.org.au
www.nmhccf.org.au

EXERCISE

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Healthy_ageing_stay_physically_active?open
www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#chba
www.actassupport.com.au/pdf/gpa_self_care_strategies_workbook.pdf
SPORTS MEDICINE AUSTRALIA - Choose Health: Be Active
(Vet affairs, Dept health and ageing)
orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00103
www.helpguide.org/articles/exercise-fitness/exercise-and-fitness-as-you-age.htm

FOOD

www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/maintaining/downloads/healthy_litreview.pdf
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+eating/healthy+eating+at+different+ages+and+stages+of+your+life/healthy+eating+for+older+adults
eprints.qut.edu.au/55543/1/Meeting_Cultural_Food_Needs_What_do_Stakeholders_say.pdf
www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55_agthe_large.pdf
gofor2and5.com.au/WhatisaServe/tabid/56/Default.aspx

RECIPES

Ms Angeline Yeoh, Accredited Practising Dietitian at Back To Basics Dietetics
Mr Gary Ng, Gary Ng Dietetic Services
Community Nutritionist Team, Access & Capacity-building Team |
Health Equity & Access Unit, Eight Mile Plains Community Health | Metro South Health

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