

In Good Health

Sleep Apnoea are you getting your 8 hours?



Sleep Apnoea is a sleep disorder experienced by around 5 per cent of Australians¹, which causes pauses in breathing while asleep. These pauses mean that one or more regular breaths are missed, and episodes of the pauses occur repeatedly throughout the period of sleep. The 'pause' in breathing is generally classified as being a minimum of a ten second break in between breaths and they cause the body's blood oxygen level to drop.

The pauses in breathing are caused by the walls of the throat closing together and blocking off the upper airway at the level of the tongue. Although rarely aware of it, sufferers of Sleep Apnoea will wake many times during the night in order to open the upper airway in a manner typically accompanied by a snort or gasp. Sleep is resumed almost immediately so the period spent awake is most often not remembered.

Because of the frequent waking, Sleep Apnoea may result in fractured sleep which leaves the person feeling un-rested, unrefreshed and fatigued with excessive daytime sleepiness. Other symptoms include poor concentration, irritability and mood changes and impotence or reduced sex drive. If the pauses in breathing are occurring many times every night, as is often the case, Sleep Apnoea can lead to high blood pressure, stroke or heart failure.

If you have these symptoms or if your sleep partner has noticed you frequently gasping for air, there is an easy way to diagnose Sleep Apnoea. An overnight 'sleep study', also known as a polysomnogram, measures blood oxygen levels throughout the night, identifying when breathing stops. Once diagnosed, there are several measures which can be taken to reduce the impact.

The most effective treatment for Sleep Apnoea is a mask worn at night that keeps the back of the throat open by forcing air through the nose. This is called 'nasal continuous positive airway pressure' (CPAP). While providing great improvements in some cases, others might find the mask too difficult to sleep with; in these circumstances the best treatments are often lifestyle changes.

Measures such as losing weight, quitting smoking and reducing alcohol consumption particularly in the evening may decrease the severity of Sleep Apnoea; in fact a loss of around 5kg to 10kg may be enough to dramatically reduce the severity of the disorder. A sleep specialist will be able to suggest other lifestyle changes to make Sleep Apnoea more manageable.

¹ Better Health Channel, Victoria, 2007

Sleep Apnoea is experienced by ~ 5% of Australians.



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Benefits of Dietary Fibre



Dietary fibre, also known as roughage, is the indigestible substances found in plant foods, such as cellulose, pectins, beta-glucans, dextrins and inulin. Dietary fibre is needed to keep the digestive system healthy.

Dietary fibre is not digested by the body; instead, it pushes food through the digestive systems as it moves through, absorbing water and helping regulate and ease bowel movements by increasing bulk, softening stool and shortening the transit time through the intestinal tract.

Soluble fibre is transformed by bacteria

and absorbs water to become a gelatinous substance that passes through the body. Insoluble fibre, however, passes through the body largely unchanged.

The amount of fibre found in different plant foods varies but it is found in all plant sources. The highest amounts of fibre are found in legumes, fruit and vegetables, nuts and wholegrain cereals.

Adults should aim for a diet that contains 30-35g of fibre per day and when increasing fibre in the diet should introduce it gradually to avoid digestive

problems which may occur as a result of the body being 'overloaded' with fibre. It is also important to drink lots of water when increasing fibre intake.

A diet high in fibre may prevent and relieve bowel problems such as constipation, haemorrhoids, diverticular disease, and irritable bowel syndrome; improve cholesterol levels in the blood; reduce the risk of heart disease; reduce the risk of diabetes; and reduce the risk of certain types of cancer developing.

PROSTATE CANCER

Every year around 12,000 Australian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer; almost 1 in 11 men will develop prostate cancer during their lifetime.²

Prostate cancer occurs when some of the cells of the prostate reproduce far more rapidly than in a normal prostate, causing a swelling or tumour. There is no known cause of prostate cancer; however diet, lifestyle and genetics may all play a role. Prostate cancer can affect men of all ages, however the risk increases with age and if there is a close family history of the disease.



The symptoms of prostate cancer include:

- Waking frequently at night to urinate
- Sudden or urgent need to urinate
- Difficulty in starting to urinate
- Slow flow of urine and difficulty in stopping
- Discomfort when urinating
- Painful ejaculation
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Decreased libido

Prostate cancer can be cured if detected and treated while still confined to the prostate gland.

Methods of treatment include:

- Surgery with a radical prostatectomy (removal of the whole prostate) in all its various forms, including nerve-sparing, non-nerve-sparing and non-nerve-sparing with sural nerve graft;
- Radiation treatment; and/or
- Hormone therapy.

To reduce the incidences of prostate cancer, all men should be aware of their risk of the disease and be regularly tested from the age of 50, or from 40 if there is a family history of prostate cancer. A blood test for Prostate Specific Antigens (PSA) and Digital Rectal Examinations (DRE) both allow for early detection.

² Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

Strength Training

Strength training, also known as resistance training, is a form of exercise used to build the strength, size and anaerobic endurance of skeletal muscles.

Strength training is an important part of any exercise regime, as it has significant benefits to overall health and wellbeing. By improving muscle strength and tone, strength training can improve joint function, thereby reducing risk of injury, increase bone density, provide a temporary increase in metabolism, improve cardiac function and elevate HDL (good) cholesterol. When performed properly, strength training increases bone, muscle, tendon and ligament strength.

Strong muscles look better because they are physically firmer; but having strong muscles can also help prevent debilitating bone and joint injuries. Doing strength training exercises can increase your lean body mass (the non-fat parts of your body), which raises your metabolic rate, so helping with weight management.

The best way to strength train is to progressively increase the force output of the muscle through gradual increase of weight or other resistance to target specific muscle groups. Your muscles should be worked 2 to 3 times a week, with at least one day off in between for recovery.

There are several ways to perform strength training. The simplest way is to use your own body weight for resistance. This would include exercises such as sit ups, push ups, lunges and squats, where your muscles need to support your own body weight. Another method is to use free weights. This can be done both in a gym set up and in the home environment with either a set of dumbbells or with improvised weights such as 2 litre drink bottles or cans of soup. In this method, the hand weights supply the resistance against which the muscles need to work. Expensive gym equipment usually targets specific groups of muscles, however you can replicate most of these exercises as home with minimal equipment.

It is important to perform strength exercises properly- go through the complete range of motion whilst moving slowly with controlled breathing. Maintain a neutral spine and focus on the muscles you are intending to exercise- don't transfer the exercise to an easier part of the body. Never sacrifice form just to add more weight or repetitions

Strength training improves strength, endurance and muscle tone. It is important to start slowly, use proper form, avoid heavy weights and increase workouts gradually to prevent injury. Just a few short sessions a week will really pay off — besides better muscle tone and definition, you will also notice improved overall health and well being.

Benefits of Nuts

Nuts are seeds of trees that are covered with a hard shell. Most nuts are high in nutrients and are therefore recommended as part of a healthy diet. A serving of nuts generally equates to 30g – which is usually a handful.

Almonds are high in Vitamin E, with a serving providing 85% of the recommended daily intake of Vitamin E. Brazil nuts are a great source of

selenium, which may help prevent heart disease. Cashews are high in magnesium, which can improve bone strength, hazelnuts are high in B group vitamins including folate and Vitamin B6 and macadamias are a great source of healthy monounsaturated fats which can help lower blood cholesterol.

So next time you're in need of an afternoon snack, instead of reaching for

Exercising during Winter

Don't let the cold be an excuse to stop exercising! The fact is that during winter your body uses more energy keeping warm, making it a great time to exercise for weight loss and general fitness.

Regular exercise is also a great way to support your immune system and reduce the chances of catching nasty winter colds.

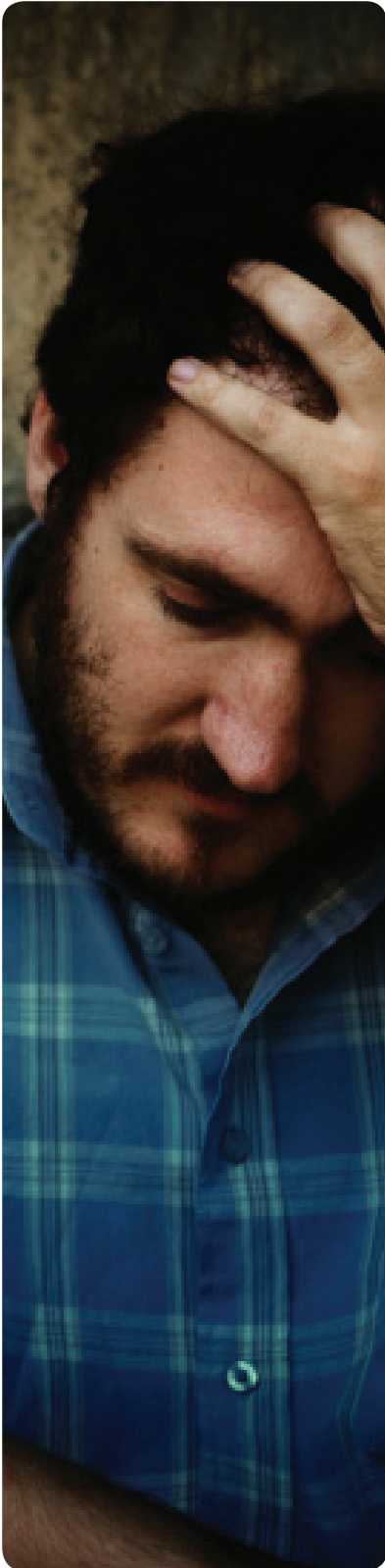
During winter it is vitally important to ensure you warm up before beginning to exercise, as the body temperature tends to be slightly lower during the colder months and joints take a little longer to warm up. Cold muscles cramp or pull easily, so make sure your warm up includes stretching.

Some winter-friendly exercise options include:

- Walking indoors, for example at a shopping centre. Just make sure you keep your pace up.
- Join a gym, so that you can walk, cycle and use a myriad of other cardio and weights equipment indoors.
- Set up some at-home exercise activities, using small dumbbells for a weights circuit, a jumping rope or stepping machine for cardio and an exercise ball for stretches and abdominal work.
- Try out an exercise DVD for walk aerobics, yoga or Pilates that you can do in your own living room.
- Find a set of stairs and climb up and down for an intense and efficient workout.
- Head to a heated indoor pool for swimming laps, water aerobics or walking/running laps in the pool.

chips, chocolate or other high fat, high salt snack foods, have a handful of unsalted nuts.





DEPRESSION

Depression is an illness that can affect anyone regardless of age or gender. Around one million Australian adults and 160,000 young people live with depression each year³. On average, one in five females and one in eight males will experience depression in their lifetime.

Depression is not just a state of mind or a feeling of being down; it is caused by physical changes in the brain connected to an imbalance of a type of chemical (neurotransmitters) that carry signals in your brain and nerves.

There are some factors which may increase an individual's likelihood to develop depression at some stage of their life, including:

- Family history: patterns suggest that depression runs in the family.
- Trauma and stress: relationship breakdowns, family problems, financial hardship, death of a loved one and major life changes (i.e. change in career, having a baby or getting married) can all be catalysts for depression.
- Medical conditions: serious medical conditions such as cancer, heart disease and HIV, as well as chronic conditions which affect a person's quality of life can contribute to depression. This can be due to the stress and weakness caused by the illness, because of side effects of medications used to treat the illness or due to the physical and emotional pain of the illness.
- Other psychological disorders: if a person already has substance abuse problems, eating disorders, anxiety, schizophrenia, etc, the risk of becoming depressed is increased.

In most cases even those with severe depression find improvement after seeking help. Treatment for depression varies on a case by case basis, and may include antidepressant or anti-anxiety medications, often in combination with therapy or counselling. Depression can be frustrating, because recovering from it takes time; this is why it is so important to act as soon as you start to notice things are not right.

Symptoms to look out for include:

- Drastic changes in mood including constant sadness
- Regular or irrational mood swings including irritability, anger, tension, sadness and a general feeling of being unable to cope
- Lack of interest in activities which usually bring happiness
- Lethargy, restlessness and an inability to concentrate
- Change of appetite leading to large weight gain or loss
- A change in sleeping pattern, either insomnia and trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Feeling unworthy, hopeless, guilty or not good enough
- Thoughts or planning of suicide

Depression is NOT a normal part of life and it can be successfully treated. Depression should not be seen as a weakness and people shouldn't feel ashamed to seek help. If you have any of these symptoms or think someone you know might be suffering from depression, it is important to seek help by visiting your GP, calling Lifeline on 13 11 44 or calling 000 if there is an immediate risk of self harm or threatening behaviour.

³Beyond Blue: The National Depression Initiative



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