

Good Health -- Great Future

Issue A11

"Obstacles can not crush me, every obstacle yields to stern resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind."

LEONARDO
DA VINCI

Don't Forget:

To have a 'cuppa' or three each day.

Articles continue to appear suggesting that tea might reduce your chances of developing many conditions from heart disease to prostate cancer.

Make one a green tea, as there are some suggestions that green tea may have additional benefits.

Sorry! Coffee does not offer the same benefits

Welcome

I hope you are well and that 2007 is turning out as you hoped. Yes, we are a little late in sending the first newsletter of the year. The reason is that we have been awaiting formalisation of details for a changed structure of Health Futures -- I am pleased to make the announcement below.

May I begin with my usual post Christmas question: Did you eat more than usual, have a bit more to drink or did your exercise goals slip over the Christmas period? If so, congratulations -- there was fun to be had! Of course you don't want to go overboard and leave yourself with a major restoration job in February and March. Getting back to generally healthy eating and regular physical activity should have weight and fitness back to ideal a short while after the festive season or after a holiday or whatever. If weight loss is proving a little stubborn, try the "10% Rule": eat 10% less and increase your physical activity by 10%.

During last year I had a number of requests for information that exists in previous newsletters and hence suggestions that we should advertise previous topics to encourage people to visit our website and look them up. We have new people joining our programs all the time so I have decided to include a previous topics list in the first newsletter of each year (see page 3). In addition I will publish a repeat of a previous feature topic as an additional page to each newsletter. This issue it is: "How to Live a Healthy and Happy Life: 10 Points/1 Page"

Here's a worthwhile day out if you happen to be in Sydney between March and June or Melbourne July to October. The Amazing Human Body Exhibition (www.amazinghumanbody.com.au) is quite incredible (even for me having studied anatomy) and of particular value as a learning experience for children -- I recommend it highly.

I welcome to our team Kerin Davis and Noni Robertson who have joined us this year. Also, Ivana O'Connor who joined us mid last year.

Lastly, a digression from health -- I and a couple of associates have spent considerable effort during 2006 establishing the It's Time Foundation (www.itstimefoundation.org) and its first project is targeting schools. Check it out and send a note with the kids to alert their school.

Rob Edwards and the Health Futures Team

Health Futures: New Ownership Structure

I am delighted to announce that, as of January 2007, fifty percent of Health Futures has been acquired by Carrie and Clyde Rathbone. Many of you will have met or communicated with Carrie who has worked as a member of our team for the past four years. You may have seen Clyde on television or read about him as a member of the Australian Wallabies and Canberra Brumbies rugby union teams. The enthusiasm and fresh ideas they bring is great for Health Futures and ultimately for the participants of our programs.

COMPETITION: To celebrate, we invite you to participate in our first ever competition. You can win tickets to the Bledisloe Cup rugby test match in Melbourne (Saturday June 30). The prize includes a trip for two from any Australian or NZ capital city, one night's accommodation and two signed Wallaby caps. To enter visit www.healthfutures.com.au and click Bledisloe Competition.

Please note: those who have actually participated in a Health Futures program may enter TWICE, others may enter only ONCE. The winner will be drawn April 27 and announced on our website May 4.



"Doing little things well is a step toward doing big things better."

HARRY F BANKS

Don't Forget:

To find something to laugh at each day. Better still make someone laugh with you.

Studies are showing that we are working longer and harder -- so don't forget to see the funny side as often as you can.

Perhaps have a joke book at hand or a link to a laugh site on your computer. As the Irish say: "a good laugh and a good sleep are the best medicine".

Cholesterol and Plant Sterols

Plant sterols are the ingredient in cholesterol lowering margarines. Please note the following comments published recently by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand -- announcing that other products will now contain plant sterols. This is good news, but may I urge you to note the context of: "consumed as part of a healthy diet". One worry I have with the marketing of these products is that they can be presented as: "here is the magic cure -- don't worry about the harder, bigger picture lifestyle issues". We support the use of the products as a "bonus" in an otherwise healthy lifestyle.

Christopher Pyne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, said:

'Plant sterols can reduce cholesterol uptake when eaten in sufficient amounts. Until now, plant sterols have only been allowed for use in margarines. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has carried out an extensive safety assessment and, from today [10/11/06], plant sterols are also allowed to be added to low fat milks, low fat yoghurts and breakfast cereals. These type of products are already permitted for use in Europe and North America.' Mr Pyne said.

'FSANZ's consumer research found that most consumers of plant sterol products are health conscious adults who choose foods with a health benefit in mind and as part of a healthy lifestyle. Plant sterol products must carry advisory statements that they should be consumed as part of a healthy diet and that they are not suitable for children under 5 years or pregnant or lactating women. Plant sterols do not provide additional benefits when more than 3 grams a day are consumed.'

For a fact sheet visit: www.foodstandards.gov.au/newsroom/factsheets/factsheets2006

For more information on cholesterol visit: www.healthfutures.com.au/news [Issue A7]

Bean Casserole

Serves 4

Ingredients:

1 cup of beans (soy or mixed tinned beans), cooked and drained.
1 tsp. (teaspoon) olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 tsp. dried thyme
1/2 tsp. dried dill
3 tsp. fresh parsley
2 cloves garlic, crushed
ground black pepper
250 gms tomatoes
250 gms zucchini
1/2 cup reduced fat cheese, grated
1/2 cup bread crumbs

Method:

Saute onions in oil. Add thyme, dill, parsley, garlic and pepper. Cook for 3 minutes. Stir in beans and 1 1/2 cups of water. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Spoon 1/2 the mixture into a casserole dish. Place sliced tomatoes and zucchini in layers on beans. Sprinkle with cheese. Spoon on the remaining beans and sprinkle with breadcrumbs.

Bake in a moderate oven for 1 hour or microwave for 20 minutes.

Server with salad or steamed green beans and cauliflower.

Worth a Read

The above recipe is reproduced from "Never Say Diet Again" written by the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital weight management program. There is so much information out there today surrounding weight loss, much of which can be confusing and unnecessarily complicated. This book is packed with easy to understand information about nutrition, health, food preparation and physical activity. The principles are well explained and easy to understand. It's a useful tool for setting and achieving realistic, long term weight loss goals. There are also some good recipes to enjoy. To order a copy visit: www.media21publishing.com



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Gone Nuts at Work!

A variety of nuts and seeds is a healthy inclusion in your diet. But how much is enough? I often suggest a small handful each day is reasonable -- more is okay if you have a high energy output; less if you are attempting to lose weight. BUT the trap is they taste good and are so easy to eat. The hand can, almost involuntarily, make extra visits to the nut bowl. Soon the health benefits are being eroded by the additional energy intake contributing to unnecessary body weight.

Here's a tip: Buy nuts in their shells, for example, walnuts, pecans, almonds and peanuts. Take a nutcracker to work and when you feel like a couple of nuts, crack them and enjoy. There are a number of benefits: firstly you are likely to gain the nutritional benefits of nuts without overeating; you will also be taking a brief time out from work -- that's good because your eyes, hands, back and your brain all take a short break. Regarding seeds -- breads with large amounts of seeds are a good choice.

Apply similar thinking to fruit juices. In our programs we occasionally meet people who, in the name of good health, consume a high proportion of their fluid intake as 100% fruit juices. Believing they are making a healthy choice, but they are taking in more energy than their body needs. A glass of juice each day is fine, beyond that choose real fruit.

Just Under The Limit!

I was lunching with a group of people over the Christmas period -- good food and some wine. Two of the group were embarking on three to four hour journeys later in the afternoon. Neither would ever consider going near their vehicles if they were over the legal alcohol limit; but both felt it fine as long as they were "below the limit". This is a worrying mindset. Having a "couple of drinks" even if below the limit is going to increase the likelihood of a fatigue related accident. A social "one" or "none" is much wiser than making sure you are just below the limit.

It's also a safe idea to consider the type and volume of food you eat before you embark upon a long trip. High fat, high sugar foods are more likely to cause you to tire earlier. Select more protein, complex carbohydrates, fruits and nuts. It is wise to plan eating stops on your trip rather than having a big meal and intending to spend much longer before a break. Plan to take food with you or consider where on your journey you might stop for a break. When my family travels we will often divert off the highway to a nearby country town for a break and visit a coffee shop there (yes, the kids do protest as the McDonalds sign flashes by). Not only is the food more interesting (and has less packaging) we get to check out a new place and often get chatting to the locals.

Drive safely this Easter.

Previous newsletter topics (visit: www.healthfutures.com.au):

Issue A1: Self checking for cancers: You could save your own life! Chart of office stretches: a couple of 5 minute stretch breaks during the day will keep you loose and reduce tension; Recipe: A healthy and hearty minestrone.

Issue A2: New Year's resolutions: 7 steps for converting resolutions into life-long actions; 10 quick stress management tips for work; A health rating chart for yourself; Recipe: Lamb, Eggplant and Lemon Stew.

Issue A3: Taking Action: Now! Because tomorrow never comes; A better back; Recipe: Potato, Chickpea & Cashew Curry.

Issue A4: The SELF test: making change more achievable; The Healthy Weight Loss Creed; The Good Eating Guidelines; Recipe: Chilli Chicken.

Issue A5: Comment on Prostate Cancer; Search For The Smile Side; Can't You? Can You? It's your call; Recipe: Roasted Italian Vegetables.

Issue A6: Bowel cancer screening: simple and saves lives; Back exercise chart available; How To Live a Healthy and Happy Life: 10 Points -- 1 Page; Recipe: Tomato and Butter Bean Soup.

Issue A7: Why cholesterol is such a big deal?; What should we set as "ideal" and how do we achieve it?; Chinese peasant farmers and pharmaceutical giants; Recipe: Shredded Chicken Sesame Salad.

Issue A8: Kidney Health and what you can do; A few tips for when the pressure is really on; Recipe: Roast Lamb With a Twist.

Issue A9: Healthy tips for breakfast and lunch; Modifying your existing main meals for a healthier outcome; Budget shopping with health in mind.

Issue A10: Healthy Entertaining; Glycemic Index; Getting over the Yuk! Factor.

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Print this page, then enter a "Rating" from 1 to 5 as to how well you take care of yourself in that particular area. 5 means that you are very proactive in managing that particular aspect of your lifestyle; 3 means there is room for improvement, 1 means it is in a pretty bad way.

This is not designed as a detailed analysis. Just approximate how you are going for each point, for example: "Dietary Fibre Intake" ask yourself: do I eat whole meal bread, include plenty of vegetables, have a couple of pieces of fruit each day, choose whole grain cereals and so on?

Use the low ratings to identify areas that may be improved -- opportunities to invest in your future health and well being.

Enter "Goals and Actions" in the space provided. Make a diary note to revisit the table two monthly.

Don't do this in a hurry (it's far too important), take some time to ponder where you are at and how you can make positive change in the context of the other demands on your energy and time.

Have a great day

How Do You Rate Yourself?

Consider www.healthfutures.com.au/planner (use HF Code: P1111) to manage your goals.

	Rating	Goals and Actions
Physical Activity		
Body Weight		
Alcohol		
Cigarettes		
Dietary Fibre Intake		
Dietary Fat Intake		
Sugar Intake		
Fluid Intake		
Stress Management		
Time to Relax		
Back Care Exercises		
Cholesterol/Triglyceride		
Skin Self Checking		
Check Stools for Blood		
Breast/Testicular Self Check		
PAP Test		
Mammogram		
Prostate		
Dental Check Up		

Replies, Replacement Reports and Back Issues

For back issues of this newsletter visit www.healthfutures.com.au/news. The newsletter goes to many thousands of people so again it is not possible for us to respond to specific health related questions.

For those who have taken part in the Health Futures Appraisal Program a new appraisal report is available. Due to the number of people who have taken part in our programs, we are unable to provide new reports without charging a small fee. The fee is \$49 for production and postage of a CD (approx. 3000 pages of resources). Reports are sent after payment (by cheque) to: Health Futures Pty Ltd, Level 1, 44-52 Townshend Street, Phillip ACT 2606. Please indicate date of birth and if your name has changed.



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Repeat article from Issue 6:

How To Live a Healthy and Happy Life: 10 Points/1 Page

These are just the ideas that came into the author's mind -- take a piece of paper and write your 10 points.

Eat Plenty of Good Food: Start the day with a healthy high fibre breakfast. Prefer wholemeal and wholegrain foods -- particularly when choosing breads and breakfast cereals. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables -- two pieces of fruit and five serves of vegetables each day. Meats are fine, but eat in moderation and buy low fat or trim fat as best you can.

Careful Of Body Wreckers: Coffin nails (cigarettes) rip people's health and families apart. My family has lost decades to them -- the most wonderful guy I have ever met (my dad) died at 56. Put other heavy drugs in the same category. Keep control of alcohol, rather than it controlling you -- moderation is the key. Regarding medications, ask your doctor if there is a non drug alternative. Particularly so with antibiotics -- at the rate we are going the super bugs, we are creating, will inherit the earth.

See A Band: Do some things out of the square. If you liked the Stones or Status Quo when you were younger, be first to line up again if you get the chance. It might be a play, picnics, going to the footy, skydiving or skinny dipping! What are the things you really enjoyed doing in the past or always thought you would have liked to do?
(Disclaimer: whilst the the author will be at the next George Thoroughgood concert he is not a nude skydiver!)

Know Your Body: Do regular self checks and if something isn't quite right, check it out with a health professional, without delay! Ask your doctor about family history traits such as bowel cancer and diabetes. The old worn saying "Prevention is better than cure" is king when it comes to your health.

Don't Eat Too Much: In a world of plenty many of us simply eat too much. Don't feel bloatedly full after a meal and don't rush to the pantry at the slightest tummy rumble. Being a little hungry for periods during the day is how it should be. Don't go back for seconds or finish off the kids meals (that's a big weight trap for parents!). Be particularly limiting of sugar and fat bombs: biscuits, pastries, pies, sausage rolls, crisps, fries, chocolate, sausages, ice-cream, etc. -- you know the drift! Did you know there is approximately 8 teaspoons of sugar in the average can of soft drink? Some breakfast cereals -- half the packet is sugar!

Move Your Body: My twenty years in the health business leads me to believe that if you can keep your heart right (in more ways than one) and your back in good shape the chances of you living a long healthy life are high. Aim for 30 minutes each day of walking, cycling, gym, basketball -- whatever it is that you can fit into your day. It does not have to be all in one go. Make sure you include five minutes or so of back care exercises. If you struggle with physical activity: simply set the alarm 30 minutes earlier, get up straight away and walk (or other) for 30 minutes. Don't make excuses -- just do it.

Have Some Treats: Occasionally forget all of the above and have some treats. Buy an ice-cream (trust me there are some really good ones in the Woolworth's freezer cabinet); a sausage at a BBQ; fish and chips do taste great, don't exercise for the day; an extra glass or two of wine. There are few people more dull than a prudish health fanatic!

Don't Stress -- Chill Out: Make sure that every day there is time for a quiet walk or to read a book or to tell a story to a child or watch TV or tend your vegetable patch. If there is a flower to be smelled, smell it! Also, make sure you have a break for a couple of weeks every year -- don't save all your holidays up for retirement, you might not get there.

Get Your Attitude Right: A good friend of mine is a manager who delivers the required business outcomes, but always he is striving to get the principles right, caring for the people he influences and continually finding the best in every situation. He never says "Thank God It's Friday" -- it's always "Thank God It's Today". Life might seem to deal up some crap at times, but for most of us we have clean water, plenty of food, never heard a machine gun, never seen a child starve to death, don't really understand torture. The sun is shining! Make the most of it.

Care A Little More: There are tons of small opportunities where you can exercise your power to make the world a better place. Try some of these : telephone someone you know who is feeling down; use reusable grocery bags; on your walk pick up the bottles and put them in the recycling; buy green power; sponsor a third world child; help at the Salvos Christmas lunch; buy a ticket in local Scout group raffle (even if you don't want the prize); say nothing when you know the words you are about to speak will hurt someone.