

“Real confidence comes from knowing and accepting yourself -- your strengths and your limitations -- in contrast to depending on affirmation of others”

JUDITH BARDWICK
Sociologist

Don't Forget:

For all of us it is important that we do a quick visual check for blood in the stool. It is simple and could prove a live saver.

If you have a family history of bowel cancer see your doctor to discuss the age at which bowel cancer screening is appropriate for you.

Welcome

I hope you have been well since the last newsletter.

I received an email from a person who participated recently in our health appraisal program. Her chance offering to her husband has possibly saved his life and their family a good deal of pain and despair. Bowel Cancer: over 12,500 new cases are diagnosed each year and 4700 are dying, in Australia. That is one death every 2 hours. Please take a moment to read the article below. This newsletter is often dominated with a single topic -- with the hope that some people will latch onto it and changes they make will result in a positive difference in their lives.

I have devoted page three to answering a request from a person with whom I was recently chatting. I was sprouting off about the wonderful resources contained in our resource CD that he was about to receive: “Allen, there is over 2000 pages of information including many small books, recipes, links to web sites bla bla bla ...”

He said “Sounds great, but any chance you can give me ten points on one A4 page that will ensure I live a long, healthy and happy life? Actually tell me the first ten things that come into your head!”

Hmmm, my first thought was that he would be better advised to consult Aristotle or Goethe. None the less, for a rambler like me, it was a neat challenge to write a spontaneous and succinct page. Page three has my humble offering -- the ideas were quick, but obviously I spent some time fleshing it out. See what you think, then do your own ten points that you feel will give you the best chance of a “long, healthy and happy life.”

We have international recipients so we no longer refer to the issues as Summer 2005 etc.

I hope this issue is of value -- you are most welcome to pass it on to whomever you like.

Rob Edwards and the Health Futures Team

Possibly a Life Saving Decision

“Dear Rob

I want to convey my thanks. The home kit for bowel cancer screening, that you provided, has three tests. I used one and my husband the other. His test showed blood was present in the toilet, although he could not see it. He used the third test that also returned a positive result.

Following the instruction on the kit, he visited our family doctor who booked him in for a colonoscopy. After the colonoscopy my husband was advised that a polyp was removed and sent away for testing. Some days later we were notified that the polyp was cancerous, however the cancer was contained within the polyp.

My husband is a healthy and fit 41 year old, although he does have some family history of bowel cancer. The cancer would have almost certainly spread elsewhere and have become a lot more difficult to treat. Thank goodness I participated in the program or who knows when we would have discovered the cancer!

Regards Sally ...” (Email from a participant, June 2005)

Over the years we have had feedback from many people who identified issues and their early action rewarded them with significant benefits.

We encourage you to do the same. The particular test kits we offer in our health appraisal program are not available for sale as single items and Health Futures, as a service business, is not structured for product sales. Thus we investigated a similar home test kit (that checks for hidden/unseen stool blood) that individuals can purchase independently. It is produced by an Australian company, Enterix, whose representative I requested deliver a session at our recent staff conference. The result being that Health Futures is delighted to recommend the product. For details see the following page. This is a no fuss way of screening for this serious condition, alternatively have a chat with your family doctor.

“Even smiling at someone, I feel as if I’m doing something to make the world a better place”

DANNY GLOVER

Actor & human rights activist

Don't Forget:

When taking criticism:

- watch for early warning signs
- listen and keep your emotions under control
- consider who the critic is and where they are coming from
- repeat the criticism to the critic
- ask for specifics
- consider the criticism carefully and respond objectively.

Worth a Look on the Web

www.enterix.com.au Bowel cancer screening services. The method is quite simple:

Apply for a test kit via the Internet or by telephone (1800 55 65 75). A kit is posted to you. Follow the instructions to collect two samples of toilet bowl water (using brushes provided, you do not need to collect faecal samples). Return the test card for analysis. Enterix will post you the results and follow up instructions if needed. The cost of the service (Aug. 2005) is \$32 (\$28 via Internet).

There is professional argument about the age at which people should be screened: it is commonly suggested from 50 years of age, but some people are now pushing that over 40 should be the target group. Our earlier story suggests 40 is a good idea and it certainly would not hurt to do it a little earlier.

“Gee that’s a bit expensive” was the response from a person to whom I mentioned the service. I replied “Yep! Sure is expensive -- less than one tenth the cost of a set of tires for your car; about the cost of half a tank of petrol; less than the cost of a carton of beer or a couple of take away meals...” My cynical response could have gone on at great length! How valuable is your health?

Health Futures receives no commission nor any other commercial benefit from Enterix.

Tomato and Butter Bean Soup

Serves 4

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 red onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon chilli powder (optional)
2 x 400g tins reduced-salt chopped tomatoes
1 teaspoon sugar
freshly ground black pepper
2 cups salt-reduced chicken or vegetable stock
1 x 400g can butter beans, drained and rinsed
1/4 cup basil leaves
2 tablespoons parmesan shavings

Method:

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat then add the onion and cook for 5 minutes until soft. Add the garlic and chilli powder if using, and cook for a further minute. Pour in the canned tomatoes and add the sugar and black pepper and cook for 5 minutes uncovered. Add the chicken stock and bring the soup to the boil then reduce the heat and allow to simmer for 15 minutes uncovered.

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Backing Up

Well over half the people we meet in our programs report that they have at least some level of lower back pain. This ranges from a “bit of a niggle now and then” to more serious conditions. The majority of those people do not do regular preventive back care exercises.

Yet by devoting five to ten minutes each day they may significantly reduce the chances of the back problem getting worse as they grow older. In some cases it may improve. It makes just as much, if not more, sense for people without back pain to invest the same five to ten minutes each day -- to ‘keep a good thing’.

Some of you would have received a laminated chart of back care exercises. We have recently produced an electronic (.pdf) version of that chart. Anyone who would like a chart may reply with the subject “Back Care”* and we will email you a copy (at no cost).

We suggest you print the chart (perhaps laminate it) then hang it on the bedroom wall as a reminder to do the exercise set everyday -- be sure to follow the safety instructions.

* If you also require back issues enter the subject as “Back Care and Back Issues”.



Good Health -- Great Future

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 veges 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 a 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.

Good Health -- Great Future

Issue A6

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

If you would like back issues of this newsletter you can "reply" but the subject must be: "Back Issues". The newsletter goes to many thousands of people so it is not possible to respond to specific health related inquiries.

A new appraisal report is available. A generic version of the resources is also available for those who have not taken part in an appraisal. 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. 2000 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.