



# Good Health -- Great Future

Issue A8

## Welcome

I hope you are well and that 2006 is turning out as you hoped.

Did you eat more than usual, have a bit more to drink and your exercise goals slipped 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%.

We have included a new blood test parameter (eGFR) in our health appraisal program, it's for the early detection of kidney disease (not yet available in all states). Thus I invited Dr Grant McBride (specialist pathologist) to present a session on kidney health at our recent staff conference. As a result the feature topic of this newsletter is Kidney Health. It may seem a narrow topic to take up a major chunk of the newsletter, but Dr McBride's input convinced us the topic is deserving of the attention. Did you know that kidney disease is the seventh biggest killer of Australians? Did you also know that there are a number of lifestyle strategies to help you avoid kidney damage? See page 3 for details and links.

I've been somewhat indulgent in that the stress tips to follow are prompted by recent personal observations and the recipe is one I made up on the weekend -- it was too good not to share.

This newsletter offers you the opportunity to receive more extensive information in the form of emailed pdf documents. Please note: they are only available by replying to the newsletter address and you must include the topic in the subject (i.e. "Kidney Health" and/or "Back Care" -- a separate reply for each). Allow a couple of weeks for us to respond. Please understand that this newsletter is read by many thousands of people and it is simply impossible for us to engage in email discussions about the topics. Please direct sales inquiries to [sales@healthfutures.com.au](mailto:sales@healthfutures.com.au) (rather than replying to this newsletter as your needs may not be met). New subscribers are welcome, but only via "quarterlynews@healthfutures.com.au" with "Subscribe" in the subject.

Have a great day.

*Rob Edwards and the Health Futures Team*

## Do They Stress at Health Futures?

Some people expect that health promotion people, such as ourselves, don't have much stress in our lives. Wrong! Recently we had more than our share: to set a platform for future improvements to our services we embarked on a major project to redevelop our purpose built and rather complex software. The work was scheduled for the Christmas break and required much internal input plus that of external contractors. In short, we were let down by a contractor and thus started a busy New Year frantically completing essential sections of the project to ensure service quality was not compromised. It was an extremely frustrating and stressful couple of months.

The key point we must remember when stressful events occur in our lives is that stress is "our reaction" to the situation -- stress is not the situation. I reckon we did a pretty good job of both achieving the business goals and coming out of it fairly relaxed. The following are some key actions that we identified of value through the process. You might like to consider them when dealing with potentially stressful events in your life.

**Change what you can.** Don't jump up and down on the spot, stressing yourself out. If changes can be made, then act to modify or remove the stressor. If you don't have control over the stressor, work on your acceptance and coping skills. In our situation that meant some long hours and hard work. In your situation it may be a period of the same or acquiring new skills or getting respite help in a carer situation or perhaps counseling support in a relationship dispute, etc. It's important to sit down and have a quiet cup of tea with yourself, to work out exactly what you have control over -- and define exactly what action you will take.

*"Look at your choices, pick the best one, then go to work with all your heart"*

PAT RILEY

Basketball Coach

## Don't Forget:

Life's about attitude, make the most of it.

Sure, have a good winge and get it off your chest, but don't spend your energy on "Woe is me!". It gets you nowhere and probably annoys the hell out of the people who have to listen to you!

Also, if the pressure is on, still find every opportunity to have a good laugh. Try to see the glass really is half full.

cont...

**Be physically active.** Don't underestimate the power of exercise in burning up stress chemistry. Even if you are very busy and you feel there is not a spare minute in the day -- find at least 15 minutes to walk, run or whatever -- swimming is great. You will get the time back in terms of well being and effectiveness. Studies show light exercise is of value, but getting a little sweaty is a good deal better to relieve stress symptoms.

**Take 3 or 4 timeouts each day.** Particularly if it is intense mental work. Just walk away for 3 to 5 minutes and forget about what you are working on. When you are returning to the work, refocus on exactly the piece of work that you left. These short timeouts are good "stress safety valves". Plus they are a great productivity tool. By clearing your mind of the work for a short while then refocusing on it, you will often find you're doing the work differently and better.

**Eat and drink well.** Often when the pressure comes on, out goes the healthy diet and in comes takeaways, coffee and alcohol. Like a car, to perform at your best your body needs good quality fuel. So keep the fat low, include heaps of fruit, vegetables and water. Coffee won't relieve stress and too much grog just adds to it, so go easy on these.

If your day includes long hours in front of a computer or driving, give high priority to your 5 to 10 minute daily back care routine (I assume all readers of our previous newsletters are now diligently doing this! Reply with "Back Care" in the subject if you want a new copy of the chart). Also, take regular short stretch breaks, see [www.healthfutures.com.au/news](http://www.healthfutures.com.au/news) and choose [Issue A1](#) to view a chart of "Office Stretches".

## Roast Lamb With a Twist

Too much spare time on a Sunday afternoon produced this interesting twist on roast lamb. It looks a fair bit of work, but it is quite simple and well worth the effort.

**Ingredients:** Leg of lamb; 2 x 400 gm cans of tomatoes; 4-5 cloves of garlic, crushed; 4-6 anchovy fillets, chopped; 1 teaspoon of sugar; 3/4 cup chopped parsley (or basil); 3/4 cup of crumbled feta (not the creamy varieties); olive oil. Optional: rosemary, lemon, cracked pepper.

**Method:** Remove as much fat as reasonably possible from the lamb (bake the shank separately as treat for the family favorite). Put the tomatoes, garlic, anchovies, sugar and half a cup of water in a glass baking dish (small and deep is best) mix and add the lamb. Rub the lamb with a little olive oil (you might like to pierce the lamb in a few places and inset extra garlic and some rosemary, but go easy with the rosemary as it can overpower the sauce). Bake in a hot oven until meat is roasting and well browned.

Remove from the oven and carefully turn the lamb over and brush a little oil on the now exposed side, again bake until it's roasting. Remove from the oven, the meat should be quite rare (if you don't like it rare you can cook it longer in the next phase).

Remove the lamb from the dish. Skim obvious fat from the sauce. Add parsley and feta to the sauce and mix -- you may need to add some water to maintain the sauce volume. Put the dish back in a moderate oven whilst you carve the meat. Add the carved meat and meat juices to the sauce; making sure the slices are well coated with sauce. Return to a very hot oven to finish -- nice baked tips to the exposed meat is how I like it.

Serve with baked sweet potato, snow peas and/or other vegetables you like. Try some cracked pepper and/or a squeeze of lemon on the served meat. If you don't drink I certainly don't suggest you start because of this dish, but if you happen to enjoy a red wine I reckon this dish does call for a cork to be removed -- don't forget moderation.

Please note: The meal is quite healthy except that it is relatively high in salt. Options to reduce salt (particularly for those with high blood pressure or otherwise where salt restriction is recommended): choose no added salt tomatoes and omit the feta. If you want to go all the way, omit the anchovies although they are an example of a strong flavor for a relatively small amount of ingredient. Without the salt you might like to add more herbs, pepper or chili.

*"A good laugh  
and a long sleep  
are the best cures  
in the doctor's  
book"*

IRISH PROVERB

### Don't Forget:

Plenty of water is good  
for your kidneys.

People often say they  
simply forget to drink  
enough. If that's you,  
here's a tip:

Every time you go to  
the loo to empty, on  
your return go to the  
tap and have a good  
drink.

Out one end and in the  
other, easy.

## Kidney Health

If you would like a detailed brochure (in .pdf form) about kidney health click reply to the email and include "Kidney Health" in the title. It will be sent within two weeks.

Cancer ... Heart Disease... Diabetes ... Now include Kidney Disease as the latest lifestyle disease we will be reading and hearing a lot more about. Did you know that one in every three Australians is at risk of developing kidney disease; one in seven may have the disease, but not know it? The following is a short introduction to the essential messages that Kidney Health Australia is encouraging all Australians to carefully consider.

According to Kidney Health Australia, the number of Australians with Kidney Disease is on the rise (approximately six per cent each year). Kidney disease is the seventh biggest killer of Australians, killing more people each year than accidents, suicide and breast cancer.

**An important message is that if kidney disease is detected and treated early, you can significantly increase the life of your kidneys and of course your quality of life. Plus there are lifestyle factors that you have control over.**

The kidneys are our body's blood filtration plant. Blood enters the kidneys and moves through a maze of fine tubes where excess fluid and unwanted substances are removed and transferred to the bladder as urine. The kidneys also play a vital role in controlling blood pressure, producing red blood cells and maintaining strong and healthy bones.

As kidney function decreases, wastes begin to build up in the blood. If the kidneys are working at only five to ten per cent of their normal rate, treatment through dialysis or a kidney transplant is the only way to prevent total kidney failure. Both of these treatments not only have a huge impact on quality of life, but they are at enormous expense and burden on the health system.

### How Do You Know?

The symptoms of kidney disease tend to be non specific. It is a good idea to consult your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Feeling sick, vomiting, loss of appetite
- Change in the frequency and quantity of urine passed
- Extreme tiredness
- Shortness of breath
- Swelling of the hands, feet or face
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Blood in urine.

### What Can You Do?

The good news is that developing kidney disease is significantly lifestyle related. You can reduce your risk of kidney disease by:

- Being a nonsmoker
- Controlling your blood pressure
- Staying fit
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Reducing stress
- Limiting alcohol
- If you are diabetic -- ensure that it is well controlled.

There is a natural slow decline in the ability of the kidneys to filter blood as you age. So if you are over 50 years of age talk to your doctor about appropriate screening for kidney disease. Also, if you have one or more family members with kidney disease, you may have a higher risk. Unfortunately the prevalence of kidney disease is six times higher in people of Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander descent -- chat with your doctor about appropriate screening. The testing procedures are very simple. A kidney health check, performed by your doctor, is likely to include: a blood pressure test, a blood test and a urine test. A new blood testing procedure for exposing the extent of kidney disease is gradually being introduced by pathology companies. The new test is known as eGFR (estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate) which predicts the rate at which the kidneys filter wastes such as creatinine from the blood -- eGFR is based on the results of a serum creatinine blood test (a routine inclusion in blood tests), your age and gender. For more information see the web site below.

Our thanks to Kidney Health Australia and Dr Grant McBride (Sonic Healthcare).

### Worth a Look on the Web

[www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au) Consistent with our feature topic we suggest you have a look at Kidney Health Australia's web site. Their fact sheets and brochures are high quality.



# Good Health -- Great Future

## How Do You Rate Yourself?

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

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

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 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 can 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.

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*Have a great day*

## Replies, Replacement Reports and Back Issues

For back issues of this newsletter visit [www.healthfutures.com.au/news](http://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.