

# A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

HEALTH ADVICE FOR  
AUSTRALIAN MEN  
ISSUE 1 // DECEMBER 2006

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"Here's something I'll give ya for free. See your doctor for an annual howd-yado or you'll be up Poop Creek."

## FROM THE EDITOR: WHAT CRISIS?



Do we have time to worry about our health? Well, we need to. Ignore your health and it'll go away.

G'day. I'm Gary Richardson, the Chairman of Foundation 49. I helped set-up this foundation because, over the years, it's become obvious there's a health crisis affecting 49 per cent of the population. Men.

So what is it about men? Why are we in a health crisis? Is it for real?

*Did you know, more than five men die prematurely each hour in Australia from preventable diseases? That's 48,000 men per year.*

The frustrating thing is that the causes of these deaths – mainly cardiovascular disease, cancer, suicide and accidents – can often be stopped from happening in the first place.

So now some good news. The risks for diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and cancer, are well known and screening tests to detect them early are available. Did you catch that? The message is clear. Have a health check. Have some tests done. Catch problems early.

There's no room for blame here. It's not simply that men don't look after their bodies. We have different biology to women, we behave differently, we have different social and economic pressures. Our roles are changing with more expected of us. Do we have time to worry about our health? Well, we need to. Ignore your health and it'll go away.

Early death in men has been associated with smoking, drinking alcohol, little or no physical activity, and obesity. Fifty percent of Australian men are overweight. This is slippery slope stuff. Overweight leads to heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer.

One-third of men have not seen a doctor in the past year, and 10 percent have not seen one in the past five years. Why wait for the disaster to occur before you do something?

Foundation 49 has set-up a Decades of Life program to help you manage your health. Visit our website and do your own assessment before visiting your GP for a health check. It takes five minutes.

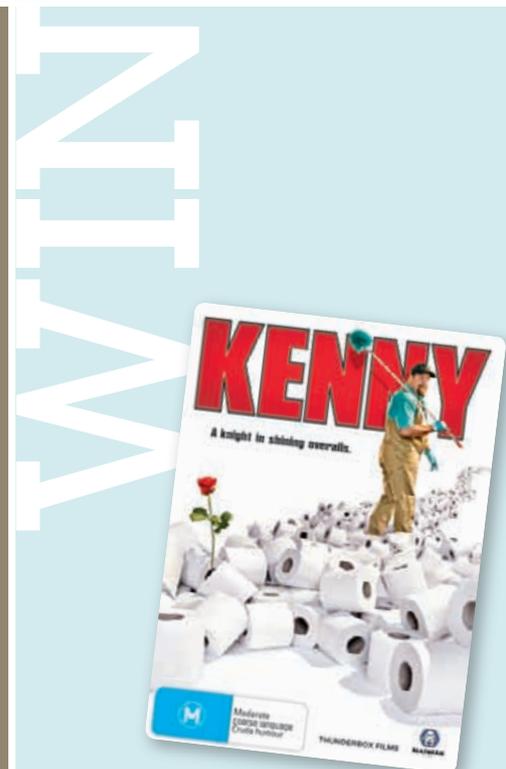
We're pretty sure the Foundation 49 initiatives will help you live longer. Ask your doctor about the Decades of Life program. Don't wait for your mum, girlfriend, partner or wife to make the call. Get onto it!

Associate Professor  
**Gary Richardson**  
Chairman, Foundation 49.  
Promoting Health Awareness in Men

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Foundation 49 is funded through donations and special events. For more information, please call (03) 9508 1535, or visit our website [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)



Kenny has kindly donated five copies of his DVD to give-away.

Visit [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au) to enter.



**MADMAN**  
FILMS

# Black dog in back paddock



Disturbing news is emerging as Australia's worst drought in more than 100 years continues to exact its toll. Many farmers and their families are despairing as their crops and livestock suffer or fail.

*beyondblue*: the national depression initiative, recently reported that every four days a farmer commits suicide. The drought is now in its sixth year in some parts of Australia and is adding stress to farmers, their partners, families and communities.

Isolation, drought-induced financial difficulties, stock loss, pressure of decision-making and the constant mental and physical demands of farming have been cited as causes for farmers' stress.

"Why is it that more than 300,000 rural Australians experience depression each year but only a small number is seeking help?" asks Associate Professor Gary Richardson, the Chairman of Foundation 49.

"Solid and useful treatment is available and there's no shame in talking about your problems," Gary says. "Depression is more than just a low mood. It is a serious condition that requires attention."

*beyondblue*'s CEO Leonie Young agrees, believing country people in Australia are typically tough, resilient and resourceful. "These are qualities that have enabled generations of country families – and men in particular – to tough it out in hard times," says Leonie. "But these same qualities also prevent many men from seeking help – particularly for depression – because they're worried that asking for help could be seen as weak or shameful."

Help for depression is as close as the telephone, internet, doctor or health centre and the new Medicare subsidy for 12 visits to a psychologist will make professional help more affordable for Australians living in the city or the country.

If you feel you may be experiencing depression, seek help from a GP or health professional – the earlier the better. Call the *beyondblue* info line on 1300 224 636 or visit their website, [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

It doesn't matter where you live. Depression hits men at the same rate in cities or rural settings.

Signs to look out for:

Over two weeks or more, are you:

- Feeling irritable, angry or constantly tired
- Having trouble getting through the day's normal jobs
- Losing interest in things you're usually keen on
- Neglecting your health
- Withdrawing from families and friends
- Indecisive
- Thinking suicidal thoughts?

If you need to talk to someone straight away call:

- Emergency appointment with your local doctor.
- Contact your local public hospital.
- *beyondblue* info line 1300 22 4636 or [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- Lifeline – 13 11 14.
- Suicide Helpline Victoria – 1300 651 251.
- Mensline – 1300 789 978.
- To find out what mental health services are available in your area call Lifeline's Just Ask information line on 1300 13 11 14 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm EST). Just Ask can also post you copies of any of *beyondblue*'s fact sheets on depression and you can them order direct from the *beyondblue* website.

# A roadmap for a healthy life

It's hard to imagine getting sick when you're still young and fighting fit. Diabetes? Heart disease? Later.

But it is worth stopping to think. You can make changes when you're young that will pay dividends as you age. Eat well. Don't smoke. Limit the grog. Get out and sweat.

Actually, the advice is similar for all men. It's never too late to start protecting yourself. After all, this body's the only one you're going to have.

Welcome to the Foundation 49 Decades of Life roadmap. Here you'll find useful questions to ask yourself and some tips and places to go for guidance. Live well. Live long.

## In your twenties ...

This is usually an exciting time in your life when you are stabilising physically, emotionally and socially – from childhood to adulthood while moving from education to work.

So while it all may seem smooth sailing, there are some health challenges you are particularly vulnerable to:

- Mental illnesses
- Harmful amounts of alcohol
- Tobacco and other drugs
- Self-harm and suicide
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Injuries from car crashes

You'll see many of these are self-inflicted. Challenging yourself can be fun. But remember, you're responsible for the risks you take.

Many guys this age exercise a lot. Keep it up. Don't let work or other responsibilities take over. Physical activity is great for you in so many ways. Go for it.

Now is a great time to start having an annual health check with your GP.

## In your thirties ...

You're probably pretty busy right now – perhaps establishing yourself at work, developing a relationship, maybe starting a family or paying-off a house.

A quick check-up with a GP will cover a few essentials to ensure you stay on top of your game. Keep playing sport. It's a great way to stay fit, keep your weight under control and catch up with mates.

### Action:

- Tell your GP about your family's medical history
- Have checks for your weight, blood pressure, skin, cholesterol levels and diabetes risk.

You can help yourself, too. Stop smoking, drink moderately and seek help for relationship problems.

Remember, the way you live now is going to directly affect the way you age. Abuse your body now and you may not notice. In 10 years' time, chances are you'll start to pay the price.

## In your forties ...

So, you've been working hard for a long time and you're expected to be at your most productive. Are you spending extra time at work, missing your kids and forfeiting a run or a bike ride on weekends?

Partners and ageing parents may be after a piece of you. If you are worried about the pace, now is a great time to make changes so you live a healthier, balanced life.

### Action:

An annual visit to your GP is a great idea to ensure your bod is behaving. Any problems can be picked up early.

The doctor will check:

- Your family history
- Your weight, blood pressure, skin, cholesterol levels and diabetes risk.

## In your fifties ...

When you reach your 50s, you may be as busy as ever, or it may be a time to reap the rewards of your hard work and take the pressure off a bit. This can be a great time to take up a new interest or the odd weekend away to rest and revive.

There are hidden risks during this decade, especially if you've neglected your health in the past.

### Action:

Make an annual health check an essential goal each birthday.

The doctor will check:

- Your family history
- Your weight, blood pressure, skin, cholesterol levels and diabetes risk.



## How Healthy Are You?

Why not do a health self-assessment on-line at the Foundation 49 website? It's designed for Aussie men and takes about five minutes to complete. Visit [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au) and try it out. The results may surprise you!

You can print out a report from the assessment to follow-up with your GP, should any health issue show up.

It is really important to have a regular GP, but if you don't have one, and don't know where to find one, just go to [www.mydr.com.au](http://www.mydr.com.au) for a listing of the GPs in your area. You could always ask a friend for a recommendation too.

Keep playing your sport, as it's a great way to stay fit, keep your weight under control and catch up with mates.

You may also like to discuss having:

- Checks of your blood, kidneys, liver, iron levels, bone density
- Heart and cancer screening, paying special attention to your bowel and prostate
- A talk about any emotional issues you're thinking about.

And remember, don't smoke, limit alcohol intake, maintain a health weight, keep active. And are you having three alcohol free days per week?

### In your sixties ...

Are you still working? Planning to retire? Kids still around? This is a decade of change for many men, when the routines of the past can disappear and you have time to do your own thing.

Keep moving! A walk each day, a game of golf each week, a hit of tennis – they're all investments in your long-term mobility and energy levels.

### Action:

An annual health check is vital now. Why not book-in on your birthday?

The doctor will check:

- Your family history
- Your weight, blood pressure, skin, cholesterol levels and diabetes risk.

You may also like to consider having:

- A flu shot
- Checks of your blood, kidneys, liver, iron levels, bone density
- Hearing and vision
- Heart and cancer screening, paying special attention to the bowel and prostate
- A talk about any emotional issues you're thinking about.

And remember, don't smoke, limit alcohol intake, maintain a health weight, keep active. And are you having three alcohol free days per week?

Your doctor may discuss other tests relevant to your own history. Keep on top of your health and you'll be insuring to your future. Got your retirement finances under control? What about your health?

### Decade: Beyond 70

You probably have worked out by now that your lifestyle is directly affected by your health, and it is vital to do all you can to maximise your wellbeing. As always, it is important to maintain relationships with family and friends, and for many, work is still an important part of life.

Keeping in touch with your GP is vital now to achieve this. As for the decades of your 50s and 60s, the range of health checks recommended are wide and varied. Talk to your doctor to discuss your own risks.,

Live life well, enjoy the ride and take care of yourself.

# Health check?

## What health check?



Five years ago Ingo Pohl decided to have a health check. At the age of 34, what could go wrong?

Ingo Pohl was given some information five years ago that could well save his life.

When Ingo went for a routine annual health check back in 2001, he was told his cholesterol levels were “pretty high”. But that wasn’t the end of it. Just as he found out his mother had type 2 diabetes, he was told his “sugars were getting up there” too. He didn’t have diabetes, but if he’d kept going the way he was, it wouldn’t be long.

In fact, Ingo was given the best news possible. He had been given a wake-up call, a fantastic opportunity to take control of his life.

Unlike so many men who don’t realise until something goes seriously wrong, Ingo was given the chance to avoid a heart attack and diabetes with all its complications.

Since the diagnosis, Ingo has modified his diet and has got on his bike.

“When I was 15 or 16 I used to run in cross-countries all the time. Over the years I did less and less running as work and social commitments took over. Now I am running and bike-riding again and I plan to ride to work – about 18 km a day,” says Ingo.

Ingo reckons it was rotten being confronted by the bad news from his doctor, but a few changes to his lifestyle have meant his levels are well under control.

“Most guys know what they need to do to be healthy and everyone is aware that we’re getting fatter. It’s easy to think ‘not me, I’m not affected’ but you could be.

“Next time you’re thinking ‘just one more piece of small pizza, think twice. And get a health check.”

## Are you at risk of high cholesterol?

### What is it?

- Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in some foods we eat and is also made by our livers. There’s good and bad cholesterol.
- LDL cholesterol is known as the “bad” boy of the cholesterol world because it contributes to your risk of coronary heart disease. They settle on the walls of your arteries and make gooey plaque, thickening the walls and narrowing the space for blood to flow.
- HDL cholesterol is the “good” stuff because it helps stop the bad guys settling in the arteries. It takes the LDL to the liver where it is sent packing.
- What influences you levels of LDL and HDL? Your genes (thanks mum and dad) and your diet both have an impact.
- So which foods should be limited? LDL comes neatly packaged in saturated fats in meat, dairy products, coconut, palm and cocoa oils.

### Want to prevent thickened arteries and your chance of a heart attack?

- See your doctor to work out your LDL and HDL levels
- If your doctor thinks it’s necessary, take some medication to reduce your LDL cholesterol.
- Know your blood pressure, and keep it under control
- Lose some weight
- Stop smoking
- Exercise – 30 minutes a day

## Are you at risk of developing diabetes?

### What is it?

- When your blood sugar (glucose) levels are higher than they should be, but not high enough to be called diabetes, you have a significant risk of developing diabetes in the future. It's an important warning sign. A wake-up call offering you the chance to fend off the big D.
- Type 2 diabetes happens in adults later in life when there is too much glucose in the blood. Your body's not converting glucose into energy as it should. Glucose levels are normally controlled by a hormone called insulin.
- Over one million Australians have diabetes – and half of them are unaware.
- Two million people are at risk of developing diabetes. In fact, almost one in four Australians aged 25 years and over have either diabetes or are at risk of developing diabetes, increasing their risk of serious complications like heart disease.
- What causes it? Increasing levels of obesity and our lazy lifestyles. The solution? Healthier foods, and 30 minutes of physical activity each day
- See your GP to find out if you are at risk of developing diabetes or already have diabetes. From the age of 20, we should be checked every five years. When you reach 40, a test every three years is a good idea.

### Are you at risk of Type 2 diabetes?

Is this you:

- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you have high cholesterol?
- Are you overweight?
- Do you have a family member with diabetes?
- Are you over 50 years of age?
- Are you over 35 years of age and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or are you from the Pacific Islands, Indian subcontinent or from a Chinese cultural background?

### Where can I get more information?

[www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)  
[www.diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au)  
or phone: 1300 136 588.



## The Seagull Race

Foundation 49 has been very fortunate to have the support of the Brighton Rotary Club. Fundraising by the club has allowed the development of the Foundation 49 website, [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au), which is now up and running.

Visitors to the new website can find groundbreaking men's health information, links to other reputable websites and a men's health assessment. Why not have a go at the assessment and see just how healthy you are?

In one of Melbourne's most innovative attempts to raise funds, Brighton Rotary ran a unique 'Seagull' race with 100 floating foam birds – an extraordinary sight. A staggering \$100,000 was raised, an absolutely vital contribution to men's health in Australia.

Our grateful thanks go to the Brighton Rotary Club, and to Dr David Grodski as the event organiser. We look forward to continuing to work together to help men enjoy the best of health, both now and in the future.

Foundation 49.  
Promoting Health Awareness in Men

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## Fast facts

- Foundation 49 is an initiative of the Cabrini Institute
- It aims to help all men over 20 years of age – of all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds
- Widespread screening and health promotion are key goals
- We believe supporting men to take control of their health is vital
- Our Decades of Life project is a tool for all men and for health professionals to help them assess a patient's risk of disease, to avoid illnesses and to assist in making early diagnoses of physical and mental problems.

Foundation 49  
is supported by



## Five minutes with... KB

Kevin 'Hungry' Bartlett is a legend of Australian Rules and revered by Tigers fans. He played 403 games for Richmond from 1965 to 1983 and kicked 778 goals. He was a member of five premiership winning teams, and his seven-goal effort in the 1980 grand final won him the Norm Smith Medal. He also won five 'best and fairest' awards during his time at Richmond. KB is a true leader having captained Richmond in 1979 and Victoria in 1980, and he also coached Richmond from 1988 to 1991.

### What do you do for work these days?

I host a morning radio program called Hungry for Sport on SEN – 1116 AM, Melbourne's Home of Sport.

### Greatest highlight of your footy career?

Easy. Being a member of five Richmond premiership sides in '67, '69, '73, '74 and '80.

### Your worst injury playing football?

Broken cheek bone and eye socket.

### Best players you played on?

Bob Skilton, Billy Goggin, Wayne Richardson, Leigh Matthews, Ian and Bruce Nankervis.

### What do you do to stay healthy?

I garden, play golf and a bit of tennis.

### When was the last time you visited your GP?

I've had an annual check-up for the last eight or nine years.

### Biggest health challenge faced?

Thankfully have not had one yet!

### Best health tip you ever had?

Make certain that after you turn 50 you talk to your doctor about prostate and bowel cancer testing.

### Favourite drink?

Cup of tea. True.

### Favourite meal?

Fish and chips.