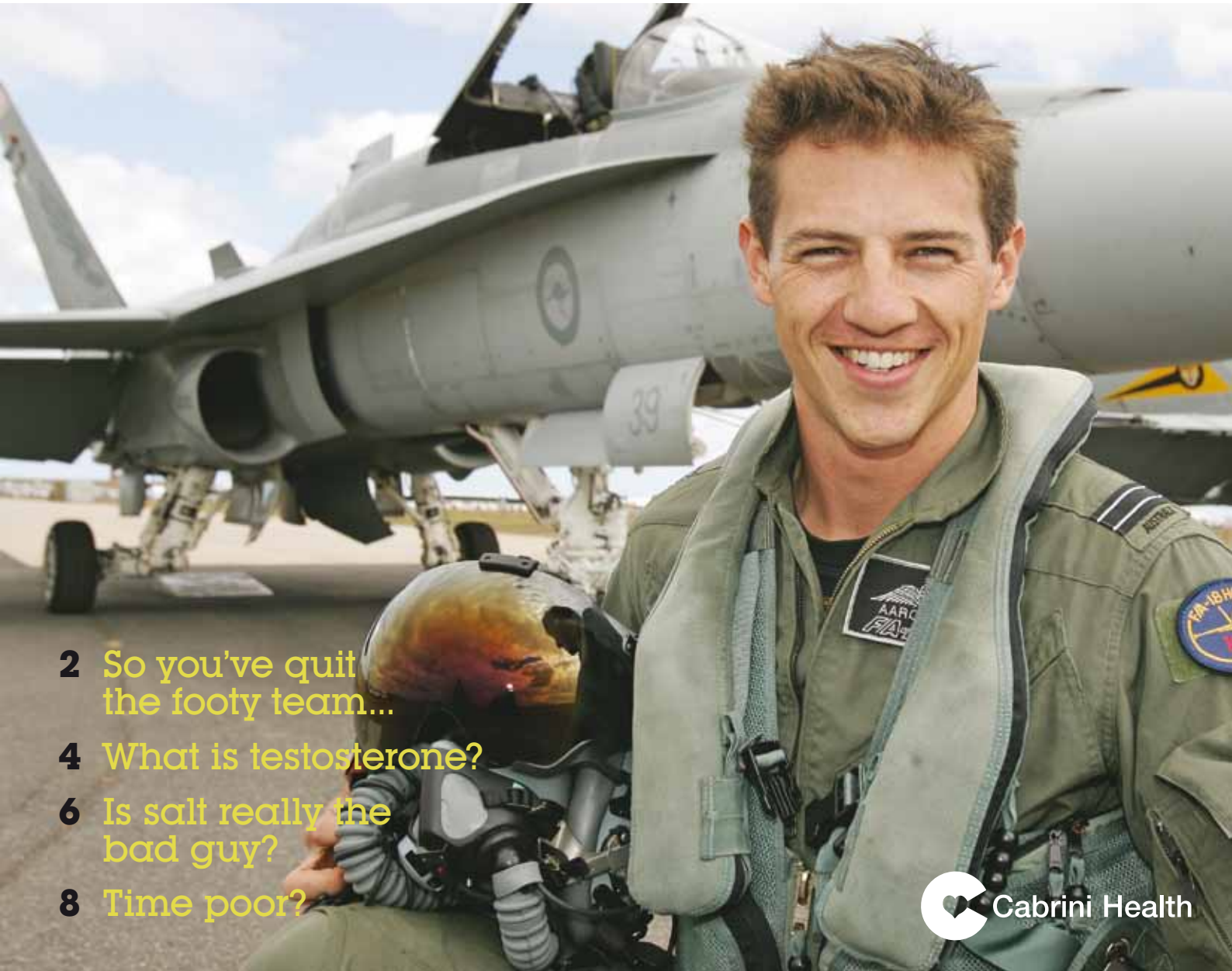


A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

HEALTH ADVICE FOR
AUSTRALIAN MEN
ISSUE 16 // June 2011

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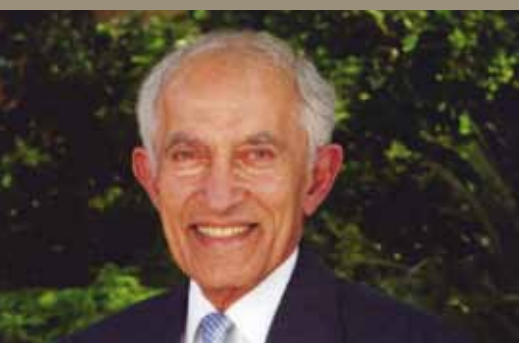
Foundation 49 is an initiative of Cabrini Health. Thanks to Cabrini for its ongoing support.

This magazine contains general health information and does not take the place of regular medical advice and treatment from a GP. We recommend all men consult a doctor or health professional for a thorough personal examination on a regular basis.

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Foundation 49 Patron,
The former Governor of Victoria
Professor David de Kretser, AC



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
GARY RICHARDSON

QUESTIONS FOR THE QUACK

with Associate Professor Gary Richardson

Welcome to another edition of A Whole New Ball Game, I hope the year has kicked off well for you and life is good! Have you ever wondered about testosterone and what it does? Well have a look at our article on pages 4 & 5 and it might answer some questions for you. Let us know if there is something you would like us to cover in an article, just drop us a line at admin@49.com.au or give us a call 03 9508 5363. Cheers, Gary.

Q. Bob 54 asks: I have allergies, could they be the reason I have high blood pressure?

A. Allergies don't usually directly cause high blood pressure, but they can contribute to high blood pressure in two very different ways.

People with allergies often use products such as Sudafed, which constricts small blood vessels in the nose making it easier to breathe. But it also constricts blood vessels throughout the body, making the heart work harder, and possibly increasing blood pressure. If you are concerned about high blood pressure, choose antihistamines such as Zyrtec, Benadryl, and Claritin, which are safer for the heart. Maybe try a nasal spray, which acts directly on the blood vessels in the nose and not the rest of the body.

Secondly, if your allergies cause nasal congestion at night, they could interfere with your breathing when you sleep.

This can promote, or worsen, the type of gasping-for-breath snoring known as sleep apnea, which can raise blood pressure. Your GP can give you more details and advice.

Q. Pete 37 asks: How would I know if I had a hernia?

A. A hernia is caused by organs, like your intestines, pushing through a weakened section of your abdominal wall to form a sac. The symptoms can vary depending on the location and severity of the hernia but you may notice a lump or swollen area and experience an uncomfortable feeling or pain in your abdomen or groin when you lift a heavy object. The lump disappears when you lie down and gets bigger when you stand up or cough. The only effective treatment is surgical repair so go and have a chat with your GP if you have any concerns.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Astronauts cannot burp in space. There is no gravity to separate liquid from gas in their stomachs
- In the Caribbean there are oysters that can climb trees
- A snail can have about 25,000 teeth, and can sleep for three years
- The Eiffel Tower shrinks 6 inches in winter



SQUADRON LEADER AARON WARD

Regular health checks are important, and all pilots are required to complete an aircrew health assessment, which is a very thorough yearly check-up.

Aaron has always wanted to fly and grew up surfing in Newcastle with the jets flying up the beach near his home, and that's where his interest began.

The greatest challenges in his training have been large war-game type missions. When participating in overseas exercises such as "Red Flag" in the US, or in our Australian equivalent of "Top Gun" training missions, the missions sometimes involve up to 100 aircraft in the air at once, simulating both "good guys" and "bad guys". There is not only a very complicated air war occurring, but also vital ground targets which must be simultaneously taken out. The ground targets are usually protected by sophisticated surface-to-air missile systems along with the "hostile" fighter aircraft. Aaron has also flown as an Australian F/A-18 Hornet low-level aerobatic display pilot for 2 years, which was very challenging but equally as rewarding and the best fun flying that he has ever experienced.

Aaron currently works as an instructor and manager of introductory fighter training with students on the Hawk 127. He flies once or

twice a day training students in the basics of fighter flying. The fighter jet community also deploy overseas for training exercises normally once a year, usually to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, or the US.

Flying a fighter jet requires an above-average level of fitness. The high G-force manoeuvres are physically and mentally taxing and they require all pilots to keep good aerobic and anaerobic fitness. Aaron says of his fitness regime *"I usually run, swim or ride a bike for aerobic workout, and lift weights or do a gym circuit for muscular fitness. I love surfing which is a fun way to keep fit, and have played soccer, ridden bikes and paddled surf-skis just for fun."*

After 13 years and especially while instructing student fighter pilots, Aaron says the flying becomes more work and less of an adrenaline rush. *"At the end of the day it feels like going home after a day of any other job, and it's not until you stop and think about what you did at work, or someone asks you what you did at work, that you remember what a unique and exciting job it is."*

Flying fighters is particularly stressful on the pilot's neck and back due to the high G-forces acting on the body. All pilots are provided with an extremely high level of medical care, and wear earplugs in addition to ear-muffs which are contained inside the helmets to protect from noise while working in and around the jets. A good work/life balance is important, and Aaron tries to make the most of the time that he has away from work, mostly on the weekends, enjoying exercising, playing music, and spending time with his wife, family and friends.

Regular health checks are important, and all pilots are required to complete an aircrew health assessment, which is a very thorough yearly check-up. It covers the entire spectrum from general health and lifestyle factors to specific high-performance jet flying physiology aspects and checks.

Reducing deaths in men from preventable disease is a cause that Aaron believes is relevant, necessary, achievable, and very important. Fighter Jet flying will often get peoples' attention, and he hopes he can show that leading a healthy lifestyle helps him to do his job.

So you've quit the footy team, how do you keep those guns in shape?

Have you noticed that many young men are active and participate in school sports, but become more sedentary when they leave school? No matter what age you are, it might take a bit of effort to remain active, but the health benefits are worth it!

There are many reasons why young men don't continue with sports and physical activity after they leave school, and this trend can carry on into the 20's, 30's and beyond. The most common reasons include the busyness of life in general, and time constraints. This can be due to settling into demanding work and study routines, family commitments, and not having readymade sports opportunities that school provides.

For many, the structured routines of Saturday games, or night games and weekly practices do not provide the flexibility that individual lifestyles require. But it may also be that injuries and fitness levels prohibit participation, and therefore creativity is needed to find new ways of exercising. It is easy to get out of the habit of exercising, and knowing how to find an activity that suits you can be a challenge!

But why are we being told to get up and exercise? Well it appears that there is a

lot of scientific evidence that suggests there are many benefits to being physically active. The list includes things such as:

- Social benefit – meet new people, rekindle old friendships, spend time with your mates
- Physical health – stronger bones, improved immunity
- Vitamin D production – the sun on your skin produces vitamin D in your body
- Mental health – don't underestimate the value of doing something positive for yourself
- Weight management – to help keep those kilos off, and tone that muscle mass
- Cancer prevention – reduced chance of developing bowel cancer
- Stress release – shakes off the tough day
- Fun – endorphins released during exercise make you feel good

So if we all agree that exercising is good for you on a number of levels, how much you should be doing is an important question that needs answering. The Australian Government has put together

some guidelines on how much exercise we should all be doing, and it seems that 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise on most days of the week (5 or more) is what we should aim for as a minimum. The 30 minutes can be broken into 3 x 10 minute blocks if that is easier to achieve. So, get your runners out, put your swimmers on, dust off that bike you have been meaning to ride and hit the exercise trail!

SOME EASY EXERCISE IDEAS!

Get your mates together for some rugby or footy in the park

Make a regular time to walk, building up to greater distances over time

Exercise your dog... yes, regularly!

Ask your work mates if there is a team that needs a spare man, or even start your own team if there is something you are keen to do

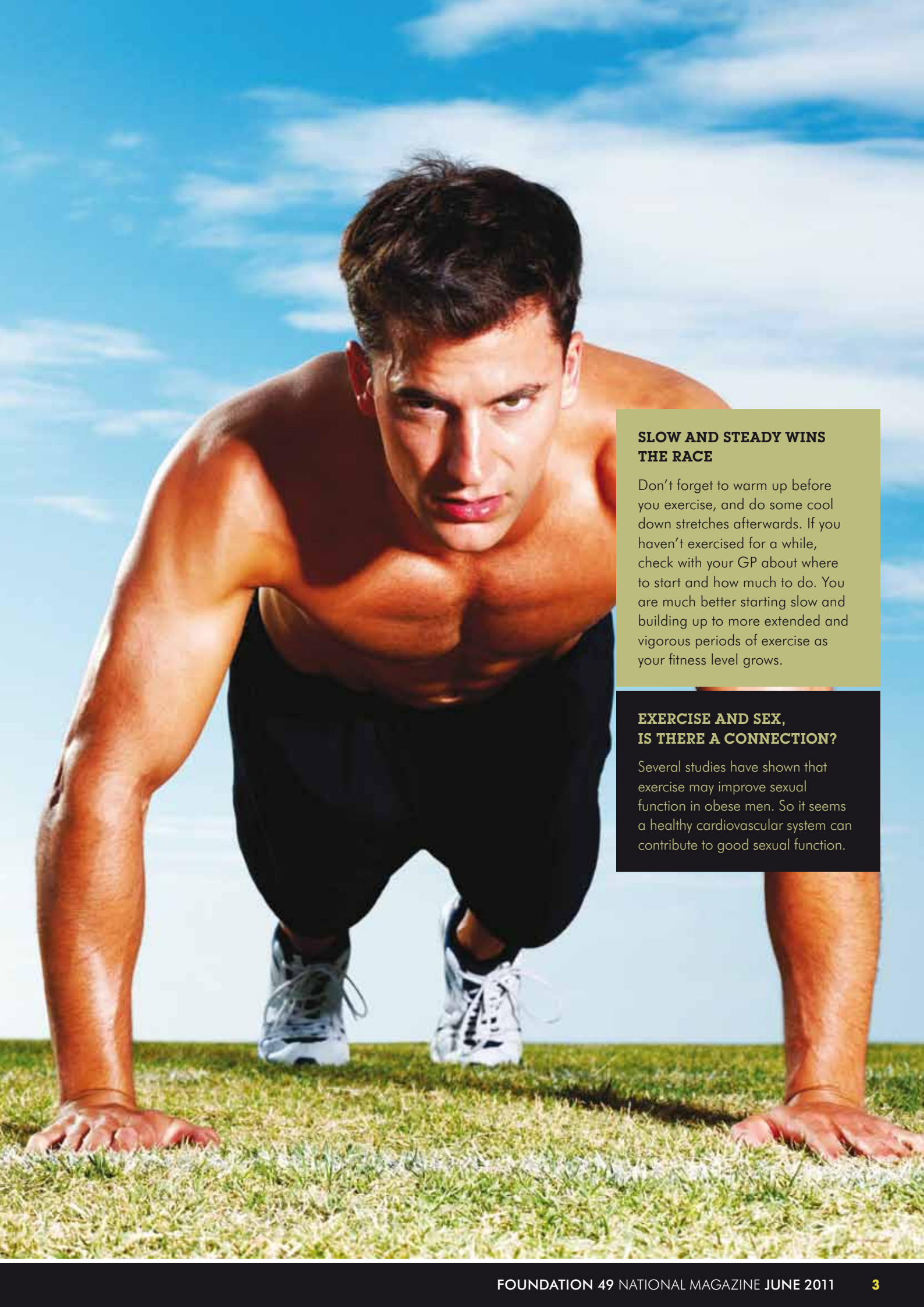
Set yourself a target – there are many charity walks/runs/swims/bike rides you can train for

Try something new, and it doesn't need to be expensive

Plan an active holiday with a few mates, such as bike riding or bush walks

A BIT OF ONLINE RESEARCH CAN HELP

Your local council website | Go For Your Life website | Google bike paths, parks, walking trails in your area



SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

Don't forget to warm up before you exercise, and do some cool down stretches afterwards. If you haven't exercised for a while, check with your GP about where to start and how much to do. You are much better starting slow and building up to more extended and vigorous periods of exercise as your fitness level grows.

EXERCISE AND SEX, IS THERE A CONNECTION?

Several studies have shown that exercise may improve sexual function in obese men. So it seems a healthy cardiovascular system can contribute to good sexual function.

What is testo

Testosterone is the most important androgen (male sex hormone) in men and plays a key role in reproductive and sexual function.

Testosterone is responsible for producing the physical characteristics of male puberty, and for those features typical of adult men such as facial and body hair. Testosterone also stimulates cells in the testes to assist in the production of sperm. In addition, testosterone is important for the good health of many non-reproductive tissues in the body. It plays an important role in the growth of bones and muscles, and affects mood, sex drive and certain aspects of mental ability.

What is testosterone deficiency?

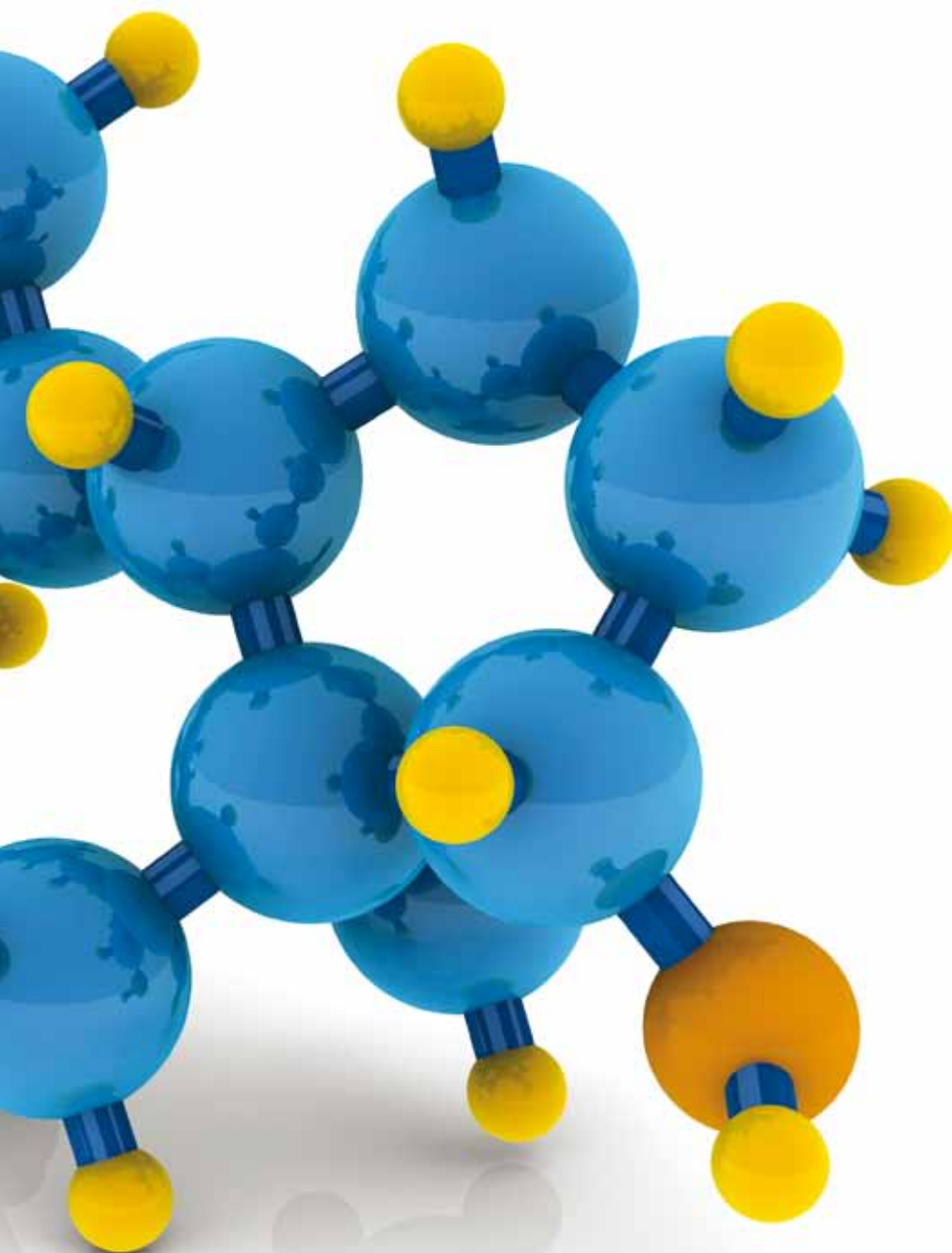
Testosterone deficiency is when the body is unable to produce enough testosterone for the body to function normally. Although not a life-threatening condition, it can have a major affect on quality of life.

How common is testosterone deficiency?

Testosterone deficiency affects about one in 200 men under 60 years of age. The number of men over 60 years who are testosterone deficient is uncertain with some estimates suggesting that one in 10 older men may have low testosterone levels. The ageing process, medical illnesses and obesity all affect testosterone levels.

Do all men get low testosterone levels as they age?

Testosterone levels in men are at their highest between the ages of 20 to 30 years; then testosterone begins to fall by about a third between the ages of 30 to 80 years. Some men will experience a greater drop in these hormone levels. However, many men aged over 80 years will have relatively normal testosterone levels.



Testosterone?

Does “Male Menopause” exist?

Ageing men who have symptoms that have been associated with testosterone deficiency are sometimes described in the media as having “male menopause”. Terms such as these are not accurate. Menopause is the stopping of menstrual cycles (periods) which can only happen in women. Testosterone levels in men do not stop suddenly but slowly drop with age. Therefore, the hormonal changes associated with ageing in men and women are diagnosed and treated differently.

What are the symptoms and signs of testosterone deficiency?

The signs of low testosterone are different depending on the age when testosterone levels fall below the normal range. Many of the symptoms and signs are nonspecific and may occur with other medical illnesses and in other circumstances, such as in times of physical or psychological stress. Showing these symptoms therefore does not automatically mean that such men should have testosterone treatment.

How is testosterone deficiency diagnosed?

A number of steps are involved in diagnosing testosterone deficiency:

- A full medical history and physical examination to confirm testosterone deficiency and to identify a possible cause
- At least two blood samples on different days are taken to measure hormone levels. Blood is taken for testing in the morning as testosterone levels are highest at that time
- Tests can be performed to determine the presence or absence of medical conditions known to affect the testes or pituitary gland

What is the ‘normal’ testosterone reference range?

Ninety-five per cent of healthy people have hormone levels that fall within a standard reference range. However, a few healthy people (5 per cent) have levels outside the range. The ‘normal’ testosterone reference range for healthy, young adult men is considered to be between about 8 and 27 nanomolar (approximately).

How is testosterone deficiency treated?

Testosterone deficiency is treated by giving testosterone in doses that return the testosterone levels in the blood to normal.

What are the main forms of testosterone therapy?

Testosterone injections, implants, oral capsules, skin patches, creams and gels are available in Australia. Testosterone is prescribed for men with clinically proven lowered testosterone levels. Once started, treatment is usually continued for life and needs to be checked regularly by a qualified doctor, who will also monitor the prostate, blood count (haematocrit), cholesterol levels and bones (for osteoporosis).

Who should NOT receive testosterone therapy?

Testosterone treatment should not be started in older men before the possibility of prostate cancer or severe non-malignant prostate disease has been considered. Men with breast cancer should also not receive testosterone therapy. Men with sleep apnoea or heart failure need a thorough assessment before being considered for testosterone replacement therapy. Testosterone therapy should also not be used to treat low hormone levels caused by other treatable conditions, such as obesity or depression. These underlying problems should be corrected first as hormone levels may return to normal and testosterone therapy may never be needed.

What are the side-effects of testosterone therapy?

Testosterone therapy can increase prostate growth, possibly making any prostate cancer, if present, worse. Testosterone should not be prescribed for men with prostate cancer. It may also make symptoms of prostate enlargement (benign prostatic hyperplasia, BPH) worse. Other side-effects such as mild acne, weight gain, breast development, male-pattern hair loss and changes in mood are uncommon.

Can anything be done to prevent testosterone deficiency?

There are no known ways to prevent true testosterone deficiency caused by damage to the testes or pituitary gland. However, a healthy lifestyle and management of other health problems can improve testosterone production in men whose lowered hormone levels are due to other illnesses or conditions. Treatment should be directed towards these other illnesses in the first instance.

For more information

This information has been kindly provided by Andrology Australia. For more detailed information, please call 1300 303 878 for Andrology Australia’s free guide on androgen deficiency, or visit www.andrologyaustralia.org.

Is salt really the bad guy?

Who doesn't love a plate of fish and chips with a generous sprinkling of salt, and a salad of course! **But is all that salt good for you?**

Salt is one of the oldest food ingredients around, and plays many roles in food, from acting as a preservative, helping yeast rise in bread and adding flavour. It is also a cheap way to make food tastier!

So how much salt should we eat?

Scientists prefer to talk in terms of sodium, which is one of two components of common salt. The recommended upper level of intake of sodium is 2300mg. This is about 6g, or one and a half teaspoons of salt. Sodium is naturally found in foods and is also added to foods during manufacture or during cooking or baking. Salt preferences vary widely. Many people are now consuming less salt, while there are also people who prefer moderate amounts of salt in their diets.

Salt can be difficult to regulate in our diet because most of the salt we consume is "hidden" salt. It is in products such as breakfast cereals (1 cup of bran cereal, 160 mg of sodium), a tuna sandwich (1,300 mg), a cup of cottage cheese (900 mg), prepared biscuits (3 biscuits, 190 mg).

Is there a link between salt and blood pressure? Scientific evidence shows that:

- Salt intake can influence blood pressure in some people, but genetic and lifestyle factors (including age, physical activity, body weight, alcohol intake and other dietary factors) can be more important.
- About one in five people are 'salt sensitive' (blood pressure rises with a high salt intake) and for these people, it is important to limit their salt.
- If a person is overweight, reducing weight can have the greatest effect of all lifestyle changes on lowering blood pressure.
- Getting enough of several other minerals – including calcium, potassium and magnesium – is important for having normal blood pressure. For example, diets with the same salt content but containing more fruit and vegetables, which are high in potassium and magnesium and low fat, dairy products which contain calcium, were found to have three times the blood pressure lowering effect of salt restriction alone.
- For most people there is usually no harm in having a low or moderate salt intake.



HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT IODINE?

Iodised salt (salt with iodine) provides a good source of iodine in the diet. Iodine is an essential trace element necessary for a healthy functioning thyroid gland. Iodine is found in seafood, bread and iodised salt. There is also some iodine in plants and vegetables, but the amount depends on the iodine levels in the soil they have been growing in.

How to best guard against high blood pressure:

- If overweight, reduce weight and maintain a healthy weight.
- Be physically active.
- Eat more fruit, vegetables and low fat dairy products.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Moderate salt intake by using less in prepared foods and reading nutrition labels.

If you do need to reduce your salt intake:

- Make a gradual change to less salt in your diet; the more salt we eat the more our taste buds like it
- Encourage the rest of the household to join you
- Remove the salt from your table
- Use other seasonings such as lemon, pepper and herbs
- Avoid frozen meals and take-away foods
- Read food labels carefully, choose low-sodium or sodium-free products
- Choose fresh and homemade foods over processed foods

Content for this article has been supplied by The Cabrini Health Nutrition and Dietetics Department, and the Harvard Medical School.



MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



FRIDAY

Time poor?

You may think we live in the land of the long weekend but Australians work the longest hours in the developed world, with full time workers spending an average of 44 hours at work each week.

According to a recent study, 45% of all Australian workers clock up an average of 49 minutes unpaid work each day. There are many reasons why people work longer hours such as career development and financial commitments and pressures. Workplace culture can also play a role in this trend with many workers feeling there is an expectation to stay longer at work each day, which in turn means they are missing out on family time and exercise.

Long working hours and job stress have been linked to preventable health outcomes such as obesity, cardio-vascular disease, anxiety and depression with many workers feeling they have no time to visit their GP.

So what is the answer? Keep an eye on the hours you work, and remember that it is important to make time for you and your family.

Further information: www.beyondblue.org.au
National Workplace Program

Long time, no see: the impact of time poverty on Australian workers. Josh Fear, Serena Rogers, Dr Richard Denniss. Australia Institute. Nov 10 2010

Climbing the ladder?

It can be more dangerous than you think!

There are around 4000 falls from ladders in Australia each year resulting in serious injury and admission to hospital, and the number of falls is increasing!

83% of these falls are men, with the most at risk group being men aged 60-84 years.

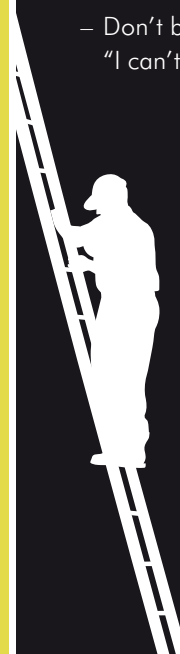
Falls from ladders by men usually result in injuries to the head and upper body like shoulders and can be as serious as a permanent spinal cord injury.

Most of these falls occur in the home and are caused by ladder instability.

A couple of reasons for the high rate of ladder injuries in the home could be DIY trends and difficulties getting a tradie to your door.

How to stay safe up high?

- Set the ladder up at a 70-75 degree angle
- Secure the ladder or have someone hold it for you
- Don't over-reach or carry heavy things up the ladder
- Don't be a hero, it's ok to say "I can't do it"



AIHW National Injury Surveillance Unit
Briefing Number 11,
August 2007



Sian Pullen, F49 nurse, performs a health check on Ray Terare.

Health checks St Kilda Festival

Foundation 49 has been busy again this year delivering health checks in the community.

In February Foundation 49 partnered with the Inner South Community Health Service and two of our nurses offered free blood cholesterol and blood pressure checks at the Yalukit Willam Ngaree Indigenous music day as part of the St Kilda Festival. If any health issues were identified, the person was encouraged to follow up with their GP.

Organiser Prue Ingram said "There was a huge amount of interest (in the health checks) and the nurses were kept busy for the whole time, usually with a queue waiting. Our shared tent space meant that while people were waiting for health checks, Inner South staff had a "captive audience" for discussions about diabetes and smoking cessation!"

The health checks provided an excellent opportunity to provide the indigenous community with a number of brochures, as well as a range of Foundation 49 health resources. There was great enthusiasm for the health checks promoting "wellness" in the indigenous community.

The event was supported by the Cabrini Health Mission office.

Want to support F49?

Each hour, five men die from potentially preventable conditions. Foundation 49 is working to tackle this crisis.

Yes, I'd like to help Foundation 49 protect men from potentially preventable diseases.

Here is my gift of: \$ _____

Payment can be made by credit card or cheque made payable to: Cabrini Health / Foundation 49.

- VISA MASTERCARD
 AMEX DINERS

Credit card number

Expiry date ___/___/___

Name on card

Signature

Name

- Miss Mrs Ms Dr Mr

First Name

Surname

Address

Phone

Email

Mail to: Foundation 49, 183 Wattletree Rd, Malvern, Vic, 3144.

Fax to: (03) 9508 5360

You can also donate by calling (03) 9508 5363.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Your support is gratefully acknowledged. Foundation 49 is an initiative of Cabrini Health.



CABRINI HEALTH ABN 33 370 684 005.

Men at work

Call Foundation 49 to find out about a straightforward and practical health assessment program catering for *all men* in the workplace. We provide individuals and employers with valuable feedback on health risks, recommendations on well-being initiatives and useful health information. Each participant receives an individual health report.

Foundation 49.
Promoting Health
Awareness in Men

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Malvern, 3144

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Foundation 49
a Cabrini Health Initiative

Five minutes with...

Adam Byrnes

Melbourne Rebels Rugby Union



Adam studied law at Sydney University and then headed to Europe to take up a rugby contract at the age of 23. Since then he returned to Australia to fulfil his dream of playing in the Super Rugby competition first for the Queensland Reds and now the Melbourne Rebels.

How long have you played rugby, and how did you get in to it?

Rugby was the predominant sport at my school and it really appealed to me. My parents made me play soccer in years 3 and 4 before I was finally allowed to play rugby in year 5. Since then I have never looked back!

2. What's the biggest health challenge you have faced?

Just to list a few – 3 shoulder reconstructions, hand reconstruction, both knees have had ligaments ruptured, neck and lower back spinal degeneration and disc issues as well as many muscle tears. But these are all easy to rehabilitate, you can see them on scans, you are told what is required. It is the mental side of sport and injuries which is much harder. The stress, the disappointment, contract negotiations/options, they can really impact on your health, family and relationships. There are massive highs with sport, feelings of great satisfaction and achievement, and then there are the times that are the opposite.

3. Apart from your training, what do you do to stay healthy?

I eat fruit and vegies every day. Nutrition is important for not only your sport, but to establish good routines for the rest of your life. You have to find the right balance, you still need to be able to enjoy yourself.

4. What has been your greatest sporting achievement?

Running out against the Bulls in Pretoria for my first Super Rugby cap at the age of 27. It was a life-long goal to play Super Rugby and to finally get there the long way around was very satisfying. I proved to myself I was good enough.

5. What do you think is the biggest health issue for men today?

Men's perception that having check-ups or seeking help is not important or that it is a sign of weakness.

6. What was your worst career moment?

Being cited for biting and facing a possible 2 year ban against the Waratahs early last year. If I had of been found guilty it would have ended my career then and there.

7. Best health tip you've been given?

Prevention is much better than rehabilitation.

8. What is your favourite non-football thing to do?

Fishing, I love being out on the water. Whether it be with company on a bright sunny day catching plenty of fish, or even sometimes by myself.