

## Health 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, friends and ageing parents may all 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, more balanced life.

Taking time for yourself is important – remember to relax and allow yourself time to do the things you enjoy.

### Take Action:

- If you don't already have one, find a GP you feel comfortable talking to.
- An annual visit to your GP is a great idea to ensure your body is behaving. Any problems can be picked up early. Not necessarily because you are sick, but because, compared to ten years ago, you will benefit from a little more care and attention to make sure you don't become sick.
- Have checks for your weight, blood pressure, skin (screening for skin cancer), cholesterol levels and diabetes risk.

For example, symptoms related to diseases of the heart and blood vessels generally develop gradually, even if you only become aware of them much more suddenly. A regular check of blood pressure, blood cholesterol and fats, and even blood glucose will assure you that all is well.

Your mental health is also important. Depression and anxiety in men are common - one in eight men experience depression and one in five men experience anxiety at some stage in their lives. Some signs of depression and anxiety include:

- often feeling down or anxious/uptight
- drinking or smoking too much
- withdrawing from family, friends and social situations
- stressing over small things
- feeling easily irritated, upset or angry
- feeling like you're losing control.

Symptom checklists and more information on depression and anxiety are available from the *beyondblue* website ([www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)) or by calling the *beyondblue* info line 1300 22 4636. Help is available for depression and anxiety and with the right treatment, most people recover. It's important to seek help early – the sooner the better. Your GP is a good place to start. Depression and anxiety are illnesses, not weaknesses, and you shouldn't feel ashamed to ask for help.

### You may also want to consider:

- a flu shot
- blood tests to check kidney and liver function, and iron levels
- a bone density test as recommended by a GP
- hearing and vision tests
- self-examination of testicles for lumps
- a talk about any relationship problems

### And, keep an eye on your:

- weight
- the amount of physical activity you're doing
- alcohol intake – have no more than two standard drinks per day, and no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion. Stay in control.

Remember, friends and family won't appreciate all the hard work you're putting in if you're not around in ten years to enjoy the rewards with them. Take time out and spend time with friends and family.



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