

Health in your 70's and beyond...

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.

Not only is it possible to increase the number of years you live beyond seventy, it is equally possible to be more productive and energetic across these years. Keeping in touch with your GP is vital now to achieve this. The great benefit of this is, of course, the increased opportunity to stay involved in a meaningful way with friends, family and even work.

Take Action!

An annual health check is vital. Why not book-in on your birthday? The doctor will check your:

- family history
- weight
- blood pressure
- skin (screening for skin cancer)
- cholesterol levels
- risk of diabetes (fasting blood sugar)

It's important to also keep a check on your mental health. Some people – especially older people – consider depression to be a weakness of character and not a health problem, so they don't talk about how they're feeling. Depression is not a normal part of ageing. Depression and anxiety are common health problems - 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) or you can call the *beyondblue* info line 1300 22 4636 (local call cost from a landline). 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.

When you see your GP, you may also like to consider:

- a flu shot
- blood tests to check kidney and liver function, and iron levels
- bone density test
- hearing and vision tests
- heart and cancer screening
- screening for bowel cancer every two years
- screening for prostate cancer
- a talk about any relationship problems

But most of all live life well, enjoy the ride and take care of yourself.



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