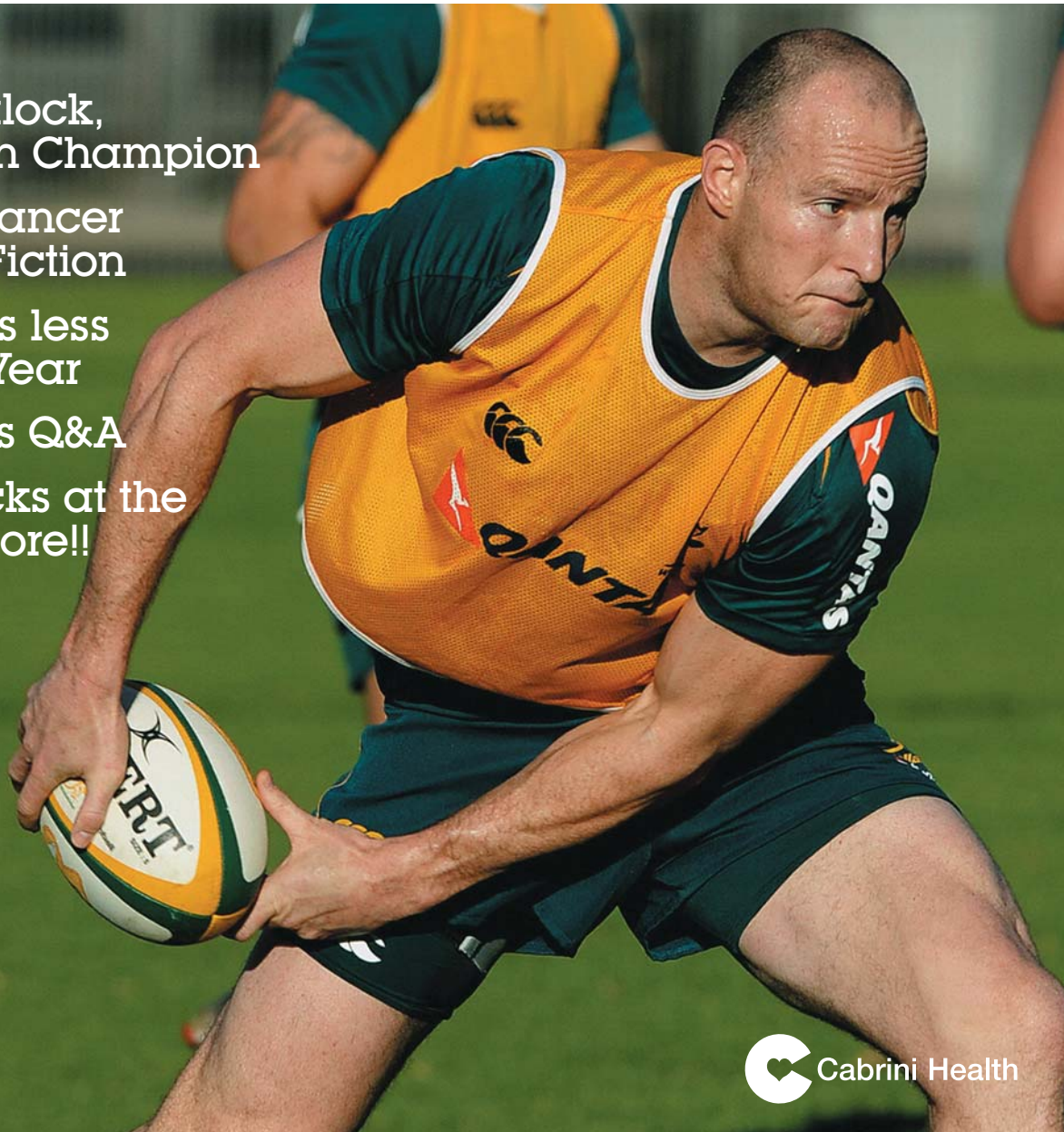


# A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

HEALTH INFORMATION  
FOR AUSTRALIAN MEN  
ISSUE 17 // FEBRUARY 2012

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Rugby Union Champion
- 2 Testicular Cancer  
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- 4 How to stress less  
in the New Year
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- 8 Health checks at the  
hardware store!!



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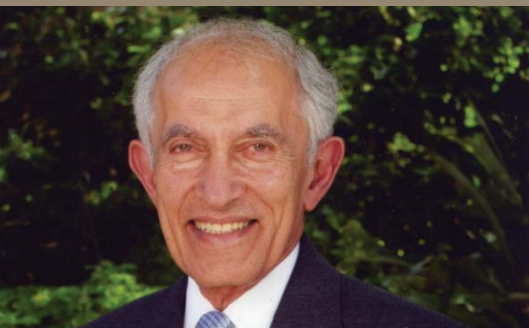
Foundation 49 is funded through your donations and special events. For more information or to make a donation, please call (03) 9508 5363 or visit [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)

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,  
Former Governor of Victoria  
Professor David de Kretser, AC



## QUESTIONS FOR THE QUACK

with Associate Professor Gary Richardson



*Another year is upon us already, and I hope in the busyness of life you get to have some time out doing the things you enjoy. Check out pages 4 and 5 to "Stress less in the New Year", and try out a few of the tips! Also, have a look at the osteoporosis article (pages 6 and 7) and you can go online at our website [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au) to complete an osteoporosis risk assessment to see how you are travelling.*

**Michael 59 asks: I think I have a 'shy bladder' because I find it really hard to pee in public places, and I'm worried that I might have prostate cancer?**

'Shy Bladder Syndrome' or Paruresis is difficulty urinating when others are around, which is particularly challenging for men using public urinals. However, waiting longer than usual for urine to flow, straining to urinate or if your flow is weak, even when in private locations, may be an indication of prostate problems but not necessarily prostate cancer. Non cancerous enlargement of the prostate is often the cause of difficulty passing urine. Any changes in urinating need to be checked by your GP. During a prostate check, the doctor assesses the size, shape and feel of the prostate gland. Information about the risks and benefits of prostate testing should be discussed with your doctor.

**For more information**  
[www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)  
or [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)

**Rick 22 asks: My work mate has just told me he has hepatitis B. Does this mean I might get infected?**

Hepatitis B is the most common infection of the liver in the world and the hepatitis B virus is transferred via blood and body fluids such as saliva and semen. It is not

spread by everyday social contact such as sneezing, shaking hands or eating food prepared by a person with hepatitis B. However it is important not to share personal items like razors, toothbrushes and anything that has come into contact with the blood or body fluid of your work mate. If for example, your work mate needs you to help with first aid for an open wound at your work site, you need to wear disposable gloves. Most adults who become infected with hepatitis B recover completely, so this is an opportunity to support your work mate and respect his privacy about his diagnosis. It is also important for you to check with your GP if your hepatitis B vaccination is up to date, to help prevent infection.

**For more information:**  
[www.hepatitisaustralia.com](http://www.hepatitisaustralia.com)  
**1300 437 222 National Info Line**  
[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
**GARY RICHARDSON**

CHAIRMAN, FOUNDATION 49

## What do YOU want?

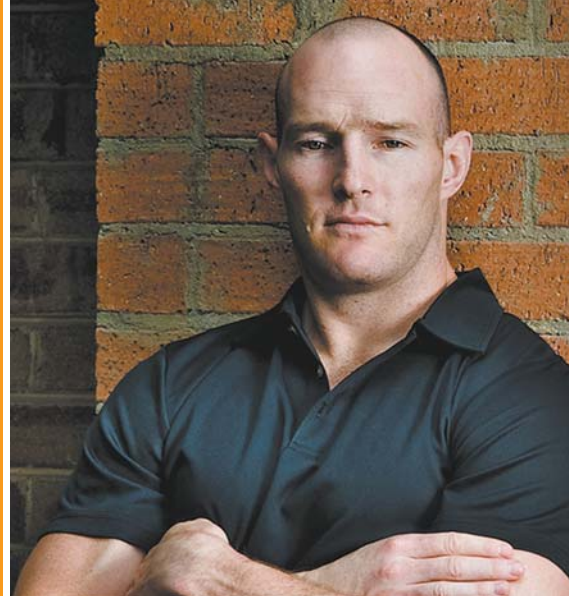
Here's your chance to have your say!

Fill in the brief Whole New Ball Game survey at [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)

Let's make this magazine even better! Thanks!



# STIRLING MORTLOCK, RUGBY UNION CHAMPION



I started playing rugby when I was 4 years old. When I was 18 and left school I joined the Gordon Colts which was great for my development. A year later I played 1st grade and by the end of the year I was contracted to the ACT Brumbies and went on the '97 Wallaby Tour to Argentina. From then onwards I have been lucky enough to play professionally 13 years for the Brumbies and I am in my 2nd year for the Rabodirect Rebels this year.

There have been many highlights in my career, but personally, getting picked out of club rugby to play for the Wallabies was a massive highlight. One minute I was watching these guys on TV and the next I was training and playing with them. My first season of test rugby in 2000 was amazing; we won both the Bledisloe and Tri-nations. Being involved in two World Cup campaigns was huge, in particular a home Rugby World Cup in 2003 and captaining in 2007. Passing 1000 Super Rugby points is a number that I will look back on when I hang up my boots.

Who was my toughest opponent?  
My answer would be Jonah Lomu or Tana Umaga.

Currently I am very busy with my role as captain of the Rabodirect Rebels. As a club we have our Five Star Engagement with the community. Players get involved with the community through relationships with a local school, rugby club, charity and business. On my days off I work at NAB/ MLC group and am being rotated throughout the business. I am a patron of Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation and ambassador for Foundation 49. I am one of three Rebels in the club who rotate throughout all schools and clubs in Victoria.

I am also married with three kids who are all at school. This all adds up to being very busy, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

Prior to rugby, I worked in a 24 hour pub, doing the graveyard shift. I lasted probably two months. That was tough work while in uni holidays. I also worked at the Gordon Social Club, mainly in events. I was pretty lucky that I got contracted to the Brumbies when I was 20.

My greatest training challenges have been to increase my speed and power early in my career, and dealing with injuries. With every injury, the rehabilitation process is different. The end goal is obviously the same, to play rugby union at the top level. But to get there it has taken a great deal of planning, effort and adapting to how your body responds on the way. So the ability to be flexible with the rehab plan is very important.

I keep fit when not in training by going to the gym and being active with family and friends. I love taking the kids to the park, pool or a bike ride. Likewise I enjoy tennis, golf and most sports. When you're having fun keeping fit it's easy!

I don't have really any health concerns other than wear and tear on my body. So my right knee has some arthritis in the lateral joint line. In 2009 I injured my back and had a laminectomy and discectomy at L5- S1 level. This is something that I will always have to look after and make sure is strong. Fortunately we are in a unique situation where we are in contact with doctors if not daily on a weekly basis, so I had a visit to my GP last week.

Playing professional rugby over the last 15 years has been a huge commitment for me and my family. We have always kept the family together, living where my team is based. My rugby and work take up lots of time, and I travel frequently, so it is very important that I maximize my time with the family whenever I can. With three young children it's always easy to find fun things for the family to do. My family time keeps me energized and revitalized for my work commitments. Family time is fantastic for taking away stress and giving me balance.

I am interested in Foundation 49 as I think it is important to increase awareness of men's health issues and encourage men to seek out medical advice and care on a regular basis. Also, I feel very strongly about raising awareness for men's mental health. I have had a lot of people close to me affected by this issue and it is something that doesn't discriminate.

# TESTICULAR CANCER

## FACT AND FICTION

### What do the testicles do?

Males are born with two testicles which are located in a sac of skin called the scrotum, under the base of the penis. The testicles produce male hormones, mostly testosterone, and they also make sperm.

### What is testicular cancer?

It is cancer that develops in one of the testicles.

### What causes testicular cancer?

There is no known cause for testicular cancer, but there are some risk factors all men should be aware of. These include having an undescended testis when you were born, a history of testicular cancer in the family such as a father or brother and having previously had testicular cancer.

### How common is it?

It is not a common cancer, with around 700 men diagnosed with it Australia wide per year, and only 11 men dying from the disease in the same period.

It is a cancer that tends to affect younger men, with the majority of men diagnosed with it in the 20 to 40 year old bracket. Men of other ages sometimes develop testicular cancer as well. It is important to remember that testicular cancer only makes up 1.1% of male cancers.

### Symptoms, what to follow up?

Testicular cancer most commonly presents as a small, hard lump in the testicle, which may or may not be painful. Other symptoms can include a constant backache, breathlessness or coughing.

### Diagnosis

The doctor will take a full medical history, including a discussion about family history of testicular cancer and any other current health concerns. This will be followed by a full physical assessment, including blood tests. The doctor will also order an ultrasound of the testicles, which may indicate the lump is not cancer.

### Treatments, what will happen?

Surgery to remove the affected testicle is usually the first line of treatment. This may be followed by chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and the length of treatment will depend on whether the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Testicular cancer has a very high cure rate if found early, and even if it has spread to other parts of the body, it can still often be cured. Follow up visits to the doctor will be required over the following years to ensure the cancer does not return, but if it does, to catch it early for further treatment.

### Fertility?

Having one testicle removed does not affect fertility as the remaining testicle makes testosterone which triggers the production of sperm.

### Implants?

Men can choose to have a testicular implant to replace the testicle that is removed in surgery. The implant does not function as a testicle, but restores the scrotum to its pre-surgery shape. Having an implant is a personal choice.





## TESTICULAR CANCER MYTHS DEBUNKED

Surgery causes testicular cancer to spread **WRONG**

Surgery is used to treat and cure testicular cancer, and to stop it from spreading

Testicular cancer will end your sex life **WRONG**

When one testicle is removed the other one will still function and produce testosterone.

Tight jeans cause testicular cancer **WRONG**

There is no scientific evidence that wearing tight jeans or underwear will lead to testicular cancer.

Testicular cancer is an old man's disease **WRONG**

The majority of men diagnosed with it are between 20 and 40.

A Vasectomy will cause testicular cancer **WRONG**

There is no scientific evidence that there is a link between having a vasectomy and developing testicular cancer.

There is only a 50–50 chance of surviving testicular cancer **WRONG**

When caught early, there is a 95% cure rate for testicular cancer.

An injury to the testicles causes testicular cancer **WRONG**

There is no scientific evidence that an injury or hit to the testicles, such as a delivery from a fast bowler to your tackle, will cause cancer.

### TESTICULAR SELF EXAMINATION

Testicular self examination is important so you are familiar with the normal look and feel of your testicles, and you can find any changes early. This is best done after a warm bath or shower, and is simply a matter of gently feeling for any lumps, bumps and changes.

For more information go to [www.andrologyaustralia.org](http://www.andrologyaustralia.org)

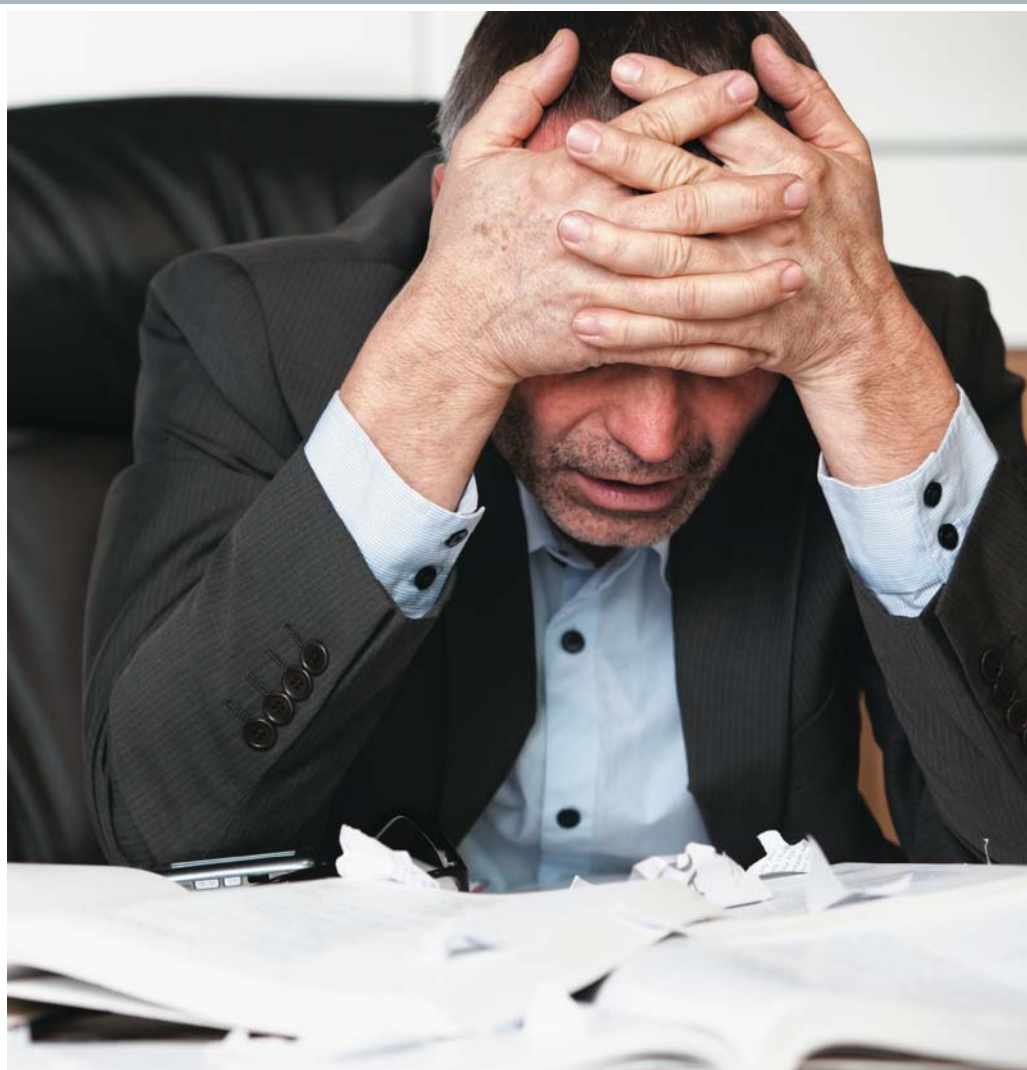
# HOW TO STRESS LESS IN THE NEW YEAR

There is no shortage of bad news these days, such as natural disasters, economic woes, and political unrest. Add to this the stresses in our personal lives, work pressures, illness, money problems, relationship issues, and traffic jams, and it is clear that stressful situations are constant and a part of life.

Just as serious as the stressors themselves are the negative effects stress can have on your emotional and physical health. Many well-respected studies link stress to heart disease and stroke. Stress is also implicated in a host of other problems such as depression and anxiety, chronic lower respiratory diseases, asthma flare-ups, rheumatoid arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems.

But stress is not all bad. Your perception of a real or imagined threat can spark a stress response, which prepares the body to fight or flee. That swift reflex was built into you for survival. Thanks to the stress response, you might suddenly jump out of the path of a speeding car or flee from a burning house. But when your stress response is triggered repeatedly, your body experiences unnecessary wear and tear – such as high blood pressure – that can lead to poor health.

Even if you only have a few minutes to spare, the stress-busting suggestions described opposite can make your days calmer, if not easier.



# Take the sting out of 10 common stress triggers

Sometimes just thinking about starting a program of stress control can be stressful. Rather than freeze in your tracks, start small and bask in the glow of your successes. Give yourself a week to focus on practical solutions that could help you cope with just one stumbling block or source of stress in your life. Pick a problem, and see if these suggestions work for you.

## 1 Frequently late?

Apply time management principles. Consider your priorities (be sure to include time for yourself) and delegate or get rid of unnecessary tasks. Map out your day, segment by segment, setting aside time for different tasks. If you are overly optimistic about travel time, consistently give yourself an extra 15 minutes or more to get to your destinations. If lateness stems from dragging your heels, consider the underlying issue. Are you anxious about what will happen after you get to work or to a social event, for example? Or maybe you're just trying to jam too many tasks into too little time.

## 2 Often angry or irritated?

Are you magnifying a problem, leaping to conclusions, without knowing all the facts? Take the time to stop, breathe, reflect, and choose.

## 3 Unsure of your ability to do something?

Don't try to go it alone. If the problem is work, talk to a co-worker or supportive boss. Write down other ways that you might get the answers or skills you need. Turn to CDs, books, or classes, for example, if you need a little tutoring. This works equally well when you're learning relaxation response techniques, too.

## 4 Overextended?

Clear the deck of at least one time-consuming household task by hiring help. If you can, hire a housecleaning service, shop for groceries online, call a family meeting to consider who can take on certain jobs, or barter with or pay teens for work around the house and garden. Consider what is truly essential and important to you and what might take a backseat right now.

## 5 Not enough time for stress relief?

Try mini-relaxations. Or make a commitment to yourself to cut back your schedule for just one week so you can practice relaxing every day. Also slowing down to pay attention to just one task or pleasure at hand is an excellent method of stress relief.

## 6 Feeling unbearably tense?

Try massage, a hot bath or shower, mini-relaxations, or a mindful walk. Practically any exercise — a brisk walk, a quick run, a sprint up and down the stairs — will help, too. Done regularly, exercise reduces tension, as do relaxation activities.

## 7 Frequently feel pessimistic?

Remind yourself of the value of learned optimism: a more joyful life and, quite possibly, better health. Rent funny movies and read amusing books. Create a mental list of reasons you have to feel grateful.

## 8 Upset by conflicts with others?

State your needs or distress directly, avoiding "you always" or "you never" zingers. Say, "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_." "I would really appreciate it if you could \_\_\_\_\_." "I need some help setting priorities. What needs to be done first and what should I tackle later?" If conflicts are a significant source of distress for you, consider taking a class on assertiveness training.

## 9 Worn out or burned out?

Focus on self-nurturing. Carve out time to practice relaxation techniques or at least indulge in mini-relaxations. Care for your body by eating good, healthy food and for your heart by seeking out others. Give thought to creative, productive, and leisure activities. Consider your priorities in life: is it worth feeling this way, or is another path open to you? If you want help, consider what kind would be best. Do you want a particular task at work to be taken off your hands? Do you want to do it at a later date? Do you need someone with particular expertise to assist you?

## 10 Feeling lonely?

Connect with others. Even little connections — a brief conversation in line at the supermarket, a quick chat with a neighbour, a question for a colleague — can help melt the ice within you. Attend religious or community functions. Suggest coffee with an acquaintance. Call a friend or relative you miss. Take an interesting class. If a social phobia, low self-esteem, or depression is dampening your desire to reach out, seek help. The world is a kinder, more wondrous place when you share its pleasures and burdens.

This article is used with permission, Harvard Medical School, 2011

# Osteoporosis

## Q&A

Go to the F49 website [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au) to check your Osteoporosis risk!

“1 in 3 men over 60 years will have an osteoporotic fracture in Australia.”

### What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones become fragile and are at increased risk of a break, also called a fracture. The risk of developing a fracture increases after each new fracture. These fractures can cause deformity of the spine, chronic pain and decreased mobility.

### How does this occur?

This occurs because minerals like calcium are lost from the bone causing the bone to become thinner or losing ‘bone mineral density’.

### Who is at risk of osteoporosis?

Women are more at risk than men in developing osteoporosis. This occurs because of a decline in oestrogen levels after menopause. However: 1 in 3 men over 60 years will have an osteoporotic fracture in Australia.

### Other risk factors for developing osteoporosis include:

- Family history of osteoporosis
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Diet lacking in calcium
- Lack of sunlight exposure, which may cause vitamin D deficiency
- Inactive lifestyle over many years
- Long term steroid use
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Over-active thyroid or parathyroid glands
- Coeliac disease and other chronic gut conditions
- Chronic liver or kidney disease

### How do I get tested for osteoporosis?

A DXA (dual energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scan is the gold standard for diagnosing osteoporosis and a referral can be made by your GP. Medicare rebates are available for those aged 70 years or over.

### How do I prevent osteoporosis?

By having a healthy and balanced diet and regular physical activity! This includes having enough calcium in your diet. Calcium is the essential nutrient for building strong bones. Dairy foods including regular fat, reduced fat or low fat milk, cheese and yoghurt are our major source of calcium.

### Recommended serves of dairy (or alternatives) to get your Calcium requirements:

Adults 3–4 serves /day as part of a balanced diet

Children 2–3 serves/day as part of a balanced diet

### One serve of calcium is:

1 cup (250ml) milk

40g (size of a matchbox) slice cheese

200g tub yoghurt

1 cup calcium enriched soy product, including soy milk or firm tofu

½ cup canned fish, salmon or tuna, eaten with their bones



For more information on osteoporosis go to:

[www.osteoporosis.org.au](http://www.osteoporosis.org.au)

[www.healthybones.com.au](http://www.healthybones.com.au)

[www.daa.asn.au/for-the-public/smart-eating-for-you/nutrition-a-z/osteoporosis](http://www.daa.asn.au/for-the-public/smart-eating-for-you/nutrition-a-z/osteoporosis)

[www.iofbonehealth.org](http://www.iofbonehealth.org)

#### Other sources of calcium include:

Green leafy vegetables (spinach, Bok Choy, broccoli)

Baked beans

Nuts

However keep in mind that calcium absorption from plant sources is not as efficient as from animal sources.

#### What is Vitamin D?

It is a vitamin that is needed by the body to absorb calcium to keep bones and teeth strong. Vitamin D increases the absorption of calcium from the gut and regulates the amount of calcium in the blood. Vitamin D is produced by the body after it is exposed to the sun.

#### Recommendations:

- A person needs to expose their hands, face and arms (around 15% of body surface) to sunlight for about 6–8 minutes, 4–6 times per week (before 10am or after 2pm in summer, for moderately fair people). These recommendations take into account the risk of prolonged sun exposure and skin

cancer. Have a look at the following website for more information about skin cancer and sun exposure. <http://www.cancervic.org.au/preventing-cancer/be-sunsmart>

- Having a balanced diet that provides you with adequate calcium, protein and phosphorus to help build bones. Protein comes from meat, dairy products, fish, eggs, nuts and legumes. Phosphorus comes from a variety of food groups and deficiency is rare with a balanced diet.
- Osteoporosis Australia recommends a combination of resistance exercise such as lifting weights, and weight bearing exercise such as walking, tennis or yoga to reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis. Specific exercises recommended by physiotherapists can improve general health, strength, balance and posture to prevent falls.

#### Do I need to take Calcium or Vitamin D supplements?

For people who are at risk of osteoporosis and can't meet their nutritional requirements via their diet, calcium and Vitamin D supplements can be beneficial. Speak to your GP if you think you are at risk of developing osteoporosis.

#### So remember, the two keys to preventing osteoporosis are:

- 1 Eat a healthy balanced diet
- 2 Keep physically active

This article has been contributed by The Cabrini Health Dietitians.

# Health checks at the hardware store!!

The Foundation 49 Father's Day Health Checks Program was an initiative to deliver on-the-spot health checks to men in eight Mitre 10 stores in the month of September 2011 to celebrate Father's Day.

The initiative was sponsored by Westpac, delivered by Foundation 49 and located in Mitre 10 stores in metropolitan Melbourne. A total of 367 health assessments were completed during the four weekends in September.

## The average man who participated in the check:

- Was motivated to participate because of the opportunity to have the check, and it was convenient
- Thought the health check was very good or excellent and is very likely to participate again given the opportunity
- Is now more likely to visit the GP after completing this health check

## Blood Pressure

- Can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and loss of vision
- Almost half (48%) of participants had blood pressure scores in the high to very high range, representing 172 of the 367 men tested
- Even with a family history of heart disease, simple lifestyle changes can significantly reduce the chance of having a heart attack

## Blood Cholesterol

- A waxy, fatty substance which can harden the arteries leading to heart disease
- 14% of the participants had total blood cholesterol in the moderately high/high range, this represents 49 men with elevated cholesterol readings
- A family history of high cholesterol will increase your chances of developing high cholesterol, so it very important for men to know their readings to be able to take preventive measures as necessary

## Blood Glucose

- High blood glucose levels can indicate an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes
- 11% of men had an elevated random blood glucose reading, representing 41 of the men who participated in the health checks
- 790,000 Australians have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, 56% of these are men

All men who were identified with an elevated reading were encouraged to have a follow up check with a local GP. To support men who did not have a GP, Foundation 49 set up a referral network with local GP Practices in each suburb where the checks were held.

All participants were offered men's health information, including the Foundation 49 Men's Health Tool Kit and the Foundation 49 magazine, A Whole new Ball Game.

The initiative was a great success. All men were asked to complete a feedback form after their health check, and 303 feedback forms were returned, representing a return rate of 83%.

- 98% of participants indicated the health check was good, very good or excellent
- 98% of participants indicated the chance of repeating the health check in the future was good, very good or excellent, with 85% indicating very good or excellent
- 68% are more likely to visit a doctor as a result of this health check

 **Healthcare**





Grateful thanks to Westpac and Mitre 10 for their support in delivering this initiative to men in our community.

# Weird Wee!

## 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.



We produce on average six and a half cups of urine a day and we usually only notice our urine if it looks or smells a bit different.

Urine is excess water and waste products that your kidneys filter from your blood and is usually a pale yellow colour. The yellow is urochrome, a substance produced by the breakdown of haemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying protein in red blood cells.

Drinking water and fluids dilutes the colour of urine so the more you drink the lighter your urine looks, and the more dehydrated you are the darker your urine becomes.

Foods and medications can temporarily change the look and smell of your urine and these changes are generally harmless. Carrot juice can turn urine orange, vitamin B supplements can turn urine fluoro yellow-green and rhubarb can give you tea-coloured wee.

Other changes can be more of a worry caused by medical conditions such as Urinary Tract Infections (UTI's) which can turn your urine cloudy with an unpleasant smell and can cause other symptoms like the urgent need to wee, a burning sensation when you wee and abdominal pain.

If your wee often has a sweet smell it may be one of the signs of uncontrolled diabetes.

Blood in your urine (haematuria) in small amounts may be visible only under a microscope or in larger amounts it can turn your wee a pink, red or smoky brown colour. Haematuria may be caused by kidney stones, an enlarged prostate, an injury to your kidneys or urinary tract, and strenuous, jarring exercise like long distance running.

More than 100 tests can be done to analyse urine including checking the colour, clarity, odour, and pH, so if you do notice anything unusually colourful or smelly when you wee, get it checked out by your GP.

Information sourced from  
[www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)

# Have you done the READER SURVEY yet?

What do YOU want?

Here's your chance to have your say!

Fill in the brief Whole New Ball Game survey at [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)

Let's make this magazine even better! Thanks!



## 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: Men's Health  
Live long, live well

183 Wattleree Rd,  
Malvern, 3144

Tel: 03 9508 5363  
Fax: 03 9508 5360  
Email: [admin@49.com.au](mailto:admin@49.com.au)  
Web: [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au)

Foundation 49: Men's Health  
a Cabrini Health Initiative

# Five minutes with... local GP, Dr David Oberklaid



## Is there a particular age at which you should start going to the GP for a health check?

It's a good idea for all adult males to have a health check. However, the issues will be very different for a 20 year old, a 50 year old and an 80 year old. The issues for a 20 year old might relate to sexually transmitted infections, drug and alcohol use. The issues for a 50 year old may include work stresses, blood pressure, and checks for heart disease, prostate and bowel cancer. For an 80 year old we may need to check issues such as nutrition, social isolation and memory problems.

## What is the benefit of a health check when you are not sick?

A regular health check is a good way to ensure that men stay well. There are many things such as high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol which do not make you feel unwell, but increase the risk of stroke and heart disease. Treatments for conditions such as these are safe and effective and can prevent serious illnesses.

## Some men put off going to the GP, why do you think this is?

I think there are a number of reasons. This ranges from young men thinking they are bullet proof, to some men putting work ahead of their health and others denying illness.

## What are the top 5 reasons men go to the GP?

The common reasons for a GP visit include respiratory infections, digestive problems, musculoskeletal problems, heart conditions and psychological issues. There is also some evidence men are increasingly requesting a general health check, when they visit a GP

## What are some typical symptoms that men are slow to get checked out?

In my experience, men are frequently slow to report virtually all symptoms. In particular, men are often reluctant to present with depressive and anxiety symptoms, erectile dysfunction (impotence) and sometimes potentially life threatening conditions, such as chest pain.

## As a GP, where do you go for a health check?

Unfortunately, doctors are not immune from illness and we all should have our own GP.

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- When you take a step you use up to 200 muscles.
- Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.
- We are born with 350 bones, you die with 206.

