



My Health Workbook

What are you creating for yourself next?

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The My Health Workbook

The My Health Workbook is a companion to the My Health Online Module. Record your notes in the Workbook as you go through each topic in the Module. The Module is part of the Mid-Life Matters Program.

About the Mid-Life Matters Program

The Mid-Life Matters Program is about thinking ahead and creating the future you want – for your 50's, 60's, 70's and beyond. The Program addresses these important topics:

- ✓ Planning ahead for your working life
- ✓ Enjoying your best health
- ✓ Understanding your financial needs
- ✓ Getting organised, and
- ✓ Maintaining a sense of purpose and identity into the future.

Disclaimer

The information in this Workbook is provided as educational material, and is intended to be used as a guide only.

Any recommendations made are general in nature and do not take into account specific needs and circumstances. You should consult your doctor or other health professional before making any changes to your health care, diet or physical activity.

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TOPIC 1: AWARENESS



KEY IDEAS

Awareness of your health involves understanding how your body changes as you age, and the tests available for early detection of health problems.



ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Consider having these routine tests and checks to monitor your health.*

- Eye test
- Blood pressure
- Blood test for cholesterol and glucose levels
- Pap tests and cervical screening (women)
- Dental checks
- Skin cancer checks
- Healthy weight
- Prostate check (men)
- Breast check and mammogram (women)
- Bone density scan
- Faecal occult blood test (FOBT)
- Hearing assessment

SELF-CHECKS

- Women should carry out regular breast checks.
- Men of all ages should self-examine their testes regularly.
- Everyone should regularly self-check for skin cancers.

*Source SA Health and Better Health Channel

Early detection will give you the best opportunity to treat and manage any health conditions.



QUESTIONS TO ASK

Ask yourself the following questions and record your answers in the spaces below.

When did you last see your doctor for a routine check-up?

Do you need to discuss any of the following with your doctor?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Blood test for cholesterol and glucose levels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pap tests (women) | <input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Skin cancer checks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your weight | <input type="checkbox"/> Prostate check (men) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bone density scan | <input type="checkbox"/> Breast check and mammogram (women) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faecal occult blood test (FOBT) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (record you notes below) |

Are there any issues you need to discuss with an optometrist or ophthalmologist (about your vision or eye health)?

Are there any issues you need to discuss with an audiologist (about your hearing)?

FIND OUT MORE

Find out more about the following health checks

- **Prostate Check** from the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia
- **Breast Checks and Mammograms** from Breast Screen Australia
- **Bowl Screening** from Bowel Cancer Australia
- **Health Checks for Men** at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/health-checks-for-men
- **Health Checks for Women** at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/health-checks-for-women

HOW YOUR BODY CHANGES

Understanding how your body changes in the second half of life can help you adapt and take these changes in your stride. Read below about what to expect, and the positive steps you can take for your health.

Bones, Joints and Muscles

Your bones shrink in size and density as you get older, and you also lose some muscle strength and flexibility.

What You Can Do The good news is that exercise and strength training are effective in helping you maintain strength and fitness, and bone density.

Find out more about healthy bones at www.healthdirect.gov.au/healthy-bones

Cardiovascular System

In the second half of life, blood vessels get thicker and stiffer which means your heart has to work harder.

What You Can Do Exercise can reduce this stiffening and help lower your blood pressure. A healthy diet and managing your stress can also help.

Find out more about having a healthy heart at www.heartfoundation.org.au/your-heart/how-your-heart-works

Digestion

In the second half of life, digestion usually starts to slow down.

What You Can Do Exercise, eating fibre rich foods and drinking plenty of fluids can help improve your digestion.

Eyes and Ears

Many people find that as they get older it gets harder to focus on things that are closer up, and that it's harder to hear in a crowded or noisy room.

What You Can Do Stay on top of any issues with regular checks for your eyes and ears. You can also protect your eyes with sunglasses and use earplugs around noisy equipment.

Find out more about eye health at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/eye-health

Find out more about ear health at www.healthdirect.gov.au/ears

Teeth

Over time you may notice your gums start to recede.

What You Can Do Regular dental checks will help with early detection and treatment of any problems. And don't forget to brush and floss regularly.

Find out more about dental health at www.dhsv.org.au/dental-advice/general-dental-advice/adults

Bladder and Urinary Tract

It's common to experience some changes in your bladder and bowel as you get older. This can be caused by menopause, an enlarged prostate or medical conditions like diabetes.

What You Can Do Be proactive with pelvic floor exercise and maintain a healthy weight.

Find out more about a healthy bladder and bowel at www.bladderbowel.gov.au

Weight

Managing your weight usually becomes more difficult as you age. One of the main reasons for this is the loss of muscle mass. As muscle mass decreases your metabolism slows and you burn fewer calories.

What You Can Do Strength training helps maintain muscle mass and is a key to staying a healthy weight. Watching your diet and staying active are important too.

Find out more about maintaining a healthy weight at www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/nutrition-and-older-adults

Skin

Skin loses some of its natural oils as you get older, so your skin may feel dryer. You may notice wrinkles and age spots start to appear.

What You Can Do Be vigilant about protecting your skin in the sun, check your skin regularly and report any concerns to your doctor.

Find out more about caring for your skin at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/healthy-ageing-the-skin

Mental Health

Mental health is an important part of your well-being at any age. Good mental health is necessary for healthy relationships, coping with challenges and generally enjoying life. Sometimes the second half of life can bring unexpected challenges and changes. There are many excellent resources to help if you feel you need support.

FIND OUT MORE

Find resources and support for your mental health at

- www.headtohealth.gov.au
- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.lifeline.org.au
- www.mindspot.org.au
- www.mensline.org.au





TOPIC 2: DIET



KEY IDEAS

Most Australians enjoy food but don't always choose the types of foods (or the amounts) that are best for their health.

Eating well is important for your health because it can -

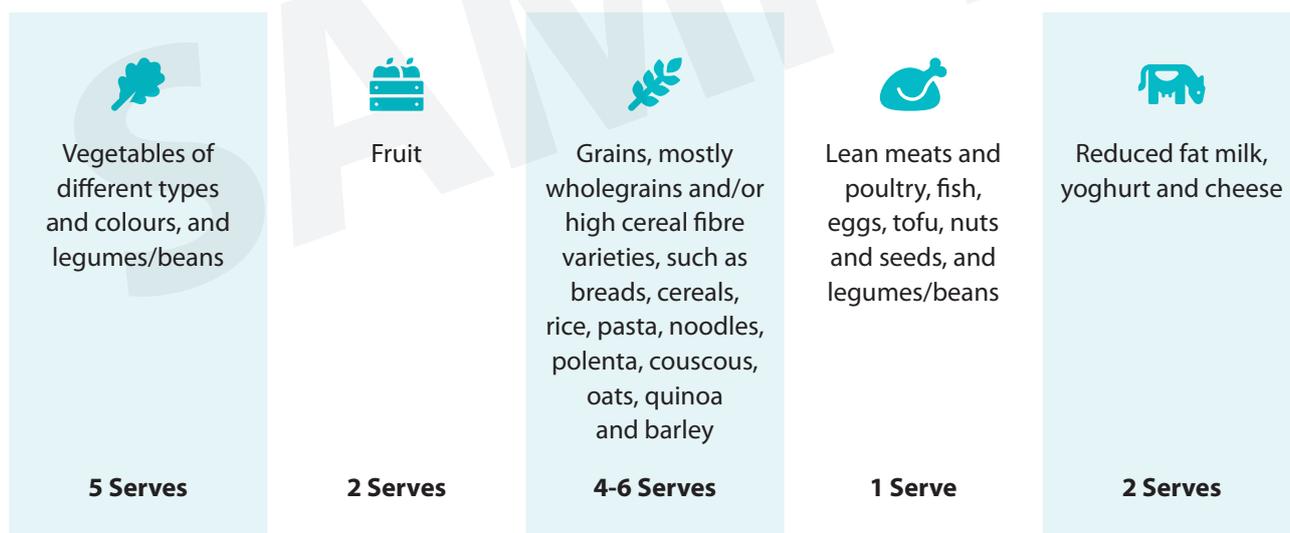
- Help you maintain a healthy weight
- Protect your body from chronic diseases such as diabetes and some cancers
- Help increase your quality of life and longevity
- Lower your risk of heart disease, and
- Give you more sustained energy.

*Source Eat for Health: Australian Dietary Guidelines Summary, heartfoundation.org.au and Better Health

The majority of disease burden in Australia is associated with not eating enough nutritious foods, or eating too much saturated fat, sugar and salt.

Source Healthy Ageing: The state of the evidence and available resources June 2017, p.8

The Australian Government produces Dietary Guidelines which recommend the best foods to eat. These Guidelines recommend that you eat at a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.



The Guidelines also recommend that you limit foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugar and alcohol. They recommend water as your main drink.

You can **find out more** about the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating at www.eatforhealth.gov.au



HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU EAT?

It's important to know how many kilojoules (or calories) your body needs per day, and how much of each type of food is recommended for your age and gender.

You can find out what your needs are by using the calculators at www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Kilojoules are a measure of energy. We can measure the amount of energy stored in different types of food. If we know how much our bodies use each day, we can estimate how many kilojoules to consume in our food.



Check with an Accredited Practicing Dietician if you are unsure about your specific nutritional needs.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR WEIGHT

Weight can creep up slowly, especially during the busy middle years of life when we often don't have time to eat well or prepare as much fresh food. How do you know when your weight may be creating a risk for your health? There are two indicators you can check.

Your **Body Mass Index** (BMI) is a number based on your weight and height.

Find out how to calculate your BMI and what it means at www.heartfoundation.org.au

Your **waist size** (measured with a tape measure) can also give an indication whether you are at risk of developing weight related health problems. Find out how to measure your waist size and what it means at www.heartfoundation.org.au

Did you know?

- ✓ Eating vegetables helps slow ageing, control body weight and can even make you look healthier!
- ✓ By eating more fruit, you can lower your risk of heart disease, stroke and many cancers including stomach, oesophagus, mouth, pharynx and larynx
- ✓ Fish and seafood are excellent sources of omega 3 fats that help reduce inflammation in your joints, protect your heart and improve brain function.
- ✓ Eating an adequate amount of dairy has also been linked with maintaining a healthy weight.
- ✓ Low heating of fresh tomatoes into sauces can increase the levels of some nutrients and can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

Source www.healthyeatingquiz.com.au/result.asp

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- ✓ Get in the habit of reading food labels so that you know what you are buying and eating.
- ✓ Learn how to make healthy choices when you eat out.
- ✓ Get inspired. Find some 'go-to' sources for healthy and tasty recipes.
- ✓ Swap saturated fats for unsaturated fats. This may have the greatest health benefit of any single change you could make to your diet.*

Source Healthy Ageing: The state of the evidence and available resources June 2017, p.15

FIND OUT MORE

Find out how to **swap saturated fats for unsaturated fats** at www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/DGA_Cut-Down-On-Saturated-Fats.pdf

Take the **Healthy Eating Quiz** for an assessment of your diet at www.healthyeatingquiz.com.au

Find out more about **Healthy Eating** at www.liveliighter.com.au

Find out more about **eating well to age well** at www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/nutrition-and-older-adults

Find **healthy recipes** at

- www.nutritionaustralia.org
- www.heartfoundation.org.au
- www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au
- www.healthier.qld.gov.au
- www.eatforhealth.gov.au
- www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au



❓ QUESTIONS TO ASK

Ask yourself the following questions and record your answers in the spaces below.

What healthy eating choices are you making currently?

What are you finding most challenging about eating well?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating the recommended quantity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snacking on unhealthy food | <input type="checkbox"/> Making healthy choices when eating out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finding healthy recipes | <input type="checkbox"/> Making healthy choices when entertaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (record your notes below) |

What would help you with healthy eating?

MOVE FORWARD

My Goal

My Next Step



FIND OUT MORE

For tool and resources to **help to change your diet** go to www.healthyweight.health.gov.au

! Most Australian States have free health programs that support healthy lifestyle changes, including healthy eating.

- **Queensland** www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/community/programs/get-healthy
- **New South Wales** www.gethealthynsw.com.au/program
- **Victoria** www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects
- **South Australia** www.gethealthy.sa.gov.au
- **Western Australia** myhealthybalance.com.au

A word about Alcohol

Anyone that regularly drinks more than 2 standard drinks per day is at higher risk of health conditions including cancer, cardiovascular and liver disease.*

*Source <https://alcoholthinkagain.com.au/>

Your ability to tolerate alcohol changes as you get older and it's important to know how you may be affected.

FIND OUT MORE

Find out more about drinking alcohol as you get older at www.drinkwise.org.au/drinking-and-you/age-and-alcohol-understand-the-effects-of-drinking-as-you-get-older

Find out more about the effects of alcohol on your body at <https://alcoholthinkagain.com.au>

Take the drinking audit to find out whether your drinking habits are putting you at risk <https://alcoholthinkagain.com.au/Alcohol-Your-Health/Online-tools>

