



# Feel better. Live longer. Make a change.

**You don't have to be a health expert to know that taking care of your health on a daily basis can increase both the length and quality of your life.**

In Australia, 90% of all deaths are caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs)<sup>1</sup>. These largely preventable lifestyle-associated conditions are driven by unhealthy habits and poor lifestyle choices.

**When you start making changes to improve your health and wellness, the benefits are immediate:**

## Feel better

- Weight control
- Improved mood
- More energy
- Better sleep
- Less stress and anxiety
- Increased self-confidence.

According to the World Health Organisation, the principal **risk factors** for NCD mortality are: unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, smoking and the harmful use of alcohol<sup>2</sup>.

These risk factors lead to key metabolic changes – obesity, raised blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and impaired glucose metabolism – that underlie cardiovascular disease, several cancers, diabetes and certain chronic lung diseases.

**Healthy changes to your lifestyle can have long-term and far-reaching benefits<sup>3</sup>:**

## Live longer

- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Decrease your risk for type 2 diabetes
- Lower your risk of some cancers
- Increase your chances of living longer.

Take control of your life, health and happiness by making the choice to live better each day.

**Here's what you can do to start now:**

## Make a change

- Eat an extra serve of vegetables
- Make a meal that includes legumes
- Book in for a health check
- Go for a walk
- Become a non-smoker
- Download a fitness app
- Dump the junk food.

Make up your own list of daily achievable goals and then discover how these can be incorporated into your life in the long term.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/australias-health/2014/ill-health/>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organisation. <http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/ncd-status-report-2014/en/>

<sup>3</sup> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>

## Don't ignore the obvious

Many people choose to ignore the risks associated with unhealthy lifestyle habits, even though there can be a heavy price to pay, including increased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure<sup>4</sup>.

- 63% of Australians aged 18 and over are overweight or obese<sup>5</sup>
- Australians are not doing the recommended amount of exercise for their age each week<sup>5</sup>
- Less than 4% of Australians meet the recommended number of daily serves of vegetables and legumes/beans<sup>6</sup>
- 18% of Australians aged 14 years and over drink alcohol at levels that increase their long-term risk of alcohol-related disease or injury<sup>7</sup>
- 2.6 million Australians smoke daily, despite the fact that smoking increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer, renal disease, eye disease and respiratory conditions like asthma, emphysema and bronchitis<sup>8</sup>.



## Turn your life around

If you are already suffering from a lifestyle-associated illness, it's never too late to turn your life around. Every improvement you make, no matter how small, places you on the road to better health.

### Here's the evidence:

- 12 hours after you quit smoking, almost all nicotine will have left your system. 12 months after giving up, your risk of heart disease declines sharply<sup>9</sup>
- Lowering body weight by 5-10% improves obesity-related illnesses, such as a reduction in type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular risk factors, even if you remain in the overweight or obese range of BMI<sup>10</sup>
- Exercising for one hour at least twice a week may avoid the need for hip surgery in osteoarthritis sufferers<sup>11</sup>
- Moderate-intensity physical activity for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days of the week can benefit diabetes sufferers by helping to control blood glucose, weight, and blood pressure, as well as raise 'good' cholesterol and lower 'bad' cholesterol. Exercise can also help prevent heart and blood flow problems, reducing your risk of heart disease and nerve damage<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4338.0~2011-13~Main%20Features~Overweight%20and%20obesity~10007>

<sup>5</sup> [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4364.0.55.012main+features12011-12>

<sup>7</sup> National Alcohol and Drug Knowledge base. <http://nadk.flinders.edu.au/kb/alcohol/consumption-patterns/risky-consumption/>

<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.001~2014-15~Main%20Features~Smoking~24>

<sup>9</sup> Cancer Council Australia. <http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/reduce-your-risk/quit-smoking.html>

<sup>10</sup> Obesity Australia. "A media guide on how to report on obesity", page 8. <https://lucy-kim-3dxc.squarespace.com/publications-and-documents>

<sup>11</sup> Arthritis Foundation <http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/benefits/exercises-for-hip-pain.php>

<sup>12</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/beactive.html>