

A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

HEALTH ADVICE FOR
AUSTRALIAN MEN
ISSUE 2 // MAY 2007

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"I tell my girlfriend that a week away fishing with the boys is good for my health and mental state"

Ben Dark, Getaway.



FROM THE EDITOR EMPLOYERS: SIGN UP FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH TESTING



Workplace health screening shows your staff that you are a responsible employer, concerned for the wellbeing of your team.

G'Day. Welcome to the latest edition of A Whole New Ball Game, a magazine put together to help men live healthier lives.

We've been a pretty neglected lot when it comes to public health campaigns designed to keep us healthy. Remember Norm? Norm, that well padded lounge lizard who told us to live more of our lives? His 'Life Be In It' campaign started nearly 30 years ago and there has been little since to make us sit up, chuckle and take notice.

Foundation 49 is all about helping men make good decisions when it comes to eating and drinking, sun exposure, the need for exercise and screening tests to pick up problems, looking after their mental health.

In an effort to reach Aussie men, we are growing our highly successful and effective workplace health screening program. Known as Decades of Life, our health assessment staff come to men, rather than hoping they'll come to us or their local general practitioner (though we think that's an excellent idea!).

Read about the success of Decades of Life on page two and three. Foster's and Victoria Police are two recent recruits, with several thousand men set to benefit.

Employers are fast realizing the cost benefits of a healthy workforce. A recent study by Wesley Corporate Health found that if you can reduce health risk factors by 2.9 per employee in an organisation of 1000 employees (with an average salary of \$50,000) productivity gains could be as high as \$3.48 million per year.

Workplace health screening shows your staff that you are a responsible employer, concerned for the wellbeing of your team. Absenteeism is reduced, there is less turnover of staff and productivity gains can be substantial.

After years of working as a cancer specialist, seeing so many patients who might have avoided a cancer diagnosis if they'd lived healthier lives, I urge you to consider booking a Decades of Life screening assessment for your workplace on ph: 9508 1567. The impact could be huge.

Associate Professor
Gary Richardson
Chairman, Foundation 49.
Live long. Live well.
www.49.com.au

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Foundation 49 is funded through donations and special events. For more information or to make a donation, please call (03) 9508 1567 or visit our website, www.49.com.au

WIN



While Kenny is clearly a well-groomed specimen with a carefully trimmed beard, do you feel like you need a bit of a make-over?

We have three one hour sessions to give away at ZIPT grooming for men, valued at \$115 each. See our website for details www.49.com.au

Congrats to the following winners of the Kenny DVD competition:

Haydn D, Templestowe, Vic., Marten A, Hawthorn, Vic., Jason C Maylands, WA, David T, Wheelers Hill, Vic., Neil L, East Melbourne, Vic.

zipt
GROOMING FOR MEN



Collingwood players, Scott Pendlebury and Simon Prestigiacomo with Foundation 49 nurse educator, Kate Temby

It's pretty black and white

Aussie Rules footballers have received a pretty poor wrap lately, with illicit drug use providing lead stories around the country. But two Collingwood players recently stole-back the headlines by undergoing Foundation 49 health checks.

One of the Australian Football League's best full-backs, Simon Prestigiacomo, 29, looked on as mid-fielder, Scott Pendlebury, 19, bravely endured a finger prick blood test in front of the cameras recently as part of a Foundation 49 health check.

Collingwood Football Club is supporting the foundation as we continue to develop workplace health screening – possibly the best way to reach men for an annual health check.

AFL footballers have some of the best bodies you'll ever see. Collingwood employs a 'head of conditioning' who monitors each player's health and fitness. Dietitians oversee the different requirements of younger and older players and a team of doctors, physiotherapists and psychologists ensure each player is a finely-tuned playing machine.

"Wouldn't it be great if we all had a team to manage our mental health, cholesterol, blood sugars levels and blood pressure," says Kate Temby, a health educator and nurse from Foundation 49 who conducted the tests on the players.

"All men need to keep track of their wellbeing, no matter what age or stage of life. If there's a problem, you can pick-up on it early and avoid side effects later on. An annual health check is an easy first-step to maximise your fitness, physical and mental health."

Both Simon and Scott believe it's important to get away from the game to relax. For Simon, it's time with his kids, 5 and 8, and for Scott, it's studying sports science at uni. "It takes the pressure off, thinking about something else. Playing for the seniors is harder than I expected with all the work behind the scenes – it's six days a week – but I'm used to it now. I love it," Scott says.

If it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me

Even if you don't back the Magpies, why not take a feather out of their plumage and book-in with your GP for an annual health check. Sooner the better!

Your doctor will probably check your family history, cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar levels and discuss how you're feeling.

As you leave the surgery, ask to book for 12 months' time. Or make your birthday your annual-check-up date.

And remember, ignore your health and it will go away.

Foundation 49 congratulates Collingwood Football Club for its support of men's health. Look out for a Foundation 49 banner before a game and updates on the team's involvement in the months ahead – especially during International Men's Health Week from June 11 to 17.

Foster's leads the way



Foster's employees Rafx Hamilton, left and Nicholas Tzoras.

Foundation 49's growing workplace health program has revealed some sobering figures at the Foster's Abbotsford Brewery.

And while the study has revealed undiagnosed high blood pressure, cholesterol and mental health issues, the interesting news for all men is that the results mirror, almost exactly, health statistics for the wider male population.

The multi-national company is one of the first to embrace Foundation 49's innovative Decades of Life men's health assessment – working to ensure its male employees are offered state-of-the-art workplace health care and monitoring.

Occupational Health Manager, Jo Spencer, says that while almost 220 tests have been done as part of a free pilot program with Foundation 49, in an ideal world Jo would like to see the service expanded to monitor all Foster's male staff around Australia and possibly internationally "As a responsible employer, we have a long history of offering this sort of support to our staff, many of whom have been with us for years," says Ms Spencer. "Foster's is a brilliant employer, very generous and active in offering flu vaccinations, heart health information, and other services."

"Foundation 49's Decades of Life program is unique in that it reaches a younger group of men as well – not just older men – and with depth and breadth."

Breaking News! Internal police investigation

Victoria Police is to conduct a thorough internal investigation ... of the health and wellbeing of its own workforce. Foundation 49 will provide training and the Decades of Life health assessment program.

While 80 per cent of the 13,500 workforce is male, the initial health testing will be offered to several thousand employees based at their Flinders Street site in Melbourne.

Victoria Police program development officer in the Fitness and Lifestyle unit, Alan Veitch, believes health testing of the workforce is essential to care for staff as well as to minimise absenteeism and the impact of health issues on performance.

"Cardiovascular health, blood pressure and stress are the main concerns for our members as for the rest of the community, and there are some who have strains and back pain from the utility belt which holds baton, cuffs, gun and capsicum spray," Alan says. "We're investigating alternatives at the moment."

"Overweight and obesity are also on the agenda and there are still 15 per cent who are regularly smoking."

Health checks are expected to be offered in the next month or so.

"Foundation 49's workplace assessments give us the opportunity to refer our members to other services when needed, and to create a greater awareness of personal wellbeing. If we can continue to address the number who cite stress as a significant factor, we'll see improvements for the individuals and in the workplace for colleagues."

What is this thing called Decades of Life?

Too few men visit their doctor for a regular, annual health-check. Foundation 49 wants men to stop, think and realise that if they ignore their health, it will go away.

We have developed a computer-based tool to rapidly assess a man's risk of disease:

- Online on a home computer
- In the workplace with a Foundation 49 nurse

Decades of Life identifies your own risks and early warning signs – of things like

cardiovascular disease, cancer, mental and sexual health problems.

But it's not all doom or gloom. It helps you make changes to prevent the problems that tend to emerge midlife and beyond.

Action:

- Book the Foundation 49 team to visit your workplace. Call Kate Temby on (03) 9508 1567.
- Visit the Foundation 49 website to do your own assessment before visiting your doctor for a more detailed assessment.

www.49.com.au

Instrument technician, Rafx Hamilton and national supplies relationship co-ordinator, Nicholas Tzoras have both done the assessment.

While Rafx was relaxed about fronting up, Nick came close to cancelling his appointment at the last minute, but decided to go through with it. And he's glad he did.

"My mum has diabetes and a heart condition so I'd been thinking I should probably check my own situation. I knew I needed to watch my diet, do a bit more exercise and lose some body fat, but I also found myself really emotional, talking about the recent loss of my dad," Nick says.

"Heather (the nurse) asked just the right questions. She was able to gauge my emotional state and it was really good to be able to talk about how I was feeling."

Rafx was pleasantly surprised by the results of his assessment. "I, like most blokes, have been pretty poor at going to the doctor for a health check. It also made me more aware of emotional issues. Now I think a bit more about the food I'm eating and I'm going to the gym regularly to get rid of the stomach."

The comprehensive, 30-minute health checks of the 200 men revealed:

- 35 per cent had unacceptably high blood pressure
- 10 per cent had high cholesterol
- four per cent had erectile issues
- 11 per cent were living with mental health problems
- six per cent had high blood glucose readings (giving a clue to diabetes risk)

Three quarters of the participants claimed the health check was excellent or very good and said they would like to be back in a year for another check-up.

Foundation 49 provided a nurse two days a week to conduct the tests. Checks of blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, weight, cancer risk, hormones, cardiovascular and emotional health revealed that many men have undiagnosed conditions – many of them preventable. Foundation 49 provided all services to Foster's free-of-charge as the effectiveness of the workplace health testing was assessed.

"Foundation 49's Decades of Life program is unique in that it reaches a younger group of men as well – not just older men – and with depth and breadth."

Foundation 49 offers grants

Foundation 49 has awarded 22 grants for its 2007 Community Grants program.

The grants are designed to encourage local community groups to put together programs to promote positive health messages for boys and men during Men's Health Week (June 11–17). Projects include pit stop health checks at cattle sale yards, father and son breakfasts and a health promotion footy match in a South Australian prison.

For more information, visit www.49.com.au

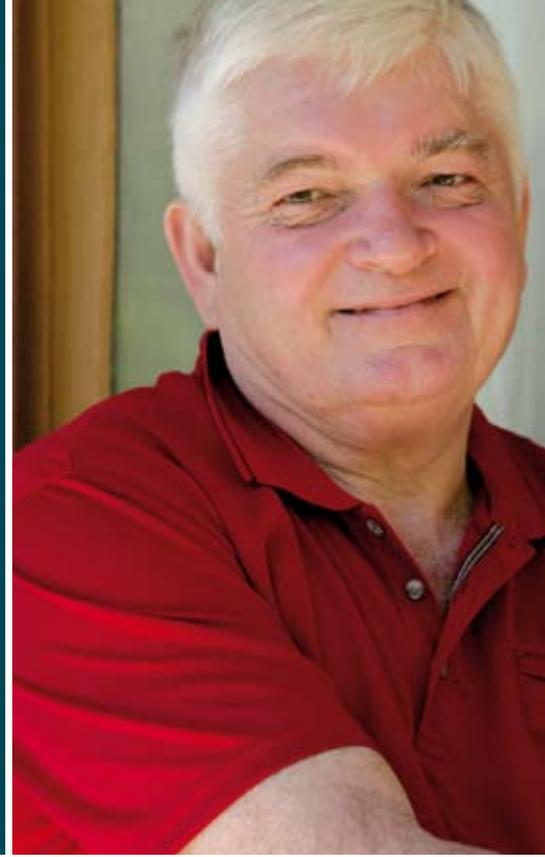
Shakin their thing for Foundation 49

The Royal Melbourne Hospital Med Students' Society recently helped promote men's health by raising money for Foundation 49. A number of student volunteers dressed up in theatre scrubs to collect donations from passing motorists and pedestrians near the Royal Melbourne Hospital. They attracted a lot of attention and laughs. Foundation 49 thanks the students who raised more than \$500.



Pictured: Medical student, David Liew, shakes a tin for Foundation 49

Downsize me: one man's battle to survive



A little over a year ago, Mike Smith, 55, suffered a massive heart attack. He'd always figured he'd die early. His dad had died at 53 from a heart attack as had a couple of other significant role models when they were young. But Mike was lucky. He survived and his fatalistic approach to life has taken a dramatic turn.

Ex-newspaper editor, Mike Smith, wants to live. He's come close to the alternative and he's decided he's not ready to go yet.

These days the diabetic, former smoker, ex-drinker and once-workaholic can be seen walking, eating a trout salad for lunch and writing books on healthy living. Colleagues from Melbourne's Age newspaper would hardly recognise this slimmed down, virtuous version of this straight-talking tough guy.

His new book, *Downsize me: How to fight diabetes and a heart attack* is a great read. It doesn't preach or finger-wag but he tells you how to get healthy without giving up all the fun bits.

And he proves it's never too late to start looking after yourself if you want to stay alive.

"I was always quite fatalistic, cramming 80 years into 40, cause I figured I'd die in my fifties," Mike says.

The 'live fast, die young' attitude suddenly seemed flippant when he was offered a second chance. His health stats now reflect a much healthier lifestyle.

Mike hopes he can encourage other men to act before it's too late. "As a diabetic, heart attack victim, journalist and communicator – and a bloody idiot – I want to try to persuade readers that it's never too late to do something about it, to reduce your risk, to improve how you feel and to improve your appearance."

Mike is now concentrating on working a normal week so he can spend more time with his partner, grandchildren and mates.

Downsize Me: How to fight diabetes and a heart attack by Mike Smith. Published by Wilkinson Publishing. RRP: \$29.95

Mike says he wrote his book to "nudge a few Australians to save their lives". He reckons there are four main groups of people at risk. Are you in one of them?

- The one in three Australians aged over 25 who are already at risk of developing cardiovascular disease or diabetes because of their weight, bad diet, sloth or genes
- The millions of others, including children, whose fatness or lack of physical activity is pushing them into the first group
- The hundreds of Australians who are diagnosed each day with diabetes or heart disease and need to make important lifestyle changes
- Some of the 4.5 million Aussies already affected by heart disease and diabetes who are struggling to make changes to their lives.



The silent killer

Heart disease is a sneaky disease. It can creep up on you after years of fermenting, only to appear when your heart screams ENOUGH.

Heart disease develops over many years and often there are absolutely no symptoms until it's well underway.

Blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol, high blood sugar levels and excess abdominal fat are pretty good clues that you're a candidate.

So how do you know if you are at risk? A visit to your GP is the first step to work out whether you have any of the silent symptoms.

It's a crazy world

- There are now one billion overweight people in the world and 300 million of them are obese. The number of undernourished people is 800 million.
- Obesity will soon overtake smoking as the greatest cause of premature deaths.
- Diabetes is tipped to become one of the world's biggest killers within 25 years. It's been described as the biggest epidemic in world history by Professor Paul Zimmet at the International Diabetes Institute.
- About 275 Aussies develop diabetes every day.
- Two-thirds of people who die from heart disease had diabetes or pre-diabetes five years earlier – one hell of a warning sign and a lost opportunity to prevent a heart attack.
- Sixty per cent of Australian adults are overweight or obese.
- About 366 people die from smoking each week around the country. That's 52 lives lost each day.

FAST FACTS

Cardiovascular disease is the term used for heart, stroke and blood vessel diseases.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death – in fact it claims one in three Australians.

Heart disease is the biggest killer of Australians and stroke is the second.

Some 1.1 million Australians are disabled, long-term, by heart, stroke and vascular disease.

Are you at risk of heart disease?

Try this simple quiz to decide:

Are you aged over 50?	Y	N	
Do you have a family history of heart disease?	Y	N	Don't know
Do you smoke?	Y	N	
Do you have high blood cholesterol?	Y	N	Don't know
Do you have diabetes or pre-diabetes?	Y	N	Don't know
Do you have high blood pressure?	Y	N	Don't know
Are you overweight?	Y	N	Don't know

If you answered 'yes' to any of these, you are at risk.

If you answered 'Don't know' to any questions, you may be at risk.

Make an appointment to see your doctor for a health check.

And one more thing.... ninety per cent of Australian adults have at least one fixable risk factor. Twenty five per cent have three or more fixable risk factors –many can be controlled or overcome.

Some good news!

- Death rates are falling slightly because people are giving up smoking and they're keeping control of their blood pressure.
- More people are using improved prescription drugs to control blood pressure and cholesterol.
- When they are struck down by a heart attack or stroke, treatment in hospital is improving and more people are surviving.

Foundation 49.
Promoting Health Awareness in Men

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Fast facts

- Foundation 49 is an initiative of the Cabrini Institute
- It aims to help all men over 20 years of age – of all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds
- Widespread screening and health promotion are key goals
- We believe supporting men to take control of their health is vital
- Our Decades of Life project is a tool for all men and for health professionals to help them assess a patient's risk of disease, to avoid illnesses and to assist in making early diagnoses of physical and mental problems.

Foundation 49
is supported by



Five minutes with... Richard Stubbs

Richard Stubbs is well-known as one of Australia's finest stand-up comedians. His cutting wit and sharp delivery makes for rapid-fire entertainment. He's also a good bloke.

Richard is currently hosting his own afternoon show on Melbourne's 774 ABC Radio. He's had 13 years in radio, much of it spent on the top of the ratings ladder with Triple M. TV credits include The Flying Doctors (!), The Big Gig and his own "Tonight Live" show on Channel 7.

He's not only funny, but clever too. He has a Bachelor of Economics and still dabbles in uni classes that stir his imagination.

Richard has two children.

How do you get yourself out of bed in the morning and ready for an afternoon on the radio?

With a very loud alarm and the knowledge that I have to make school lunches and get the kids to school on time.

Any secret tips to staying bright and chirpy?

Umm, don't always be bright and chirpy, be how you feel. But remember the positive aspects of your life, no matter what.

Best career moment?

Being number one in breakfast in a team and company where every single person was unified and positive about being there.

Worst career moment?

Being lied to and having a contract broken with no (at that time) further career options.

Worst moment in a doctor's waiting room?

Waiting for my girlfriend to come back from surgery.

When was your last health check?

If you mean blood tests etc, yeah... must get on to that.

Biggest health challenge you've faced?

Weight gain coupled with knee and sporting injuries. One leads the other, can't exercise so...

Best health tip you've been given?

Eat less and move more.

Favourite meal and where?

Japanese at my favourite restaurant in the city (can't tell you where – don't want you crowding it!)