



SOUTH WANGARATTA
MEDICAL CENTRE

45-49 year old NEWSLETTER



Happy Birthday!

We would like to wish you a happy 45th birthday from everyone here at South Wangaratta Medical Centre and Docker Street General Medical. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your life, and we hope to continue being there when you need us in your future.

45 is such a busy time of life. You may be juggling lots of commitments like work, study, sport and family. Unfortunately, because of this you may also be forgetting to look after your own wellbeing (don't worry - we've all done it at some stage!). However, if our health gets ignored then problems may start to creep in and go unnoticed.



Regardless of your current health status, we aim to support your health now and into the future. This newsletter contains a multitude of tips to keep you in top shape so you can keep on doing all the things in your life that bring you fulfillment and joy. We will also cover different **health assessments** that you may be able to access from your GP and their team which are fully subsidised by Medicare and are **FREE** if you have a Medicare card.

Fortyfive is a prime stage in your life where you hold the power to make healthy choices and change certain risk factors that can lead to the development of chronic diseases. If left unchecked, many chronic health problems can greatly impact on your quality of life, particularly in later years. There are lots of checks and preventative actions that we can take with you to help ensure good health. It's also a good time to check in with your GP, or get a GP if you don't have a regular one, if you haven't done so in a while.

Below are some health reminders and checks that you might like to consider to ensure all bases are covered when it comes to your health needs.

Preventative Health Checks

Blood tests and allied health checks

Every 1-2 years

- Dental check
- Optometrist/eye check
- Blood pressure check
- Heart disease risk assessment
- Mammogram (for women after the age of 50)
- Bowel screening test (after the age of 50)

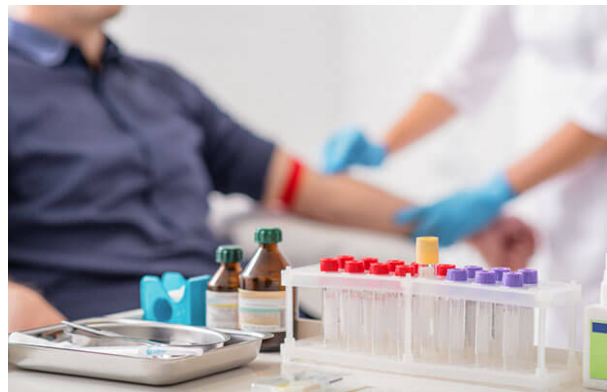
Every 3 years

- Blood glucose (sugars) test

Every 5 years

- Cholesterol and lipids check
- Cervical screening test (women)

* Some individuals may be at higher risk of certain conditions so will have the above mentioned checks more frequently



Chronic disease

Chronic disease is defined as any long term health condition that a person experiences for over 6 months. The Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing has found that the top 10 most commonly experienced chronic health conditions in Australia are; **arthritis, asthma, back pain, cancer, heart disease, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), diabetes, chronic kidney disease, mental health conditions and osteoporosis.**

These chronic diseases account for approximately 90% of deaths in Australia and a third of hospitalisations are related to these diseases. 50% of Australians experience at least one of these chronic conditions and 25% have two or more! However, it's not all doom and gloom. There are many changes you can make to prevent developing most of these conditions. Firstly, let's look into what increases your odds of developing a chronic problem - we call these risk factors.

Risk factors for developing a chronic disease

Some risk factors are changeable, while others cannot be changed (genetics etc.). These are called modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors.



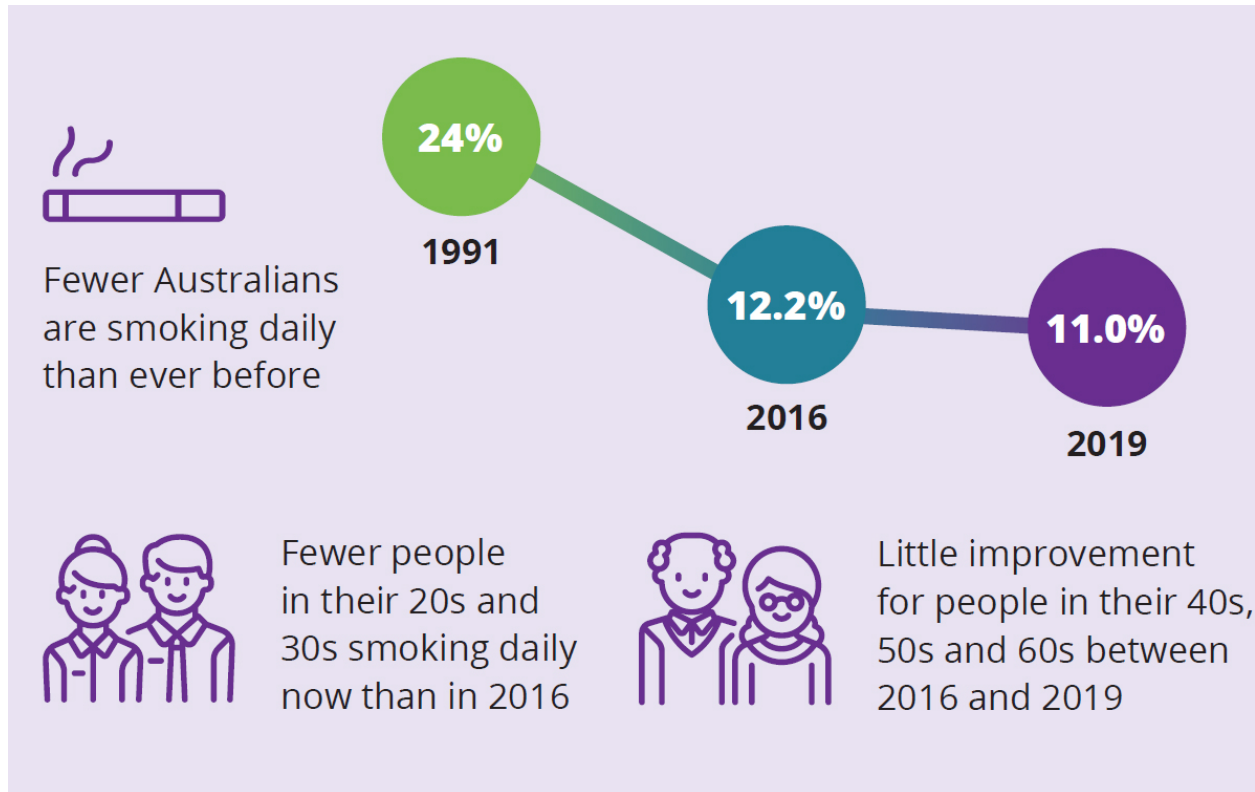
Family history - chronic diseases (diabetes, heart conditions, osteoporosis etc.) experienced by your parents and siblings may place you at a higher risk of developing the same condition.

Biomedical factors - high blood pressure, high cholesterol, overweight, obesity etc. are all factors that can increase your risk of developing chronic diseases

Lifestyle - smoking, drinking excessive alcohol, poor diet or sedentary lifestyle all increase the risk of chronic disease development.

Modifiable Risk Factors

Modifiable risk factors are behaviours that when changed can lead to health improvements and prevent future disease development. The four main modifiable risk factors are; **smoking**, **nutrition**, **alcohol** and **physical activity** (which we commonly refer to as SNAP).



Smoking

Smoking is the top most preventable cause of illness and death in Australia. While smoking rates have declined over the last 30 years, people in their 40's, 50's and 60's have not reduced cigarettes as much as other age groups in recent times. Tobacco smoke contains thousands of chemicals of which almost 100 can cause cancer. Second hand smoke can also cause ill health to others, including adults and children.

The amazing thing about smoking cessation is the health benefits of quitting begin almost straight away! Quitting smoking is hard. The body is dependent on nicotine and there are often many barriers to stopping. However there are multiple ways to quit smoking and different paths will work for different people. Most try multiple times before they are successful.

Want to quit? Here are some steps that will help you get there - or talk to your nurse, pharmacist or GP today for extra help.

- [Why quit smoking?](#)

- [What quitting feels like](#)
- [Know your triggers](#)
- [Quitting methods](#)
- [Write down your quite plan](#)
- [Coping with quitting and staying smoke-free](#)

Call QUITline for extra **FREE** help - 13 78 48



Nutrition

Poor Australian diets contributed to 62% of heart disease burden, 41% of type 2 diabetes burden, 34% of stroke burden and 22% of bowel cancer burden according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in 2020. Most Australians don't currently consume a diet that meets healthy eating guidelines (see picture above).

Australians need to eat more:

- Vegetables
- Legumes/beans
- Wholegrain cereal
- Dairy - reduced fat milk, yoghurt, cheese
- Fish, seafood
- Poultry, eggs
- Nuts, seeds
- Red meat (young females only)

Australians need to eat less:

- Starchy vegetables
- Refined cereals
- Medium and high fat dairy foods
- Red meat (males only)
- Saturated fat food and drinks (chips etc.)
- Added sugar food and drinks (soft drink, cake, biscuits etc.)
- Added salt food and drink
- Alcohol

For more information visit <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/> or speak to your practice nurse, GP or pharmacist today



Alcohol

Drinking large amounts of alcohol plays a significant role in causing chronic disease in Australia. It can be difficult to recognise when you are drinking too much, especially if those around you are also drinking regularly. Alcoholic drinks vary in size and strength which makes it difficult to recognise how much you've drunk and knowing when to stop.



If you would like to find out how many typical standard drinks you consume, try this calculator at:

<https://drinkwise.org.au/standard-drinks-calculator/#>

Australian guidelines recommend healthy men and women should drink no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks on one day. The less you drink, the lower your risk of alcohol related injury.

Are you unsure if you have a drinking problem? The following are signs and symptoms that may indicate you have a problem:

- You are drinking more than the Australian Guideline recommendations
- You or others are worried about how much you drink
- You need to drink more to feel the same effects
- You crave alcohol
- Alcohol is affecting your physical or mental health
- You don't feel in control of your drinking
- Your drinking is interfering with your relationships or job
- You experience physical symptoms such as shaking, sweating, anxiety or vomiting when you don't have a drink

Want to know how to drink less?

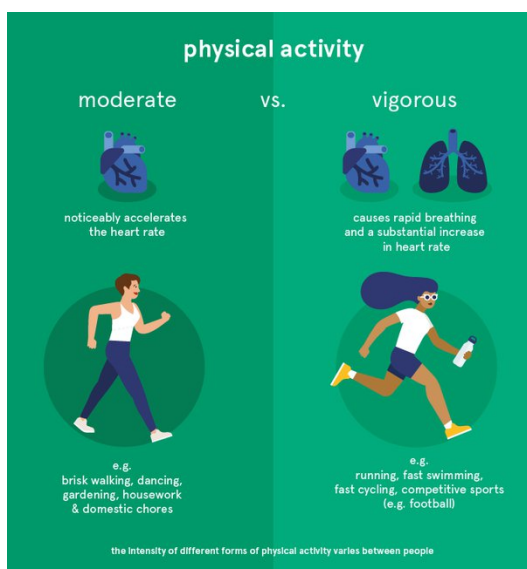
- Drink water (or non-alcoholic beverages) instead
- Avoid drinking in rounds
- Order smaller serves of alcohol
- Don't let others top up your glass
- Avoid high alcohol content drinks like spirits
- Eat food before and during drinking to help with alcohol absorption and to slow down process
- Distract yourself with activities while drinking eg. playing pool, darts, singing etc.



Physical activity

Regular movement is not just important for your physical health, but for your mental health as well. There is strong evidence that some physical exercise is better than none, and increasing the amount you do every day will have even greater health benefits.

Physical activity is important at every age, regardless of past activity/inactivity. The health benefits include; prevention and management of health conditions, wellbeing improvement, lowering blood pressure, bone/muscle strengthening, socialisation and assisting with weight management.



Physical Activity Guidelines suggest a minimum of:

- Activity on most, if not all, days of the week
- Complete 2.5-5 hours of exercise of moderate intensity a week (half to an hour daily)
- PLUS 1-2 hours of vigorous intensity physical activity
- Muscle strengthening exercises on at least 2 days of the week

What else can you do?

- Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Stand up on public transport
- Get off a stop early and walk to your destination
- Sit less
- Catch up with family and friends for a walk rather than sitting down
- Get up from your desk to talk to your colleague rather than emailing or calling
- Move more

Free Health Assessment

45-49 year old health assessment (ONCE OFF)

You may be eligible to receive a comprehensive health care check if you are between the ages of 45-49 (for individuals at risk of developing chronic disease), to best help support and manage your health going into the future.

During (or prior to) this assessment you may be asked to perform pathology to check cholesterol and blood glucose levels. At the appointment you will then undergo a cardiovascular disease risk assessment, a diabetes risk assessment, a SNAP risk assessment and receive lifestyle intervention advice.

Free GP Management Plan (Care Plan)

If you are diagnosed with a chronic disease/condition, you are eligible for a GP Management Plan (also known as a GPMP or Care Plan). A GPMP can link you into Allied Health services to help manage/improve your condition, and provide regular reviews with your Nurse and GP to track your progress.

Please feel free to contact South Wangaratta Medical Centre on 03 5713 9299 to arrange a check up or to obtain further advice from your GP.