

Personal health and wellbeing

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When we look at our own personal health and wellbeing, what do you assume is being assessed? Are you picturing yogis balancing on one finger in a 'zen' state of mind? Or having to jump into the next high flying gym class keeping up with the new generation Jane Fonda?

Many people assume personal wellbeing means 'just keeping healthy', but what does that even mean? - 'losing that extra belly that sits over your belt'.

As a registered nurse and nutritionist I am here to help you explore your health, highlight the various parts of your body you need to be aware of, highlighting what is normal so you know when something is 'not normal'. I believe personal health and well being to be something that is good for you physically, mentally and nutritionally.

Having grown up watching my father and uncles run a large thoroughbred training business in Muswellbrook NSW I realised personal health was a challenge not only for individuals but for families and rural communities.

When it comes to farming, all the technology in the world has not slowed the work load down. If anything, it has allowed for greater production in fewer hours and as farming remains a physically challenging career it is revalent for those of you on the land who are all too busy, over worked and regrettably time-poor to look after your bodies the way you would your cattle, sheep, horses or pastures.

Now, there are possibly two reasons for this personal neglect: it is either the 'too busy option' or the 'I don't worry about my body till something goes wrong' option, otherwise know as lack of maintenance.

When we start to look at the most important tool on your farm or in your shed, the tool that YOU rely on most—the tool that has to work whenever

it is called upon with multiple capabilities—we tend to want to look after it, so if you think a little harder about that tool you rely on most, I think you'll find that *tool* will be *you*. Without you, your business, your farm, your cattle, your pastures, and your family will all suffer.

To-day I will be looking at helping you identify exactly which parts of your body need to be maintained and assessed over the years as you start to add a few more kilometres to your personal metre, keeping you well serviced to keep up with your demands, after all, you wouldn't allow your ute to go for 100,000 km without a good grease and oil change.

The priorities for you are your heart, your bowels, your mental health, your prostate, your testicles, your...shall we say 'manhood', and your nutrition.

Heart Health

Heart health remains paramount, as it is after all the driving force of your entire body. The importance of heart disease within Australia is made evident with statistics confirming one Aussie will die every 10 minutes from this modifiable disease. Heart disease is Australia's number one killer.

Did you know 1 in 2 men run the risk of developing heart disease and women have a 1 in 3 chance of developing heart disease over the age of 40 in their life time?

(National Heart Foundation: Heart Facts: Cardiovascular Disease Men and Women: sourced October 2007)

According to a study run by the National Heart Foundation in April 2007, 56% of people in NSW would not call an ambulance when experiencing heart attack signs or symptoms, preferring to phone a friend rather than waste an ambulance's time *in case* they were wrong. This attitude calls

for action. We need to change this belief system within our communities. Heart health highlights the importance of blood pressure and cholesterol and the signs of a heart attack.

Bowel Health

With more than 4,000 Aussies being diagnosed with bowel cancer annually, it seems relevant to start highlighting the importance of bowel health. Bowel cancer is now Australia's second most common form of cancer. We need to learn what is normal and what is not normal, the relevance of family history and the simple dietary steps you can start to make in preventing this from happening to you.

Prostate Health

Prostate cancer affects almost 1 in 5 men and will often occur without any symptoms. (Source: Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.)

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia (excluding Melanoma skin cancers). Prostate health highlights at what age you should be having your prostate checked. The prostate can also experience other issues beside cancer which, as you start to get a little older, becomes increasingly prevalent. Many men ask "What does a prostate do... can't you just get rid of it?" The prostate is important for maintaining bladder control and aiding an erection, so, you may not wish to just 'get rid of it' after all. Prostate cancer survivor, Paul Scarfe compares the prostate to a car's air conditioning *'The car will still function well with out one but it's a luxury few men would choose to do without'*.

Testicular Health

Testicular cancer, although not common when comparing against other cancers, is common amongst our younger (25 to 44) male population. According to the Cancer Council approximately 7 in 100,000 men will have testicular cancer.

Early diagnosis is the key when it comes detecting these types of cancers, therefore it is important for men to start to learn to feel and acknowledge what's down below and actually take notice of any lumps or bumps that possibly should not be there. Awareness my friend, is the key. (Sourced: The Cancer Council Australia; April 2008)

Sexual Health

This may just come as a surprise to you, but not too many men like to talk about what is 'going on' or maybe 'not going on' in the bedroom. There are numerous issues regarding men's sexual health, but most commonly premature ejaculation is experienced by 1 in 3 Aussie males.

Conditions such as delayed ejaculation, painful ejaculation and testicular torsion have the ability to affect you and your life in more ways than one. Testicular torsion is apparent amongst younger men, which can have life changing effects if the individual chooses to ignore their symptoms and not seek medical attention immediately, this can result in losing a functioning testicle. First question, what are the signs, how do you know? This information will apply to all of you, whether you are a woman or a man, a parent, an educator, a coach, even a farmer!

Nutritional Health

Nutrition is paramount in our everyday lives for energy, maintenance and general wellbeing. The foods we eat are the building blocks for a solid foundation impacting on our immune system, our heart health and importantly, the health of our nervous system. With busy active lives, the essential nutrients found in fresh produce is second to no other foods in the market place. We need to be getting back to basics in the way we buy, eat and cook foods. Remember the KISS principle, Keep It Simple Silly – then use it! You know yourself, to breed fine cattle and fast thoroughbreds, you feed them regularly with quality foods (pastures), that is the only way to fuel them adequately if you want great results. Well, the same applies to you!

Next time you are shopping, just ask yourself, anything in a box that can sit on a shelf for 3, maybe even 5 years, can it really be good for you?

Heart Disease

- Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in Australia
 - CVD refers to heart disease, stroke and blood vessel disease.
 - CVD is preventable
 - **Cardiovascular Disease kills one Aussie almost every 10 minutes**
 - Affects the lives of 3.5 million Aussies
- Source: <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au>

Diabetes

- 85-90% of all people with diabetes have Type 2
 - 60 % of diabetes cases could be prevented or delayed, by people maintaining a healthy weight
 - Nearly two thirds of men are overweight or obese
- Source: <http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/>

Bowel Cancer

- More than 4000 Aussies are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year
 - Up to 80 Aussie sufferers die each week
 - 2nd most common cancer in Australia
 - 1 in 10 Aussie blokes will have bowel cancer by the age of 85
 - 9 out of 10 cases will be cured if detected early enough
- Source: Cancer in Australia – An overview, 2006 (AIHW and AACR 2007)
<http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au>

Gout

- 70,000 Aussies have experienced gout
 - Common for men between the Ages of 40 to 50 years of age
 - 10 times more common in men compared to women
- <http://www.ageingwell.org.au>; <http://www.virtualrheumatologycentre.com>

Testicular Health

- Almost 7 in 100,000 men will have testicular cancer
 - Approximately 675 men are diagnosed with testicular cancer each year
 - Almost half of those diagnosed are under 35 years of age
 - Early diagnosis and early treatment can cure most cases of testicular cancer
- Source: The Cancer Council Australia; April 2008

Skin Cancer

- Around 9,500 Aussies are diagnosed with melanoma each year
 - There were 2,024 Aussie blokes diagnosed with melanoma in NSW in 2005
 - Melanoma is the fourth most common cancer in males
- Source: www.cancercouncil.com.au; <http://www.skincancer.gov.au>

Fatigue

- Every day, driver drowsiness kills at least one person on Australian roads.
 - Drivers with less than 6 hours sleep are 2.5 times more likely to doze off
- Source: <http://optalert.com>; www.abs.gov.au

Prostate Cancer

- Approximately 18,700 Aussie men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006
 - 3000 men die as a result of prostate cancer each year
 - 1 in 5 men will have prostate cancer by the age of 85 years
 - The most common cancer diagnosed in Australia (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers)
 - 2nd largest cause of male deaths related to cancer
 - Prostate cancer can exist WITHOUT ANY SYMPTOMS
- Source: Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia