Research has found that exercise is important for mental wellbeing.

Exercise can improve your mood and reduce the risk of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. Exercise is also important for physical health. Getting the recommended amount of physical activity each week reduces the risk of becoming overweight, obesity and a number of diseases.

It’s not entirely known why but people who remain active into old age also have a lower risk of developing diseases like Alzheimer’s and vascular dementia. Following on from this it’s thought that exercise may help to support and preserve normal brain function.

Researchers in the US looked at the effect of exercise on brain health in 30 inactive adults aged between 61 – 88 years. Nearly half of the participants were showing some signs of mild cognitive impairment at the beginning of the study.

The group was given an exercise program to follow that involved moderate intensity walking on a treadmill four times a week for 12 weeks. Participants’ fitness levels were measured and scans were taken of their brain before and after the program.

Predictably, at the end of the 12 weeks, fitness levels had increased with improvements in heart and lung health. Brain scans showed an increase in the thickness of the cortex compared to before the program commenced.

The cortex is the outer layer of the brain that typically shrinks in people with Alzheimer’s disease. The greatest increase in cortical size was seen in those with the greatest improvements in physical fitness. The thickening of the cortex was seen in healthy people and in people with mild cognitive impairment.

This was a small study and can’t prove that exercise leads to improvements in brain health. Nevertheless it adds to a growing body of evidence indicating that exercise promotes good mental and brain health and may slow the mental decline that can come with ageing. It’s never too late to start exercising and it’s important to maintain the recommended levels of physical activity as you get older.

Good Health on the Menu

BLUEBERRY AND BANANA MUFFINS

A delicious snack packed with flavonoid filled blueberries.

Ingredients:
- 2 cups self raising flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 150g Greek natural yoghurt
- 80g (lite) margarine, melted
- 2 ripe bananas, mashed
- ½ cup honey
- 1 cup fresh blueberries


Trim Down With Flavonoids

Different foods are known to be positively or negatively associated with weight change.

Foods high in saturated fat are known to increase the risk of weight gain and some chronic diseases (see the story on the importance of healthy fats for information on what type of fat you should be getting in your diet).

On the other hand, foods like blueberries, apples, pears and celery are thought to positively influence body weight. All of these ‘positive’ foods have something in common – they are rich sources of flavonoids.

Flavonoids are naturally occurring compounds found in a number of fruits and vegetables. The exact mechanism responsible for the weight loss effects of flavonoid rich food is not entirely known.

Researchers looked into this further, investigating the relationship between flavonoids and weight change in more than 100,000 people over nearly a quarter of a century. The people involved were free of chronic diseases, including obesity, at the beginning of the study. Their personal data were collected over 24 years. This included their weight and lifestyle habits recorded every two years and their food intake reported every four years.

Consumption of most of the flavonoids was associated with small but significant weight loss benefits. This was strongest for anthocyanins (found in foods such as blueberries and strawberries) and flavonols (also found in berries and other foods like onions). The research reiterates the importance of fruits and vegetables being part of a healthy diet.

For people who struggle to lose weight, choosing specific types of fruits and vegetables might aid weight loss efforts. It’s important to try to get the recommended two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables in your diet each day and perhaps try for an extra hit of flavonoid rich food if you’re having trouble shifting those extra kilograms.
Hunger Feeds A Bad Mood

Eating is a pleasurable experience bringing about feelings of happiness and comfort and creating an occasion to socialise with friends and family.

The gratification that repeatedly arises from enjoying food can create reward pathways in the brain that link eating food to feelings of happiness and pleasure. The neural pathway circuits in the brain that link food with good times are reinforced with every meal. Another potential explanation for the enjoyment of food intake may be affecting this and promoting feelings of happiness and satisfaction. This research also illustrates why it may be hard for some people to restrict how much they eat.

Portion control is key to weight maintenance. It's important to be aware of your mood and how food intake may be affecting this and develop strategies to manage the negative feelings that arise from being hungry. Eating foods that promote satiety (the feeling of fullness) is a good way to avoid the irritable emptiness that accompanies an empty stomach.

It's also important to remember that most people in developed countries have not actually experienced true hunger and are probably rather used to consistent periods of overeating and eating a lot of energy dense food so are feeling withdrawals from these states.

Foods high in fibre promote feelings of fullness for longer as do foods with a low glycaemic index.

GET YOUR TEETH INTO HEALTH

For some reason, in this age of holistic health, we tend to ignore the fact that our teeth are part of the rest of our body.

Most dentists have little to do with the rest of the healthcare system, so dental care can be expensive and hard to access if you’re not privately insured. But the health of our teeth and gums is tightly linked to our health in general.

As we age, we develop more and more dental decay. Three out of four Australian toddlers have no decay but by the time we’re over 65, the vast majority of people have fillings and many have lost teeth. Gum disease is associated with increased inflammation in the body, which can damage the heart. Uninsightly teeth are a turn off and reduce people’s employment chances.

Poor oral health means poorer nutrition and that can mean shorter lives.

MYTH VS FACT: MORE NUTS = LESS CALORIES

Nuts are a nutritious snack and a valuable addition to a healthy diet.

Nuts are low in saturated fat and high in a number of good nutrients including ‘healthy’ fats like monosaturated and polyunsaturated fats, phytochemicals like flavonoids, dietary fibre, plant protein, vitamin E and minerals like magnesium, zinc, iron, calcium and potassium. Some nuts are also associated with reducing the risk of chronic diseases like coronary heart disease due to their positive effect on lowering LDL cholesterol and maintaining healthy blood vessels.

Despite their healthy properties many people think nuts are a fattening food due to the perception that they have a high available energy content. Research has shown, however, that the available energy from some nuts is actually much lower than people might predict. Almonds, for example, have been measured as having 20% less available energy than what people perceive.

Researchers have now tested this theory in walnuts. Eighteen healthy adults followed a diet plan on two different occasions for three weeks at a time. One of the plans included the addition of 42 grams of walnuts each day. The energy content of the foods consumed was measured and urine and faecal samples were analysed to see how much of the potential energy from the food was lost from the body.

The results showed that there was 21% less available energy in walnuts than predicted. The reason given by the researchers for this is that fat is trapped inside the plant cell wall in the nut limiting the potential of it being digested. They also flagged that this result might be more pronounced if the nuts are not chewed completely.

More research is needed in this area however these results suggest that some nuts are likely to have less available energy than people perceive and therefore potentially assist with weight control. These results apply to nuts consumed in the whole form so unfortunately it does not extend to highly homogenised spreads like peanut butter, which can be high in salt and saturated fat.


TOP TEETH TIPS

• When you’re pregnant make sure your teeth are in good shape and you brush regularly with a fluoridated toothpaste – it makes a difference.
• Avoid sugar – it fuels the decay causing germs in your mouth.
• Floss and make sure no food debris is left in your mouth after meals and overnight.
• Don’t clean a baby’s dummy by sucking on it as you’ll transmit your decay germs to the baby.
• No sugar or fruit drinks for babies.
• Never leave a baby to suck on a bottle no matter what’s in it.
• Start brushing teeth as soon as teeth are showing with a tiny smear of toothpaste.

PRACTICE TIMETABLE

The Practice is equipped to perform Pre-Employment Health Checks. We are happy to organise these for your company to utilise when employing new staff and the tests can be tailored to suit your company needs. We can also perform Pre-Employment Health Checks on an individual basis.

Online Bookings – are now available via our webpage crestwoodgp.com.au or by downloading the appointit app available for Apple and Android.

Our Practice Nurses are able to complete Childhood Immunisations and no appointment is necessary providing your child has previously been immunised at the practice. 6 week health checks and immunisations do require an appointment to be made with a doctor. 4 year old health checks are conducted at the practice and these need to be booked in with the Practice Nurses.

We are open for Pathology collection between 8am and 2.30pm weekdays.

Crestwood Family Practice bulk bill all children under 16 years of age. Other patients will be Privately Billed unless they hold a current pension concession card.

For Privately Billed patients the surgery is connected directly to Medicare online and your refund can be received in the following ways: we can issue a Medicare refund directly into a cheque or savings account at the time of billing using TYRO; we can issue a receipt which can be taken to Medicare to make a claim; we can send the claim to electronically to Medicare to be paid by them as a direct deposit into your bank account.

PRACTICE UPDATE

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PRACTICE TIMETABLE

Dr Paula Buckley
Monday: RDO
Tuesday: 8am-4pm
Wednesday: 8am-4pm
Thursday: RDO
Friday: 8am-4pm

Dr Sarah Barrand
Monday: 8am-2pm
Tuesday: 2pm-6pm
Thursday: RDO
Friday: 2pm-6pm
One Saturday per month: 8am-12noon

Dr Daniel Frost
Monday: 12.30pm-8pm
Tuesday: 8am-4pm
Two Saturdays per month: 8am-12noon

Dr Bob Futcher
Mon- Wed: 8am-2pm
Thursday: 12noon-6pm
Friday: RDO
One Saturday per month: 8am-12noon

Dr Lyndall Cooper
Monday: 8am-3.30pm
Tuesday: RDO
Wednesday: 8am-8pm
Thursday: RDO
Friday: 8am-4pm

Dr Simonne Sheppard
Monday: 9am-4pm
Friday: 8am-3pm

Dr Gunjan Singh
Tuesday: 9am-3pm
Wednesday: 8am-3pm
Thursday: 9am-3pm

This timetable is subject to change as doctors will be taking leave from time to time.

Please contact the surgery during holiday times to confirm the doctors’ timetables.