



### Alison Roberts & Joanne Turner

Our annual Christmas food feature is always highly sought after by readers. This issue, our food team present their best-ever festive fare for you. "Everything's so simple but tastes sensational," says our home economist Alison (pictured right with dietician Joanne Turner). "So, instead of slogging away in the kitchen, you can spend more time with the family, which is what Christmas is all about."



### Dr William Sukala

Clinical exercise physiologist Dr William Sukala looks at the impact every little health or diet choice has on your body in *The ripple effect* (page 76). "Even as a health professional, I still find it hard to make and maintain health changes," he says. "But think of your health as a marathon – every small positive change you make today adds up to crossing the health finish line tomorrow."



### Leigh Reinhold

Olympian Cathy Freeman talks about her type 2 diabetes to journalist Leigh Reinhold on page 94. They first met in 1999 when Cathy was posing for a portrait for the National Gallery of Australia. "Back then, I was struck by her modesty and her reticence to be the story," says Leigh. "Catherine now sees she can use her profile for positive results, and talking about her personal struggle will inspire others to take care of their health and diabetes management."



### Emma Stirling

Dietitian Emma Stirling helps you survive the silly season in *Eat what you love and stay health smart* (page 64). She knows it's a challenging time to stick to your health goals. "It pays to analyse your habits and put a plan in place for success in 2012. We've taken a leaf out of sound financial advice to help you balance the kilojoules and keep your health savings intact," she says.



### Meryn Cooper

Journalist Meryn Cooper moved into writing about diabetes after a two-year stint at Diabetes Australia – Queensland, working on several major PR campaigns and producing a kids' book, *Sam's Diabetes Story*. In this issue, she interviews radio personality Jamie Dunn (see page 98). "I love his quick wit, self-deprecating humour and realistic view on how he's coping with type 2," she says. Meryn's 11-year journalist career spans TV, radio and print.





# THE ripple effect

How every little lifestyle change you make sets in motion a wave of positive health benefits.

→ **OVERWHELMING** – that's how it can feel when managing your diabetes means sweeping away old habits in a tsunami of lifestyle changes. You need to be disciplined in so many ways, from changing your diet to learning how to exercise effectively while staying alert for possible health complications.

It can be tough keeping your head above water with so much to take on board, so try breaking down your challenges into small, achievable goals. Focus on one singular good thing you can make a daily health goal. It may seem a drop in the ocean, but every little positive change sets off a ripple effect with far-reaching wellbeing benefits. Achieved one by one, your positive new habits will stay the distance and help turn the tide on poor health management.

## GOOD HABIT 1

### Go light to lose kilos

Trimming off just 420 kilojoules from your diet each day adds up to around 3000 kilojoules a week (or 200 grams of body fat). Over a year, this seemingly small amount can translate to a loss of five kilos of stored body fat. And achieving this is easy. In fact, you can accomplish it with just a minor change, such as swapping to low-fat or low-kilojoule versions of your regular staples. For instance, having low-fat milk on your cereal or low-fat yoghurt as a snack. Small tweaks to your daily eating plan are the optimal way for you to lose weight and keep it off. This will also minimise the body's famine response and increase your chances of sticking with it. ➤

#### Your benefits

- Weight loss or better weight management
- Improved 8GLs
- Reduced blood pressure
- Improved blood lipid levels
- Improved sleep
- Reduced stress and depression

GOOD HABIT 2

## Give meditation a go

The thoughts that pass through your mind can influence what happens in the rest of the body – for better or worse. A growing body of scientific evidence supports the use of mind-body relaxation strategies for improving diabetes and heart health. A study in the US found that 16 weeks of supervised and home-based meditation improves measures of insulin resistance and blood pressure in people with heart disease and diabetes risk factors, compared to those who only receive health education.

In another eight-week US study, it was found that people with type 2 diabetes experienced an

### Your benefits

- ➊ Improved diabetes management
- ➋ Improved blood pressure
- ➌ Reduced stress
- ➍ Improved sleep
- ➎ Reduced risk of depression (or improvement in depressive symptoms)
- ➏ Better body weight control
- ➐ Reduced risk of heart attack and stroke

important half-point (0.5 per cent) reduction in their HbA1c (long-term BGLs) levels as well as a six-point reduction in blood pressure after 20 to 30 minutes of mindfulness-based stress reduction six days a week. While these may seem like only small changes, they can have a profound positive influence on your long-term health.

Laughing and sharing with friends is a great antidote to depression.



GOOD HABIT 3

## Be a social butterfly

Spending time with friends is a surprisingly powerful health tonic. Any form of social interaction that brings a smile to your face and gives you a sense of connectedness will do the trick. And, you can't overdose on this medicine – the more the better.

A US study found that people who spent more time participating in social clubs had better health than those who clammed up alone in their homes – and it's a benefit to people of all ages.

Laughing and sharing with friends is also a great antidote to depression. The effects of strict diabetes management, coupled with health complications and social isolation can be a recipe for depression, which in itself can worsen blood glucose control. Feeling blue once in a while is a normal part of life, but if it becomes prolonged and intense, you should visit your doctor for a specialist referral.

Got time to spare? Joining a diabetes support group or social group could be your first step towards feeling happier and more vital. And it can add years to your life. A 13-year study on 2761 people aged 65 and older, found that those who spent time in social activities – volunteering, running errands, catching up with friends – had a similar life expectancy to those who spent their time exercising. While this certainly doesn't discount the importance of exercise, it underscores the very potent health benefits of social engagement. ➤

### Your benefits

- ➊ Reduced perception of stress
- ➋ Reduced tendency towards depression
- ➌ Potential for improved sleep
- ➍ Increased longevity
- ➎ Reduced blood pressure

GOOD HABIT 4

## Stand up for your health

When it comes to trimming your tummy, adding just one hour of standing time to your day burns around 2600 extra kilojoules a week. Over a year, this translates to four kilos of body fat. You won't even notice if you get into the habit of routinely standing while chatting on the phone or changing the TV channel. Collectively, these actions all play their part in turning up your fat-burning furnace.

You can rev up your metabolism even further with domestic chores like washing the dishes, or by doing light office work, such as filing, when you're standing. An hour a day of these kinds of activities can result in a potential fat loss of around eight kilograms a year. And, if you go for longer than one hour, the weight-loss effects are further magnified. It's this sort of 'background' incidental movement in your day that can really give your health a boost.

Your benefits

- Weight loss or better weight management
- Reduced blood pressure
- Improved blood lipid levels
- Improved BGLs
- Reduced risk of heart attack and stroke
- Improved sleep
- Reduced stress and depression

Increased standing time activates little 'sugar sponges' (called GLUT4 transporters) in your leg muscles, which mop up glucose from the blood and help keep your BGLs in check. An enzyme, called lipoprotein lipase, is also activated when you are standing, which helps to siphon fat from your blood (it loses about 90 per cent of its activity when you're sitting).

*Adding just one hour of standing time to your day burns around 2600 extra kilojoules a week.*

GOOD HABIT 5

## Stub out the smokes

Though easier said than done, quitting smoking is one of the most powerful positive health changes you can make. Within just 24 hours of smoking your last cigarette, blood levels of dangerous carbon monoxide are greatly reduced, which means that your blood can carry more health-promoting oxygen. And, one year on, your risk of heart troubles is halved, compared to those who continue to smoke. If you're taking up exercise, you'll also find it easier to maintain your pace when you're an ex-smoker!

There are plenty of options available to support your efforts. To find out more, visit [www.quitnow.gov.au](http://www.quitnow.gov.au). ➤

Your benefits

- Weight loss or better weight management
- Improved blood pressure
- Breathe easier
- Improved blood lipid levels
- Improved BGLs
- Reduced risk of heart attack and stroke
- Reduced long-term risk of depression



GOOD HABIT 6

## Take good cardio care

Keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol levels down is the key to reducing your risk of heart attack and stroke. Cutting your salt intake to the Heart Foundation's recommendation of less than six grams (1½ teaspoons of salt or 2300 milligrams of sodium) a day can help loosen the grip that high blood pressure has on your vital organs and arteries. Every tiny change in blood pressure counts – a mere two-point drop can greatly reduce your chances of stroke or heart attack.

As well as watching the white stuff you sprinkle on your food at mealtimes, you should also be wary of the sodium that's routinely added to processed foods to boost the flavour.

Mind that added sodium!	
Hamburger	880mg sodium per serve
Beef sausage	553mg per serve
Potato crisps	531mg per serve
Yeast spreads	180mg per serve
Cheddar cheese	146mg per serve
Breakfast cereal	144mg per serve

Choose unprocessed, low-salt options instead, ensure over-generous serving sizes don't put you back in the danger zone and try flavouring your food with herbs and spices and a dash of lemon or lime juice.

Swapping butter for low-fat spreads with plant sterols (for example, Logical or Flora Pro-Activ) has been found

to lower both total and LDL (bad) cholesterol. A low-fat, high-fibre diet combined with regular exercise is the first, prudent course of action against these unhealthy blood fats, but it's sometimes not enough. While statin medication is one option, scientists are working on 'engineering' cholesterol down to safe levels in other ways, and research over the past decade shows spreads with plant sterols to be an effective defence.

### Your benefits

- ➊ Reduced blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- ➋ Reduced risk of heart attack and stroke

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