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**HEALTH & SAFETY
NEWSLETTER**

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May 2019

Free yourself from headaches

Globally, the percentages of the adult population with an active headache disorder are 46 per cent for headache in general, 11 per cent for migraine. If you're in this percentage, it's time to find out how to ease the pain.

Whether you struggle with intense head pain that puts you out of action for days or just a dull ache from time to time, learning a few strategies to bring relief is a smart move.

Headache troubleshooting

- Frequently wake with a headache? Eating a snack before bed may help. (This can also be sign of high blood pressure, so make sure you get this checked too.)
- In the habit of skipping meals? Not eating regularly can cause low blood sugar, which may result in a headache.
- Working out? Your body loses extra fluid through perspiration so if you're prone to headaches ensure you drink plenty of water. The same applies to hot days.
- Coffee lover? A strong cup of coffee can sometimes ease head pain but drinking one too many can have the opposite effect.

Tackling pain head on

Alexander Technique: This bodywork technique helps you relearn everyday activities such as sitting, standing and walking to help alleviate the physical stresses and strains that contribute to headaches and other conditions. Go to austat.org.au to find a registered practitioner.

Hydrotherapy: Splashing your face with cold water before lying down for an hour can ease a headache. Try alternating hot and cold showers to dilate then constrict the blood vessels, which stimulates circulation and eases pain.

Deep breathing: Deep breathing can help ease or prevent a headache by sending calming messages to your brain. Relax your shoulders and take deep, slow breaths. Breathe in through your nose for two counts and out through your mouth for three or four counts. Your abdomen should move in and out while you're breathing.

Cold pack: Applied to the forehead, temples or back of the neck, ice packs can be an effective pain reliever for a headache.

Seek immediate medical attention for a headache ...

- after a head injury.
- associated with a loss of consciousness or a 'thunderclap' headache.
- accompanied with blurred vision, difficulty speaking or numbness in arms and legs - these could be symptoms of a stroke.
- accompanied by a fever and stiff neck.



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World Hygiene Day is on May 5.

Each year the SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands campaign aims to progress the goal of maintaining a global profile on the importance of hand hygiene in health care and to 'bring people together' in support of hand hygiene improvement globally.

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4 common skin myths

It's easy to feel under pressure to keep skin looking a certain way: blemish-free, glowing, healthy and above all, young. Looking after our skin can be a time-consuming and expensive business – if we believe all the hype.

Your skin provides an airtight, watertight and flexible barrier between what's outside and what's inside your body. Not only that, it also helps regulate your temperature, defends you against potential pathogens, protects you against UV radiation, produces vitamin D and enables your sensation of touch.

We need to look after our skin but a huge industry has built up around skincare, much of it not based on science. Here are four common skincare myths.

1. The right cream will keep your skin looking young.

Hundreds of skin treatments claim to help you look younger or slow the aging process. However, according to Harvard Health, the topical treatment with the best evidence for reducing wrinkles is retinoic acid, contained in many over-the-counter products. Even better than retinoic acid, however, is using sunscreen and not smoking.

2. You must drink two litres of water a day for healthy skin.

According to Sara Brown, Professor of Molecular and Genetic Dermatology at the University of Dundee, the amount of water you drink does not directly affect your skin. "Water is needed to maintain skin hydration and when you become seriously dehydrated your skin appears dull and is less elastic," she explains. "But there is no fixed volume of water you need, it simply depends on the amounts you are using and losing."

The best food for dry skin

Fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel and tuna, are rich sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for keeping your skin healthy. Omega-3 fatty acids help keep skin thick, supple and moisturised from the inside. Not a fan of fish? Walnuts are also a good source of essential fatty acids as are linseeds, Brussels sprouts, hemp seeds and chia seeds. ✕

3. Scrubbing your face with soap keeps it healthy and acne free.

Vigorously scrubbing your face will remove some of the protective oils and barriers which can lead to rashes and even burns. Brown advises washing skin regularly to remove dirt, but not so much that you remove the essential moisture and water-proofing substances. A gentle cleanser followed by a moisturiser or sunscreen is best practice.

4. Facials are good for your skincare routine.

"This is a popular myth," says dermatologist Leslie Baumann, author of *The Skin Type Solution*. But it looks like the benefits of facials don't go much beyond relaxation, with a study from India concluding that facials may actually cause acne breakouts in 80 per cent of people. Bauman's conclusion? "A complete and total waste of money." ✕



Help for heartburn

Acid reflux, heartburn and GORD (or GERD) are terms used to describe the discomfort of indigestion. Are they different words for the same thing?

Incidences of acid reflux or heartburn are increasing globally. Acid reflux occurs when stomach acid leaks from your stomach and moves up into your oesophagus (food pipe). Stomach acid is very strong and sometimes you can feel the acid coming up into your mouth where it tastes sour and unpleasant.

One symptom of acid reflux is a burning chest pain or discomfort after eating. This is known as heartburn, although it has nothing to do with your heart.

Both reflux and heartburn are common and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines can bring relief. But you mustn't rely on them. If your symptoms are regular or severe you should talk to your doctor, as you may have Gastro-oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD)* and need a different treatment. Untreated GORD can damage the lining of your oesophagus and may cause bleeding, ulcers and scarring.

*GORD is also shortened to GERD where US spelling is used.

6 ways to prevent heartburn

If you find you experience acid reflux and heartburn these lifestyle changes can help:

- 1. Eat sparingly and slowly.** When your stomach is very full acid is more likely to move up into the oesophagus.
- 2. Avoid certain foods.** While a bland diet is no longer recommended to treat heartburn, there are still some foods that are more likely to trigger it. These include peppermint, fatty and spicy foods, tomatoes, onions, garlic, coffee, tea, chocolate and alcohol. Eliminate them to see if this helps, then introduce them back into your diet one by one.
- 3. Limit carbonated drinks.** The carbon dioxide causes people to burp more often, which can increase the amount of acid escaping into the oesophagus.
- 4. Chew gum.** A few studies show that chewing gum can reduce acidity in the oesophagus.
- 5. Stay up after eating.** When you're standing (or even sitting) gravity helps keep acid in the stomach, so avoid lying down within three hours of finishing eating. Better still, go for a 20-minute stroll after dinner – but don't move

too fast as vigorous exercise after dinner can send acid into your oesophagus.

6. Sleep on an incline. You can try this if other lifestyle changes aren't effective. Ideally make your head 15 to 20 centimetres higher than your feet either through raising the legs supporting the head of your bed or using a foam wedge support for your upper body. ✕

Heartburn vs heart attack

The symptoms of heartburn can often be mistaken for a heart attack, but they are unrelated. Call 000 if your heartburn discomfort and chest pain change or get worse and are accompanied by:

- Difficulty breathing
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Pain in your arm or jaw

Reflux relief from your pantry

While OTC antacids can relieve heartburn, you may not always have one handy. As an alternative, dissolve ½ teaspoon of baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) in 200ml water and sip slowly.

See anger in a new light



Face the facts

1. Losing just a couple hours of sleep a night makes you angrier, especially in frustrating situations, according to US researchers from Iowa State University. The researchers found that when we're tired we have a reduced ability to adjust to irritating situations such as a barking dog or a sloppy driver.
2. Make sure you drink up ... water, that is. Researchers from the University of Connecticut found that even mild dehydration can cause anger and mood swings, probably because when we're thirsty we experience a loss of blood flow to the brain.

What we really want is to be heard but getting angry can have the opposite effect. Here we look at what you need to know to understand your anger better.

Anger is a useful emotion when you need to communicate something important and defend yourself by being confrontational, assertive, or aggressive. But anger can get you into trouble when it's too difficult to manage and control.

Managing anger doesn't mean never expressing it. Becoming more self-aware and noting patterns in your behaviour can make the difference between alienating people with your anger and getting your message across and your needs met.

How to get smart about anger

If you're prone to tantrums, you might benefit from a boost in emotional intelligence (EQ). EQ is the ability to understand, reason, and use emotions and emotional knowledge to improve your thoughts and actions. Strengthening your EQ is one way to help you get a clearer picture of why you feel angry when you do and allow you to use anger more constructively. You'll be far less likely to express your frustrations in a damaging way.

Try a little empathy

Research shows that a hostile communication style drives people

away. You might think you're just being assertive but if you explode, people will react negatively to you. They will feel uncomfortable and want to get away from you. Consider the situation from someone else's perspective. Empathising with the other person will allow you to feel rather than simply react to get your needs met. Empathy is an antidote to anger because it's hard to attack someone if you really understand where they're coming from.

Don't make decisions in the heat of anger

Instead, sit on that angry email for a day or two before sending it, walk away from a fight where possible and seek advice from a third party before taking any hostile action. If you still want to go ahead with your plan of attack when you're calm and collected, then go ahead. But chances are you won't want to.

What lies beneath

Tune in to what's really going on and you might discover what's driving your anger. Anger is driven by a set of internal rules based on how we think others ought to behave. These beliefs can cross over into self-righteous behaviour that assumes others



“The best vaccine against anger is to watch others in its throes.”

Marcel Proust

should follow rules and beliefs that you formed based on your experiences. The key is to remember that they are your experiences and not the other person's. The knowledge that a certain situation is only a big deal to you because of past events might make you less likely to blow your top.

Monitor your anger

Keep an anger log for at least two weeks and document each episode of anger on a scale of zero to 10. This will give you some insight into your behaviour as well as creating an incentive to reduce your anger, especially if you're scoring too many eights and nines!

Don't vent

You might feel more relaxed after blowing your top but not only will you experience more frequent bursts of anger if you rant regularly, you'll also be more likely to express it in an unhealthy way, US research has shown.

Take care

Alcohol, fatigue and stress make anger worse. Take some time off, simplify your life where possible, keep an eye on your sleep quality, and cut back on drinking or give it up altogether, if you're aware it's a contributor to angry outbursts. ✕

Bad vibes

When you hold it in for long periods of time, turn it inward, or explode in rage, anger can wreak havoc on your health. Research shows that anger can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke especially within the first two hours after an outburst. When you get angry your body goes into flight-or-flight mode, your heart rate speeds up, digestion slows down and stress hormones including adrenaline and cortisol begin to circulate. When you stay angry, these stress hormones can be damaging — and because stress hormones also dampen the immune system, chronic anger can make you more susceptible to infection. It's not just your physical health that suffers, your mental health takes a beating too. Anger problems can make your anxiety worse and several studies have highlighted the link between depression and angry outbursts, especially in men.



Sure-fire ways to keep germs at bay

Germs can be easily spread from person to person via surfaces in common areas in the workplace or home.

A few simple strategies can help keep your surroundings – and you – healthy and germ-free.

STOP the spread of germs by focusing on cleaning areas where germs are more likely to spread, such as the kitchen and toilet. Use either soap and hot water or a disinfectant and clean these hotspots on a regular basis rather than the usual once-a-week clean.

DRY surfaces such as benchtops and chopping boards thoroughly after cleaning. Moisture is the perfect breeding ground for germs.

USE disposable cloths or paper towels when possible to ensure they are germ-free, especially in workplace kitchens, where dishcloths and sponges can be loaded with germs.

ISOLATE toothbrushes once a family member has a cold. Keeping them separate means the virus is less likely to spread. It's a good idea to replace the sick person's toothbrush with a new one once they have recovered. ✕

Flu buster

The sniffles set in this time of year like clockwork. One person starts coughing and sneezing and before you know it, you're feeling under the weather, too.

Flu germs are believed to spread through droplets from the mouth and nose so use a tissue to cover them when you cough or sneeze. Make sure to throw the tissue away immediately and wash your hands. If there's no tissue handy, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow. At work, keep mice and keyboards germ-free with a disinfecting wipe and do the same at home with the TV remote.

Wash your hands with soap and water

Your hands are in constant contact with your environment and the germs that exist on your phone, desk, on the bus, in the bathroom and on surfaces at the office. But your hands also regularly come into contact with your eyes, nose and mouth. When you touch surfaces and then put your hands to your face, you could be exposing yourself to germs.

The flu virus can live on hard surfaces for up to eight hours. Washing your hands regularly, especially during flu season, will reduce your risk of infection. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser will do the trick. Keep one in your bag. ✕



Ask an expert about ...



Q What is the World's Food Allergy Capital?

A It's Australia. Why? It's a combination of factors, according to scientists, including geographical location.

Professor Katie Allen from the Royal Children's Hospital says that "the further from the equator you live, the higher the risk of food allergy", which explains why it's Melbourne (a city in the south of Australia) that earned the title of world's food allergy capital.

Distance from the equator can influence vitamin D levels and study findings reveal that vitamin-D-deficient children are 11 times

more likely to have peanut allergy. Add to that the current obsession with keeping children away from dirt, which reduces their exposure to a range of bacteria and alters the immune response to allergens. A rise in the incidence of eczema in the 1990s also adds to the increase because studies have shown that children who develop eczema within the first 12 months of life have increased risk of developing allergy. Children with eczema are more likely to suffer from a food allergy because of allergens encountered through damaged skin. ✕

App of the month

Healthy food swaps made simple

We all use packaged foods for their convenience. But some can be overly high in salt, saturated fat, added sugar

and energy. That's where FoodSwitch can really help. The FoodSwitch app will give you immediate, easy-to-understand nutritional information about packaged food products so you can make simple switches for better health. Each product in the FoodSwitch database is rated on its amount of total fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt, as well as for its overall healthiness based on these components plus protein, fibre, fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content. The bonus of this app is that it gives you a list of similar foods that are healthier choices. Available for free from the App Store and Google Play. [Visit here](#) for a list of countries covered by the app.

News Bites



Your brain knows best

Many of us like to get all the smaller, easy jobs out of the way when we arrive at work – answering emails or catching up with colleagues, for example. But you could be wasting your brain's best working time, warns psychologist Ron Friedman in a Harvard Business Review Ideacast.

The first three hours of our workdays are actually when we're at our most focused, explains Friedman. "If we end up squandering those first three hours reacting to other people's priorities for us, which is ultimately what voicemail or email is, that ends up using up our best hours, and we're not quite as effective as we could be," he says.

Use the first hours at work to get the harder tasks out of the way, leaving your less productive time for the smaller, simpler jobs. ✕

The healthy snack that isn't

Before you're tempted by a trail mix in your supermarket take a careful look at the contents. Added ingredients such as chocolate, yoghurt-coated dried fruit, salt, sugar and additional oils can ramp up the kilojoules. It's far better to make your own with some raw or toasted mixed nuts, your favourite dried fruits (calcium-rich figs and iron-rich apricots are a good choice) and some healthy seeds, such as pumpkin and sunflower.

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Probiotics may strengthen your bones

Swedish researchers have discovered that a daily probiotic supplement (live microorganisms) can slow down bone loss in elderly women, potentially reducing their risk of developing the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis.

Every day for a year a group of elderly women received either a probiotic supplement or a placebo. At the end of the study those women who had received the probiotic lost only half the amount of bone compared to those who had received the placebo.

Probiotics are available as a supplement, but you can also get them from a daily dose of natural yoghurt. ✕

4-7-8 breathing for anxiety

Feeling anxious or have trouble falling asleep? Then the 4-7-8 breathing technique may help.

While there is limited scientific research to support the method there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that this type of deep, rhythmic breathing may help ease people into sleep. Here's how it works:

- Empty your lungs of air.
- Breathe in quietly through the nose for four seconds.
- Hold the breath for a count of seven seconds.
- Exhale forcefully through the mouth, pursing your lips and making a 'whoosh' sound, for eight seconds.
- Repeat the cycle up to four times.

1

THING YOU CAN DO TODAY



Go for a brisk walk

We know we need to stay physically active to be healthy, and many of us enjoy walking as part of our exercise routine – after all, it's easy, free, and convenient. Walking is also low impact, meaning that it's less likely to cause an injury than running.

For cardiovascular health, the faster we move the better. But when we are advised to go for a brisk walk what exactly does that mean?

Brisk walking is rarely defined, or when it is, it uses terminology that's almost impossible to interpret. Do you know when you're using 70 per cent of your maximum heart rate?

A group of researchers led by Professor Catrine Tudor-Locke from the University of Massachusetts wanted to come up with a useful definition. Their study, published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, concluded that brisk walking involved a pace of about 4.3 kilometres per hour, or put more simply, 100 steps per minute.

"This is a number that is very easy for any of us to measure on our own," says Professor Tudor-Locke. Count how many steps you take in 10 seconds and multiply by six.

"The good news is that this pace will probably not feel strenuous to most healthy people," she says.

Want to increase your pace even more? Vigorous walking requires about 130 steps per minute, while jogging generally starts at about 140 steps per minute. ✕

EAT SMARTER

Brazil nuts

All nuts and seeds are worth including in your diet, as they supply a number of essential nutrients. Brazil nuts are no exception, and contain protein, fibre, vitamin E, iron, copper, magnesium and zinc, as well as healthy monounsaturated fats.

But what makes them a stand-out is their extraordinary selenium content. Just two to four Brazil nuts gives you the recommended daily amount of this trace mineral, making them the richest-known food source.

You need selenium every day, and here's why:

- It's a powerful antioxidant, protecting your cells from damage.
- Selenium is important to the health of your immune system so that it can identify and fight off potential threats like bacteria and viruses.
- It also seems to lower the risk of certain cancers, including breast, lung, colon and prostate cancers.
- A diet rich in selenium may help protect your heart, possibly through lowering inflammation in the body, one of the main risk factors for heart disease.
- Selenium increases levels of a powerful antioxidant called glutathione peroxidase, which also helps lower inflammation and oxidative stress in the body.
- Your thyroid gland depends on adequate selenium, which protects it from damage. A healthy thyroid gland is important as it regulates your metabolism and controls growth and development in the body. ✕



Tip: Don't be tempted to take a selenium supplement. High doses of selenium can be toxic. Like many foods, some Brazil nuts are good, more are not necessarily better.



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