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April 2019

Do you need a multivitamin?

'Just in case.' 'As an insurance policy.' 'To cover nutrients I might be lacking'. More than 40 per cent of us use some type of supplement, with multivitamins among the most popular. Do they work or are they a waste of money?

Some of us may need a top-up of nutrients. If you're on a restricted diet, are vegan (you'll need vitamin B12), pregnant, elderly, have had bariatric surgery or similar, or have a medical condition that affects how your body absorbs nutrients, you may benefit from a boost of certain vitamins and minerals.

For the rest of us, a multivitamin is unlikely to either improve our health, prevent disease, or give us a longer life, say the most recent studies. What's more, the studies found high-dose supplementation could be risky, with fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E and K more difficult for the body to excrete, potentially causing toxicity.

What's the harm in a multivitamin?

1. You may neglect to eat well in the belief that you're getting all the nutrients you need. Nutritional science is still progressing, which means that we probably haven't yet identified all the essential nutrients in whole foods. What we do know is that real foods contain fibre and other compounds like phytochemicals that are beneficial to our health. No supplement can come close to containing what a balanced diet offers.
2. Multivitamins can burn a hole in your pocket. Taking a multivitamin every day can become a sizeable expense, particularly if you choose those with added ingredients like

herbs, which usually cost more. If you do want to take a multivitamin, choose one that contains no more than the recommended daily intake of each nutrient. Keep the cost down by avoiding those with bonus ingredients that are likely to be in doses too small to have any effect.

3. Multivitamins rarely contain enough of each nutrient to make up for a true deficiency. Common deficiencies can be tested for by a health professional and remedied with individual supplements.
4. Multivitamins and minerals, particularly if they contain iron, can interact with some medications. They should not be taken at the same time as antacids, for example, thyroid medications or antibiotics. ✕



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April 7 is World Health Day. This is an initiative of the World Health Organisation, which asserts that countries that invest in universal healthcare make a 'sound investment in their human capital'. At present half the world's population lacks access to essential health services.

9 habits that **add decades**



“People who stuck to all five healthy habits saw their life expectancy increase an extra 12 years for men and 14 for women”

Want to live a longer life? Most of us do and according to at least one major study the habits we adopt play a significant role in the quantity and quality of years we live.

How much longer will you live if you adopt healthy habits? That's the question Harvard University researchers wanted to answer with a recent study of more than 123,000 volunteers.

The researchers calculated average life expectancy when people followed these habits:

1. Eating a healthy diet – one rich in fruit, vegetables and wholegrains and low in red meat, saturated fat and sugar.
2. Maintaining a body mass index (BMI) between 18.5 and 25.
3. Exercising for at least 30 minutes a day.
4. Drinking no more than one 150ml glass of wine a day for women, or two for men.
5. Not smoking.

The results surprised even the researchers.

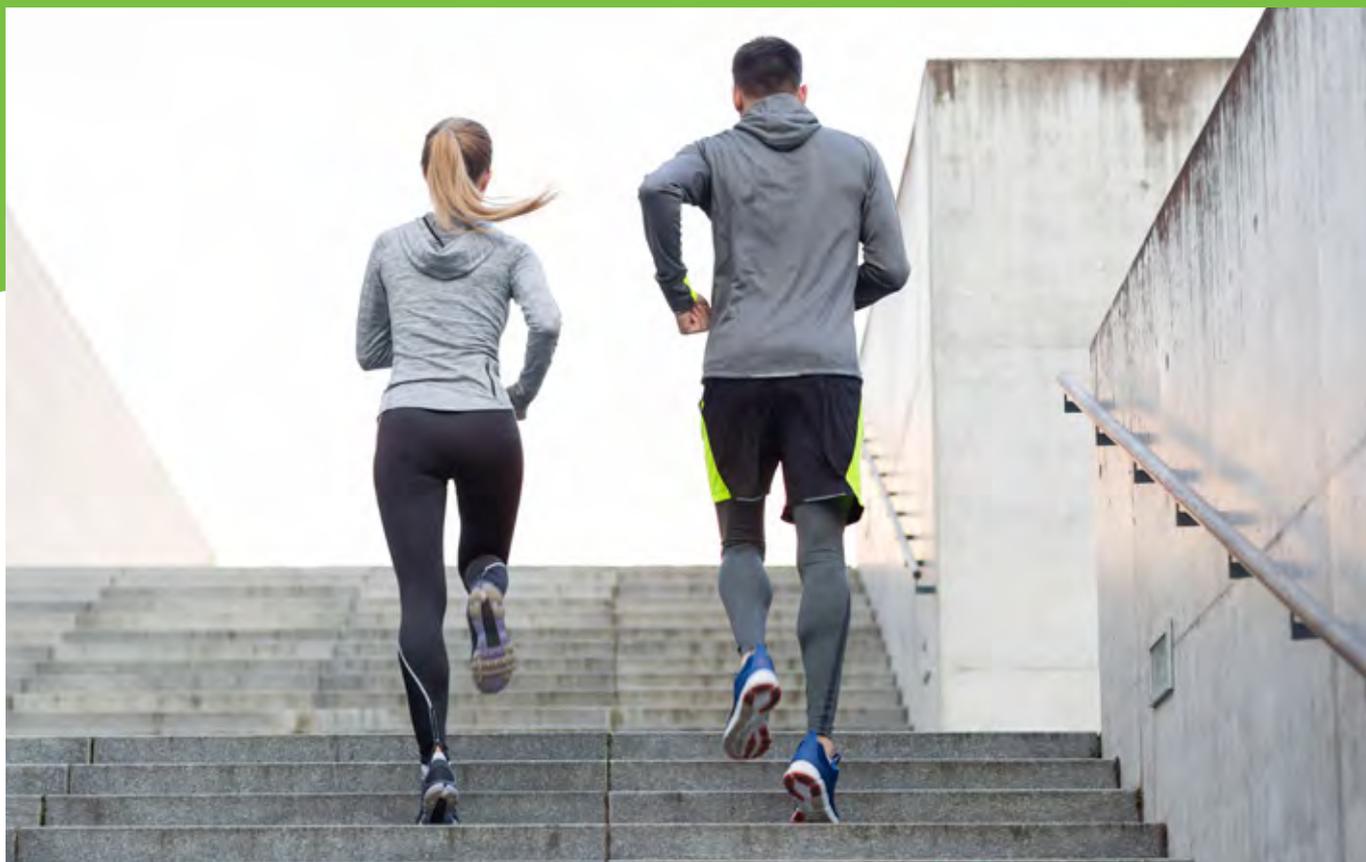
“When we embarked on this study I thought, of course, that people who adopted these habits would live longer. But the surprising thing was how huge the effect was,” said Meir Stampfer, a co-author on the study and professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health.

Compared with people who adopted none of them, those who stuck to all five healthy habits saw their life expectancy increase an extra 12 years for men and 14 for women.

What you can do every day

This study looked at five major lifestyle habits. But these are not the only ways that can add to the quality and length of your life. Here's what science says we should do every day:

1. **Eat lots of vegetables and fruit.** One UK study found people consuming the most fruit and vegetables were 33 per cent less likely to die of any cause.
2. **Choose wholegrains.** A 2019 University of Otago study found a link between higher intakes of dietary fibre and wholegrain foods and a reduced risk of a wide range of diseases including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and colorectal cancer.
3. **Walk.** According to a study of 334,000 people, just 20 minutes of walking a day cuts your risk of premature death by almost a third.
4. **Relax for 15 minutes.** We rarely give ourselves permission to relax, yet chronic stress can lead to premature ageing and an early death. Your relaxation time can include meditation, reading, yoga,



walking, playing music, gardening or sitting in a café with a coffee – any activity you enjoy that doesn't involve your phone, tablet or computer.

- 5. Floss your teeth.** Flossing helps prevent gum and periodontal disease, now known to increase your risk of heart disease, a leading cause of death. Scientists believe that inflammation caused by periodontal disease could be the reason why.
- 6. Chat to a friend or loved one.** A long-term study found that people who are more socially connected to family, friends and the community are happier, healthier and live longer lives.
- 7. Slap on the SPF.** Skin cancer is a very common cancer, especially in areas with high UV exposure. When the UV index is 3 or higher you should use sunscreen to protect your skin. Visit sunburnmap.com to check levels in your area.
- 8. Limit alcohol.** Tempted by that extra glass of wine? Every glass of wine or beer over the recommended limit will cut half an hour from the expected lifespan of a 40-year-old, found one study.
- 9. Sleep at least seven hours a night.** Getting enough sleep and being well rested improves your overall health. Insufficient sleep, research suggests, can increase your risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. ✕



Why healthy habits matter more than weight

We live in a society where weight equates with health, meaning that we are quick to assume a person is unhealthy if they are overweight.

A number of studies have found this is not necessarily the case.

One 2012 study published in *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* identified four habits linked to longevity: not smoking; exercising regularly; moderate alcohol intake; and eating five or more fruits and vegetables daily. Researchers found that adopting these habits was associated with a reduced risk of death that was equal for normal weight, overweight and obese people.

This is particularly important for anyone classified as 'overweight' or 'obese' and has struggled to maintain weight loss. The message is clear: adopting healthy lifestyle habits will be beneficial to your health and extend your life, no matter what you weigh.

Under the radar – adult **ADHD**

It's a condition that's associated with children but more and more adults are being diagnosed.

It's over 30 years since attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) was recognised as a condition. It's estimated that up to seven per cent of children worldwide may have the condition. Increasingly, though, many adults are being diagnosed who either slipped through the diagnostic net or didn't show typical symptoms of the condition as a child.

Symptoms may seem to appear or become more obvious in adulthood because of added responsibilities like family and career. With so many balls in the air to juggle, ADHD symptoms can become apparent as you struggle to cope with the demands.

Get the right help

As adults we're more likely to internalise how we feel and mask the symptoms. This may manifest as mood swings, difficulty getting along with others, problems holding down a job, substance-abuse issues, and a tendency to be irresponsible and make poor decisions. These can all lead to a misdiagnosis such as personality problems, anxiety or depression rather than ADHD.

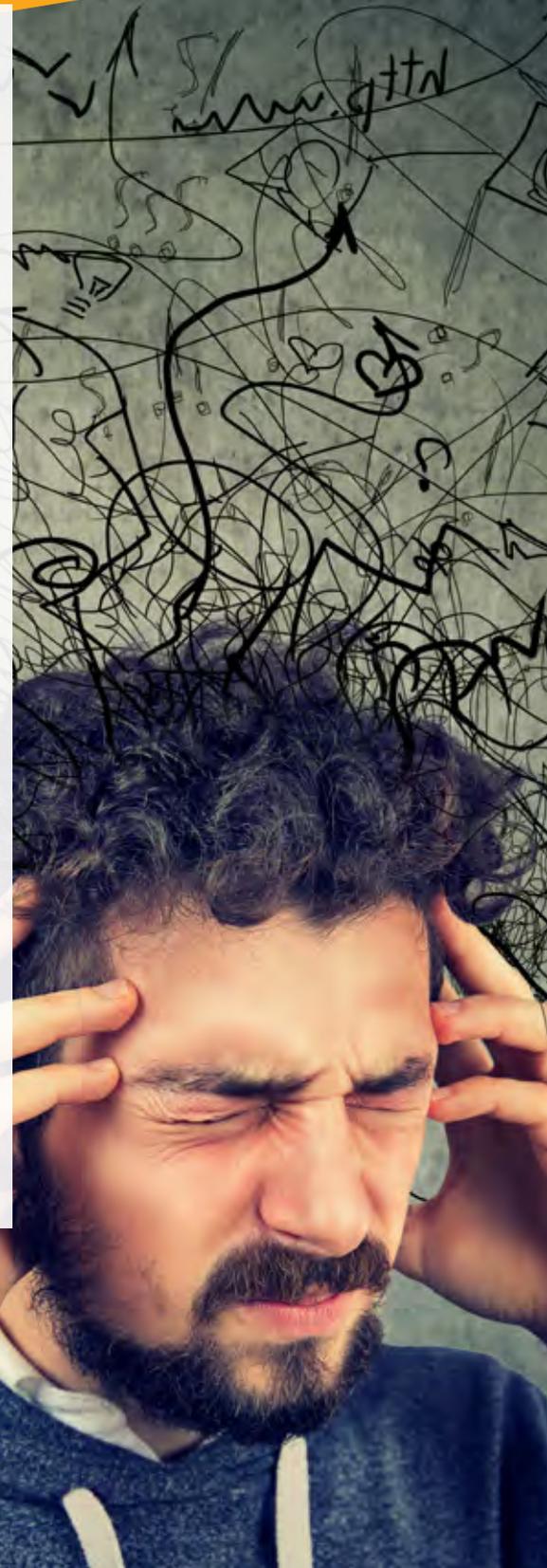
If you think you may have ADHD, a good place to start is your GP who can offer support and refer you to the right health professional to avoid the risk of misdiagnosis. ✕

Typical signs of ADHD

- **Being disorganised and having problems prioritising.**
- **Poor time management skills.**
- **Problems focusing on a task.**
- **Trouble multitasking.**
- **Excessive activity or restlessness.**
- **Low frustration tolerance.**

Forget the stereotype

You don't have to be bouncing off the walls or talking fast to have ADHD. Those symptoms do often exist but if you're a woman ADHD is more likely to show up as inattentiveness – getting distracted midway through reading an email, constantly flitting between the tasks on your to-do list or regularly losing things. In fact, women are more likely to remain undiagnosed as children because their inattention problems often are combined with daydreaming. Men tend to have more hyperactivity and behavioural problems, which are more noticeable during childhood.



The gentle art of saying no



Remind yourself on a daily basis that your self-worth does not depend on how much you do for other people.

Knowing what you don't want to do in life is just as important as knowing what you do want to do.

It's no surprise that so many of us struggle to say no. As children we're taught that that 'no' is off limits and it's usually met with a negative reaction from our parents or teachers. We learn to expect some kind of fall-out when we use the word, which can lead to a fear of rejection and a desire to please others.

First learn to let go

Remind yourself that as an adult you can trust yourself to know when to say no and that it's your right to do so. With a little practice it will become easier to turn down requests for favours or invitations that don't appeal to you. Practise in the mirror or with a friend until you feel more comfortable with giving a negative response.

Avoid making excuses

It might seem like an easy way out but when you say no quickly followed by an explanation, you leave yourself open to a

modified request. For example, if you say no to a dinner invitation because you're not keen on someone and to soften the blow tell them that you're too busy with work this week, they'll only ask you the following week. Then you'll be back in the same situation of having to turn them down but it will be even more awkward the second time around. Simply thank them for asking you but decline politely.

How to say no and keep your job

Saying no at work is sometimes necessary but it should be approached with caution. On the other hand, acknowledging when you're taking on too much and respectfully turning down work will lead to greater job fulfillment and productivity in the long term.

There's nothing wrong with exercising your right to say no at work; the trick is to do it in a constructive way. Don't flatly turn down a new task: first show an interest and ask questions that show you're making a considered decision. When it comes to saying no in the workplace it's important to offer a thorough, honest explanation and try to come up with an alternative solution that benefits both parties. ✕

The greatest love of all

The words 'love yourself' can make us squirm but the benefits are undeniable. There's plenty of research to support the idea that putting your own needs first and having a healthy sense of self-worth leads to a richer, more fulfilling life. Create a list of what you'd like more of in your life and what you'd like less of in the future. Start by introducing – even just a few minutes a day – an activity that you'd like to do more of, for example, reading a book, meditating, having a relaxing bath. Over time work to phase out what you'd like to do less off: grocery shopping (do it online), helping kids with homework (pay for a tutor), driving (get the whole family onto public transport). Change happens slowly but investing time in yourself is a worthwhile investment.

Be mindful of slips, trips and falls

It's easy enough to do. You're in a hurry, distracted by an incoming phone call or your mind is elsewhere. You don't notice the patch of water on the concrete floor and slip. The consequences can be serious, ranging from a bruise to a fracture.

Each year, slips, trips and falls result in thousands of preventable injuries in the workplace.

Slips occur when your foot loses traction with the ground surface. You may be wearing inappropriate footwear or walking on a surface that's highly polished, wet or greasy.

Trips happen when you catch your foot on an object or surface. People usually trip on low obstacles that are hard to spot – an uneven edge in flooring, a loose rug, open drawer, untidy tools or electrical cables – often in a poorly-lit area.

Falls can result from a slip or trip but many happen during falls from a low height – steps or stairs for instance, or falling into a hole or ditch.

3 steps to manage the risk

1 Notice the problem. Paying attention to your surroundings and taking your time is a

focus sometimes called mindfulness. But so often we veer from the matter at hand and in the workplace this can cause accidents. If your eyes are on your mobile or your mind is on an upcoming meeting, you are not fully attending to your environment. By practising mindfulness at work you're more likely to notice a trailing lead, open filing cabinet, discarded clutter or spilt water, all of which pose a risk to you and others.

2 Fix the problem. You might simply need to switch on a light, move a box out of the way, or close a drawer. Any hazards you can't fix you'll need to report.

3 Report the problem. Seen something that needs attending to? Spilt water or grease, unanchored rugs or mats, uneven walking surfaces, flooring that doesn't have traction, or uncovered cables. Hazards like this need to be addressed by a supervisor. ✕

Most common injuries

If you slip, trip or fall the most common injuries are

knee 20%



ankle 17%



back 13%



Ask an expert about ...

Sore heels

Q I wake up in the morning with pain in the heel and sole of my foot that gets easier as I walk. A friend told me it sounds like plantar fasciitis. What is this and how is it treated?

Physiotherapist Adam Crisp replies:

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammatory condition affecting the tissue connecting your heel and toes. Pain is often felt towards the heel or in the arch of the foot after a period of rest or inactivity, such as first thing in the morning or after a long drive.

It can be caused by a number of factors including prolonged periods on your feet, poor footwear, muscular weakness and restricted ankle mobility.

Luckily there are ways you can reduce your risk of developing this painful condition.

1. Ensure your footwear provides adequate support for the arch of your foot and fits comfortably. If you are on your feet a lot, aim to change your shoes every four to six months, or alternatively rotate with a second pair.

2. Stretch, particularly your calf muscles and your plantar fascia. Rolling your foot over a golf ball is also beneficial.

3. Keep your calf muscles strong. We often underestimate the importance of strong calf muscles in the prevention and management of plantar fasciitis.

4. Maintain a healthy weight and exercise routine. A sudden increase in weight or exercise intensity/frequency can cause plantar fasciitis symptoms.

5. Try rolling a frozen bottle of water under your arch for pain relief.

6. Finally, if your pain persists, see your local physiotherapist for a personalised treatment and exercise program.

**App
of the
month****Quapital**

Quapital combines saving with goal-setting. It allows you to take control of your spending and save money without even noticing. The tagline for this app is

“The banking app that makes it easy to fund your future – while taking care of your now”.

The beauty of this app is that you get to set your own rules. Have a few guilty pleasures? Set yourself a limit. Like a challenge? Set goals with friends who also have the app. Want to save money without raising a finger? Use their round-up rule to make all purchases even, and have the change go directly to your savings.

It's free from the App Store or Google Play.

Got a headache?

Dehydration is often the cause. The best way to rehydrate and beat the pain is to drink a 200-250ml glass of water every 15 to 20 minutes until the headache subsides. ✕

**Weigh it up**

It's estimated that 371 million people worldwide have diabetes. About half of these are undiagnosed cases. Are you at risk?

Risk factors include family history, low levels of physical activity, unhealthy eating habits, smoking, and high blood pressure, but being overweight or obese (especially around your waist) is the most significant risk factor of all: “Individuals who have fat around their middle are four to five times more likely to develop diabetes than those who don't,” says Professor Merlin Thomas, from Monash University. ✕

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**What a pain**

Do you suffer from chronic pain? Joining a pain support group in your local area can improve quality of life. You can google “Pain Management Support Groups” or [try this website](#) for ideas.

Listen up

We often think of hearing loss as a natural part of ageing. But researchers say that it is possible to prevent or delay age-related hearing loss. They recommend eating two or more servings of fish each week to modify your risk. Consumption of any type of fish (tuna, dark fish, light fish, or shellfish) is beneficial.

1 THING YOU CAN DO TODAY



Enjoy the ripple effect of giving thanks

Saying thank you is more than just good manners, it makes the world a better place.

From a young age we are taught to say please and thank you, but giving thanks can run much deeper than that. Mindfully thanking those around you for even everyday things such as cooking dinner, doing the laundry, or in a work setting, contributing ideas to a meeting, makes them feel valued. When their own efforts are appreciated, it encourages them to do the same for others, creating a ripple effect of positive feelings.

The flow-on effect of saying thank you

- You'll enjoy more fulfilling relationships because your loved ones feel appreciated.
- The person you're thanking will experience an increased sense of self-worth, which in turn triggers other positive behaviours that trickle down to others including yourself.
- You and the person receiving thanks will feel more positive in general, leading to a more fulfilling life that encourages generosity of spirit.

The big things in life

Consider acknowledging some of the people who have done things for you in the past including your parents, teachers, coaches etc. It's never too late to respect a person's contribution. Your appreciation of their past efforts might arrive at a time in their life when they need a boost. ✕

EAT SMARTER

Go dark

Yum, chocolate!

It can be tempting to go overboard and overindulge your sweet tooth. If your region celebrates Easter, you'll see chocolate eggs and bunnies start popping up in stores everywhere and who can resist? You're more likely to overindulge later if you try to ignore your cravings. Eating one or two chocolate eggs isn't going to do any harm but if you do tend to go all out, consider opting for dark instead of milk chocolate.

6 Reasons to go for dark

1. Chocolate with a cocoa content of 60 per cent or more offers health benefits such as antioxidants. The darker the chocolate, the greater the health benefits.
2. Chocolate is a rich source of antioxidant flavanols, which have been shown to help relax blood vessels, improving blood flow and lowering blood pressure. They also can increase insulin sensitivity, which can lower diabetes risk in the long term.
3. It contains less sugar and fat and more fibre so you'll eat less of it because it's more filling.
4. Milk chocolate is only 10 to 20 per cent cocoa and mainly consists of cocoa butter, fats and sugar.
5. It can lift your mood, thanks to its potential to boost feelgood brain chemicals like serotonin.
6. Cocoa is rich in magnesium so the darker the chocolate the more you're getting of this mineral, which is essential for good health including your bones, heart health, diabetes prevention and healthy muscle function. ✕



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