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**HEALTH & SAFETY  
NEWSLETTER**

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**August 2021**

## Why soda water may be **bad for your teeth**

**Regularly drinking soft drinks and other sugary drinks can lead to cavities and gum disease. But is fizzy water any better?**

We're told to brush twice a day, floss, avoid sugar and visit your dentist regularly. "Taking care of your teeth will ward off cavities and gum disease."

And with an estimated 2.3 billion people in the world suffering from tooth decay, it's a message we need to listen to.

Sugary, fizzy drinks, such as soft drinks and sports drinks are double trouble for our teeth. First, they contain sugar. Bacteria that live in your mouth feed on sugar and form acid which attacks the surface of your teeth. Over time, this can result in cavities.

Then there's the acid content of soft drinks. Dr Mikaela Chinotti from the Australian Dental Association says that even if a fizzy drink doesn't contain sugar it often contains phosphoric or citric acid. This lowers the pH

of the drink (making it more acidic) which can soften your tooth enamel, leading to damage.

### **What about my home-made soda water?**

Soda water is a better option than most soft drinks as it contains no sugar, but Dr Chinotti believes we shouldn't drink it every day.

"Soda water is also known as carbonated water," says Dr Chinotti. "It is created by dissolving carbon dioxide gas in water – this creates an acid known as carbonic acid. The carbonic acid causes the pH of the soda water to be lower than plain water, but it is not as low as fizzy soft drinks."

The American Dental Association agrees, saying that even though the acidity occurring in sparkling water is far less than what you'd find in a citrus juice or many soft

and sports drinks, they advise keeping any acidic drinks to mealtimes only.

### **Trust the tap**

It's boring, but your best options are tap water or milk. Most of us have access to fluoridated drinking water, which helps to protect and strengthen teeth. If your local tap water is unsuitable for drinking, bottled plain water is also a good option.

If you do drink fizzy drinks, or other acidic drinks such as hot water and lemon, kombucha or apple cider vinegar drinks, follow these with a glass of clear tap water or plain bottled water and avoid brushing your teeth for at least 30 minutes. Any form of acid will soften your tooth enamel and if you brush too soon you risk adding to the erosion. ✕



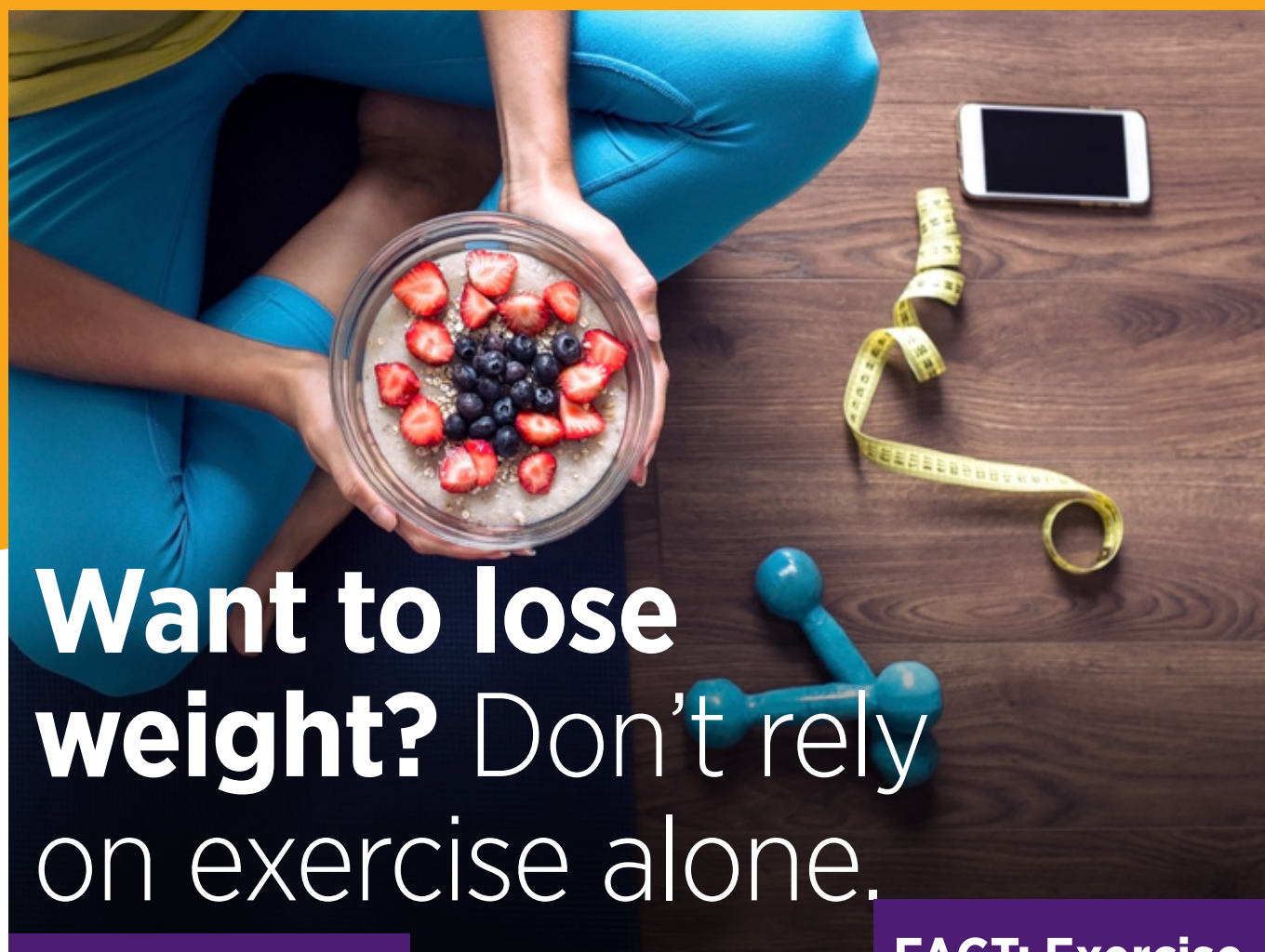
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### **Tip for improving your dental health.**

**Don't go to bed without brushing your teeth. Many of us neglect brushing our teeth at night. However, brushing before bed gets rid of the germs and plaque that accumulate throughout the day.**



# Want to lose weight? Don't rely on exercise alone.

**Move more and you can enjoy that extra slice of cake or second drink. Or so we've been led to believe. The evidence suggests that it's not quite that simple.**

Building up a sweat at the gym can feel good. You're on a quest to lose weight and your workout will burn up plenty of kilojoules. But this message is misleading, and it can cause your motivation to wane if your weight isn't decreasing as quickly as you'd hoped.

Here are some facts about exercise, and why it may not be the quick fix for weight loss that we once believed.

## **FACT: Exercise alone can't create a big energy deficit.**

The process should be fairly straightforward. Exercise more, burn kilojoules, develop an energy deficit and lose weight.

Except it isn't quite that simple.

While your food intake accounts for 100 per cent of the energy that goes into your body, exercise only burns off less than 10 to 30 per cent of it. Your basal metabolic rate (energy needed for basic body functions) accounts for 60 to 80 per cent of total energy expenditure.

If a 90-kilogram man added 60 minutes of medium-intensity running four days per week while keeping his kilojoule intake the same, and he did this for 30 days, he'd lose just over two kilograms, calculated Dr Kevin Hall of the US National Institutes of Health.

"If this person then decided to increase his food intake, or relax more to recover from the added activity, then even less weight would be lost," says Dr Hall.

If you are overweight or obese and trying to lose a large amount of weight, it would take lots of time, effort and willpower to make a real impact on kilojoule deficit through exercise alone.

## **FACT: You can't outrun a bad diet.**

For many years we've believed that lack of exercise and excess kilojoules are equally to blame for the current obesity crisis. Many researchers disagree, with some claiming in the *British Medical Journal* that "you can't outrun a bad diet." They blame our expanding waistlines primarily on our food choices, stressing that where the kilojoules come from is as important as the number.

Poor diet does more than add weight. According to *The Lancet* global burden of disease reports, poor diet is responsible for more disease than physical inactivity, alcohol and smoking combined. You can be active every day, but it won't negate the effects of an unhealthy diet. ❌

## **FACT: Exercise is the world's best drug.**

This doesn't mean you should give up exercise. There are many reasons to move more beyond weight loss. "It's probably the single best thing you can do, other than stopping smoking, to improve your health," says Dr Hall.

Upping your activity levels will reduce your risk for chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, dementia and certain cancers. It will support your immune system so you can better fight off illness; improve your sleep quality, fitness and mood; and protect against depression, anxiety and stress.

And while exercise may not help us lose a lot of weight on the scales unless we address diet too, studies have shown it's essential for keeping weight off and preventing weight regain.

As a bonus, regular exercise changes our dietary habits, which means we'll have an easier time making healthier food choices.





# Hope for people at risk of lung cancer

**For too long, people diagnosed with lung cancer have faced a double whammy of despair and distress. Firstly, lung cancer is one of the most fatal cancers. Secondly, there's still a stigma around lung cancer for people who smoked. Both of these problems are set to change over the coming years.**

According to the World Health Organization, lung cancer was the most common cause of cancer death, with 1.8 million deaths attributed to it in 2020.

If you're diagnosed with lung cancer, you have an 85% chance of dying within five years.

So two questions: why is it so fatal, and why aren't we talking about it more? Let's answer the first question first.

## Why lung cancer is so fatal

Surgery is still the best treatment for lung cancer, but many people aren't diagnosed until it's too late for surgery.

People can live with lung cancer for many years before they show any signs or symptoms, and screening for lung cancer is not yet commonplace.

## Why we're not talking about it

The truth is that 80% of lung cancer is caused by smoking. This has led to a stigma around the disease.

In Australia, for example, a 2020 survey by Cancer Australia showed that one in five

Australians believe that people with lung cancer have brought it on themselves.

CEO of Cancer Australia, Dorothy Keefe, says, "Many people presume that a patient's illness is due to smoking, and that they could have just chosen not to smoke. This is far from accurate.

"It's not the individual's fault they were sold these cigarettes...became addicted, it's Big Tobacco that is really the problem here. We don't stigmatise any other cancer, even if it might have been affected by going out in the sun or eating too much barbecued meat," says Keefe.

"This stigma could lead to delays in seeking treatment and this could impact long term outcomes."

## What about lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening is a test to see if there are any early signs of lung cancer in people who are not showing any symptoms. It allows lung cancer to be caught at an early stage, which greatly improves the chances of treating it successfully.

Some countries have started implementing government screening programs for patients deemed "high risk", but many countries do not. This is partly because lung cancer screening is not yet advanced.

The only recommended screening test for lung cancer is low-dose computed tomography (also called a low-dose CT scan). The problem is that false positives have created a lot of over-diagnosis and unnecessary interventions which can also cause harm.

This is changing. In countries like the UK, Canada and the UAE, programs are being developed to introduce or expand lung cancer screening, although the focus for many lung cancer campaigns still remains on quitting smoking.

In addition, a new lung cancer prediction tool has had some success. The tool uses a mathematical formula to predict risk, based on a combination of factors such as age, smoking intensity, duration and years quit, as well as body mass index and family history of lung cancer. ✕

## What does this mean for you?

If you have a history of heavy smoking, or you currently smoke, or you quit within the last 15 years, talk to your doctor about your risk of lung cancer and safe options for screening.

Remember, the number one way to reduce your risk of lung cancer is to never smoke. The second is to stop smoking.

**If you quit smoking, even after smoking for many years, you can significantly reduce your chances of developing lung cancer.**

In Australia and New Zealand, Daffodil Day in August is a time to donate to life-saving cancer research. Visit [www.daffodilday.com.au](http://www.daffodilday.com.au) or [www.daffodilday.org.nz](http://www.daffodilday.org.nz) to find out how. You can check for cancer charities in your local area if you would like to donate to your local organisation.



# Are you burnt out? Or just over it?

**Many of us feel burnt out at some point. We feel exhausted, disengaged and over-extended. We've hit the wall. But is that "burn-out"? And either way, what should you do about it?**

Since the pandemic, more of us are talking about burn-out than ever before. "Don't let yourself burn-out", we say to friends, without having any firm ideas on how to avoid it, or even what burn-out really is.

Burn-out isn't a medical diagnosis, but there is a scientific definition, and it has quite strict criteria.

## The official definition

Burn-out is defined in the ICD-11, the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases as an "occupational phenomenon" and not a medical condition:

"Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterised by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and

- reduced professional efficacy."

So how do you know if this applies to you? It turns out there's a test for that too.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was developed by Christina Maslach to define and measure burn-out. Although developed in 1981, it has been validated by extensive research over the 40 years since.

The MBI measures three dimensions of burn-out:

- emotional exhaustion
- depersonalisation, or loss of sense of self
- personal accomplishment, as in reduced success at work.

Michael Leiter, an organisational psychologist who co-authored *The Truth About Burnout* with Maslach, says many people fall into one of these categories, but not all.

It takes all three – exhaustion, cynicism and lack of efficacy – to be scientifically defined as burn-out.

## A warning signal, not a diagnosis

Maslach emphasises that the MBI is not intended for individuals to test if they're burnt out. It is for organisations and employers to see if their workplace environment needed adjusting.

"The scores should be used as warning

signals," says Maslach. "If there are negative scores, it doesn't mean the problem is the individual. It's what they're responding to. It's not about fixing the people. It's about fixing the job."

## Burn-out is a spectrum

Just because you don't qualify for all three criteria doesn't mean there's not a problem. You can be at any point along the burn-out spectrum. And unless you put actions in place, you could find yourself at true burn-out.

Maslach and Leiter have identified three criteria which show you're on your way to burn-out: overextended, ineffective and disengaged.

They say these criteria have definitely become more common since the pandemic. According to Maslach, before the pandemic, around 10 percent of employees met the definition for burn-out, but now it's closer to 20 percent.

## Can we blame the pandemic?

The jobs platform *Indeed* recently ran a survey on burn-out to see if rates had increased over the pandemic. They surveyed 1,500 US workers of different age groups, experience levels and industries and compared the findings against existing survey data from January 2020 — just before the pandemic struck the US.





Keep in mind that the people who answered the survey were talking about burn-out in general everyday terms, not in a scientific definition.

That said, more than half (52%) of respondents said they were feeling burnt out, and more than two-thirds (67%) believed it has worsened over the pandemic.

*Indeed* found many employees reported working longer hours since the pandemic, and with fewer boundaries between their work and personal lives.

More than half (53%) of virtual or work-from-home employees were working more hours now than they were in the office. Nearly one-third (31%) said they were working “much more” than before the pandemic.

The *Indeed* report said, “This data counters the myth that remote employees don’t work as hard or as much as those working in the office. Besides, technology that makes work accessible anytime, from anywhere, can virtually eliminate the boundaries between work and personal life.” ✕

## What to do about burn-out

If you notice some of the early symptoms of burn-out in yourself, what can you do to stop it escalating? Mayo Clinic recommends six steps:

- 1. Evaluate your options.** Talk with your supervisor and see if you can redefine expectations and priorities. For example, you could set goals for what must get done and what can wait.
- 2. Seek support.** Use your employee assistance program if you have one, and reach out to friends and loved ones for support.
- 3. Try a relaxing activity.** Explore stress-busters such as yoga or meditation. You can find many free sessions on YouTube to do wherever and whenever suits you.
- 4. Exercise.** Regular physical activity is proven to reduce stress.
- 5. Get some sleep.** Sleep restores wellbeing and helps protect your health.
- 6. Try mindfulness.** Focus on your breath going in and out, and become aware of what you’re sensing and feeling without interpretation or judgment. There are many free apps that can help with this.

## The five stages of burn-out

Winona State University identified the stages of burn-out.

### 1. Honeymoon phase

You may have experienced this when you took on a new role or task. It’s a feeling of high job satisfaction, commitment, energy, and creativity.

### 2. Balancing act

Then comes the onset of stress, and some days you handle the stress better than others. You notice some job dissatisfaction, trouble sleeping, fatigue and escapist activities (whatever these are for you, be it TV bingeing, drinking and so on).

### 3. Chronic symptoms

Stage 3 is marked by intensification of Stage 2, along with physical illness and possibly anger and depression.

### 4. Crisis

By stage 4, the symptoms have become critical.

You find yourself obsessing about work frustrations. You’re beset with self-doubt and you dream of ways to escape.

### 5. Enmeshment

The symptoms of burn-out are so embedded in your life that it’s manifested as a significant physical or emotional problem.

# Slips and trips lead to falls and injury

**You lose traction on a slippery floor and start to fall, hitting the ground with a thud. If you're lucky, you'll walk away with only your ego bruised. If you're not, you could be seriously injured.**

Slips, trips and falls are among the most common causes of serious injuries at work – second only to hazardous manual tasks. And you don't have to fall far. Falling as little as two metres can result in serious injury and lengthy amounts of time off work.

While the most common injuries are cuts, bruises, sprains, strains, fractures and dislocations, more serious injuries can also occur, and even death.

## What do we mean by slips, trips and falls?

**A slip:** is when your foot loses traction with the ground surface. This can be due to inappropriate footwear or walking on slippery surfaces that are highly polished, wet or greasy.

**A trip:** can occur when you catch your foot on an object or surface and lose your

balance. Most commonly, people trip on low obstacles that are difficult to spot, such as uneven edges in flooring, loose mats, open drawers, and poorly stored materials such as untidy tools or electrical cables.

**A fall:** can result from a slip or trip, although they can also occur from falling from low heights such as steps, stairs, and curbs, or falling into a hole, ditch or into water.

## How to prevent injury

- Report any inadequate or broken lighting, which can prevent someone noticing slip or trip hazards.
- Avoid and/or report trailing cables or other low obstacles such as open drawers, loose mats or carpet tiles, or wrinkled carpeting.
- Keep walking areas clear of clutter or obstructions.
- Clean up or report any contaminants immediately. Contaminants can be wet, such as water, oil or grease, or dry, such as dust, metal shavings, plastic bags or off-cuts.
- Wear appropriate footwear for your role. It should be suitable for your type of work and work environment, comfortable, and with an adequate non-slip sole and appropriate tread pattern.
- Always take your time and pay attention to where you are going.
- If you are carrying or pushing anything, make sure it doesn't prevent you from seeing any obstructions.



## Ask an expert about ...

**Q** Many of us are looking to find happiness. Can you have too much and are we looking in the right places?

**Psychotherapist Dr Russ Harris, teacher of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and author of the book *The Happiness Trap*, replies:**

First let's acknowledge there are two different meanings of happiness. The most common meaning is a sense of pleasure or contentment, which the ancient Greeks called 'hedemonia'. (This is where the word 'hedonism' comes from.)

Less commonly, happiness is defined as a sense of flourishing that arises from living an ethical and meaningful life, wisely guided by your core values. The ancient Greeks called this 'eudemonia'.

You can tell you're happy in this sense of

the word when you feel like you're in touch with your core values, behaving like the person you want to be, doing good in the world, caring and contributing, building meaningful relationships.

I don't think you can have too much happiness in the second meaning of the word. But in the first meaning, there can certainly be problems if you spend too much time, energy and money in pursuit of pleasure, and lose touch with living your values in the process.

Many folks have followed a lot of the pop psychology approaches to happiness, which are loaded with inaccurate and misleading advice about how to be happy – 'don't

worry, think positive, ask the universe for what you want, rehearse positive affirmations, look at the glass half full etc' – and they've found in the long term, this stuff just doesn't work.

This is a painful realisation, but it can then lead people to explore approaches to happiness with a solid research base behind them. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, ACT, is one such example. ACT helps people to build a rich and meaningful life while making room for all the feelings that go with it – both the pleasant and the painful ones.

For more information, visit [actmindfully.com.au](http://actmindfully.com.au) ✕

## App of the month

### Forest

Do you ever find yourself mindlessly scrolling through your phone, or constantly distracted by calls and messages? Forest is a productivity

app that helps you stay focused in the world of digital distractions, in a fun and easy way. Plant a tree when you need to stay focused. If you commit to your task without getting distracted, your tree grows; if you cannot resist the temptation to use your phone, your tree dies. Over time you will grow an entire forest from your focus and commitment. You can also earn credits by not using your mobile phone, and plant real trees around the world with your credits.

Available from the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

## News Bites



## Multitasking can lead to creativity

Multitasking has got itself a bad name. Studies have shown that trying to do too many things at once reduces performance. More recent research, however, has shown that despite the hindrance to performance, there's an upside to multitasking.

In one study, researchers found that students who multitasked prior to doing a creativity task were far more creative, generating significantly more ideas than those who didn't multitask. The results were repeated in further studies.

And after observing episodes of a reality cooking show, the researchers found a similar pattern. The more the chefs multitasked while preparing appetisers and entrees, the more creativity they showed when preparing dessert.

"Everybody multitasks, and we're made to feel bad if we admit to doing it," says lead researcher Shimul Melwani, an organisation behaviour professor at UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School. "This research gives us that little bit of flexibility to say, 'There are some tasks I have to be careful about, but there also are benefits to multitasking.'"

## When does junk food impact your health?

A muffin or cake with a coffee, or a savoury snack with a beer or wine. Many of us enjoy discretionary or junk foods as part of our diet and eating them occasionally isn't a problem. Eating them every day can be.

An Australian survey by the CSIRO found that nearly four out of five of those surveyed eat too many of these foods each day. In response, they have developed a free online Junk Food Analyser to help you identify if your junk food habit is a risk to your health and offer tips to help you manage it.

"This category of foods is our number one diet issue, regardless of who we are," said CSIRO research scientist, Dr Gilly Hendrie. Telling people to stop consuming these foods is not helpful or realistic, she says, as these foods are in our diet for enjoyment, for variety and part of our social life.

But it's easy to overconsume junk foods without realising it, and the kilojoules quickly add up. By asking questions about the quantities, frequency and variety of discretionary foods you eat, the Analyser allows you to see the cumulative effect and where you can cut back.

Find the Junk Food Analyser by visiting [totalwellbeingdiet.com/au/health-tools/quizzes](https://totalwellbeingdiet.com/au/health-tools/quizzes) ✕

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## Antiseptic not the best treatment for wounds

Do you apply an antiseptic to every minor scrape? You might want to think again, says [healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au). Antiseptic creams or solutions are not recommended for wounds you treat at home. Instead, thoroughly cleaning the site with water is enough to reduce the risk of infection.

According to the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, strong antiseptic products containing hydrogen peroxide or iodine can actually cause tissue damage. Antiseptic creams can be irritating to wounds and delay healing (and are sometimes painful).

Unless you've been specifically told to use them by a nurse or doctor, leave the antiseptic stuff in your medicine cabinet.



# 1

## THING YOU CAN DO TODAY



## Stop eating before you're full

Hunger is only one reason we eat. We also eat to enjoy the flavour of foods, to be social, and out of habit. That's why it's so easy to keep eating even when we're full.

Dan Buettner is a journalist famous for documenting the five Blue Zones of the world – the places where people live the longest, healthiest lives.

"The key to successful weight loss may be found halfway around the world in Okinawa, Japan," he says. Buettner describes how before every meal Okinawan elders repeat the phrase *hara hachi bu*, a term to remind them to stop eating when their stomachs are 80 per cent full.

"This cultural practice of calorie restriction and mindful eating is part of the reason that Okinawa has a higher percentage of centenarians than anywhere else in the world," says Buettner.

### How to feel satisfied

- 1. Before serving your food,** decide how much would make you feel full and put 80 per cent of that on your plate. Aim to feel satisfied and not hungry anymore, rather than full.
- 2. Focus on the food.** Turn off your TV, mobile and computer. You'll eat more slowly and eat less.
- 3. Slow down while eating,** to give your body time to register how much you've eaten.
- 4. Feel OK with leaving food behind.** If you find yourself mindlessly eating portions that are too big, start by leaving behind just one bite. Gradually increase this until you're comfortable with a portion that meets your hunger. ✕

## EAT SMARTER

### Chia seeds

Protein, omega-3s and calcium. Just three reasons you'll want to add chia seeds to your smoothies, your muesli, in baking and in desserts. This tiny black or white seed has exploded in popularity in recent years. Here's why.

Chia seeds:

- **Have an unusually high content of omega 3 fats.** That's great news if you're vegan, vegetarian or a non-fish eater (although the omega-3 fats found in seafood are more readily used by the body than those found in chia seeds). The best way to increase blood levels of omega-3 fats is to grind the chia seeds before eating.
- **Are high in protein compared to most plants.** Chia seeds have a good balance of essential amino acids, which means your body can make good use of their protein content.
- **Contain lots of dietary fibre.** Chia seeds are 30 per cent fibre by weight, and are particularly high in soluble fibre, which is why they form a gel when liquid is added.
- **Can help build your bones.** Just three tablespoons of chia seeds have as much calcium as a glass of milk (although it may not be so readily absorbed). They are considered an excellent source of calcium for people who don't eat dairy, including anyone who is lactose intolerant or vegan.

For ideas on cooking with chia visit [thechiaco.com/au/recipes/](https://thechiaco.com/au/recipes/)



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