

## Keeping fit and healthy

There are many things you can do to keep healthy and prevent disease.

A healthy diet and physical activity are important for everyone, and help prevent heart disease, [diabetes](#) and some [reproductive health](#) problems.

## Physical activity and heart health

After cigarette smoking, physical inactivity is the most important factor you can change to lower your risk of chronic disease, including some cancers.

However, less than half of the Australian population do enough exercise to maintain good health. It's recommended that you do at least 30 minutes of activity at least five days per week.

Research shows more physical activity throughout life:

- reduces the likelihood of early death caused by [cardiovascular disease](#)
- reduces the number of new cases of cardiovascular disease and type 2 [diabetes](#)
- lowers body weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- reduces the risk of, and helps to recover from, some cancers.

People who are not active are almost twice as likely to die from a heart attack compared to those who are active.

## Is physical activity linked to erectile dysfunction?

Medical research shows links between heart health and male reproductive health—a good reason for you to increase your fitness level.

Many research studies show that there are links between [erectile dysfunction](#) and heart disease. In fact, erectile dysfunction can be an early warning sign for future heart disease. If you have erectile dysfunction, you have a similar risk of having a heart attack to someone with a family history of heart disease or a cigarette smoker, especially if you're young.

Erectile dysfunction and heart disease have some of the same causes and risk factors, including being physically inactive.

## Is physical activity linked to prostate cancer?

Research hasn't shown a link between low levels of physical activity and [prostate cancer](#) in general, but some studies have shown that very high levels of physical activity might protect against aggressive forms of prostate cancer (cancers that spread quickly). We still need to do more research to better understand these possible links.

Many studies show that including physical activity during or after treatment for prostate cancer can help improve quality of life. Men treated with [testosterone](#) deprivation therapy for their prostate cancer have a higher chance of heart disease, [diabetes](#) and

[osteoporosis](#). Physical activity can help to lower the chance of these conditions. Physical activity might also reduce side-effects of treatment, as well as depression and anxiety in prostate cancer survivors.

## Is physical activity linked to other prostate diseases?

Some studies have shown a link between increasing levels of physical activity and lower rates of [benign prostate enlargement \(BPH\)](#) or irritating and painful [urinary symptoms](#) (LUTS, or lower urinary tract symptoms). Physical activity might help prevent these prostate problems.

## Is diet and physical activity linked to testosterone levels or male infertility?

If you're overweight, you're more likely to have [low testosterone](#) levels and [erectile dysfunction](#), and are likely to be less fertile than those who fall within an average weight range. Being overweight also increases the chance of developing type 2 [diabetes](#) (sometimes called adult-onset diabetes). If you have type 2 diabetes, you're about twice as likely to have erectile dysfunction as someone without diabetes.

If you're overweight, with or without diabetes, losing weight could help your reproductive health. However, not putting on weight in the first place is the best way to lower your chance of reproductive health problems. Along with changes to your diet, physical activity is very important in either keeping a healthy weight or losing weight.

## Can diet and physical activity help men with depression or anxiety and reproductive health problems?

Living with a reproductive health problem can affect you mentally as well as physically. It can have an effect on your relationships, quality of life and social interactions. There are many ways for you to get help with these problems, including speaking to professionals. Improving your diet and doing physical activity can also help with depression and anxiety by improving your mood.

## How can I include physical activity in my daily life?

Doing any physical activity is better than doing none, so it's a good idea to be active every day in as many ways as you can. Ways to increase your daily physical activity:

- Try to do at least 30 minutes of activity at least 5 days per week
- Walk or cycle instead of using the car
- Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Invite friends, family and work colleagues to be active with you.

### Do you need more help?

[Physical activity and exercise](#)

[How to start exercising](#)

[Fitness Australia](#)