

# YOUR HEALTH FIRST




THE HEALTH OF THOSE  
WE LOVE STARTS WITH US.

**Jean Hailes for Women's Health provides trusted and easy-to-understand information to help you make decisions about your health.**

We use the latest research to provide information and resources on a range of topics:

- bladder and bowel
- bone health
- breast health
- cardiovascular health
- endometriosis
- fertility and pregnancy
- health checks
- healthy living
- Indigenous health
- menopause
- mental and emotional health
- natural therapies and supplements
- polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- periods
- sex and sexual health
- vulva, vagina, ovaries and uterus.

Visit [jeanhailes.org.au](http://jeanhailes.org.au):

-  for practical ideas to improve your health
-  for free resources including videos, podcasts and recipes
-  to sign up for our magazine and email updates

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#### Get social with us



**Disclaimer** This resource is designed to be informative and educational. It is not intended to provide specific medical advice, or replace advice from your health practitioner.

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Jean Hailes for Women's Health gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government.





**"At Jean Hailes, we believe in supporting women to live life to the fullest."**

## IT'S TIME TO PUT OUR OWN GOOD HEALTH FIRST

Thank you for taking the time to read this special fold-out keepsake. It's our gift to you.

We know many women often find it hard to make the time to better care for their health, so in these pages you'll find a few facts and tips that we encourage you to use in your day-to-day life. The topics covered are based on responses from more than 10,000 women all over Australia who took part in our national survey, and told us their top five health concerns.

At Jean Hailes, we believe in supporting women to live life to the fullest. As our namesake, Jean Hailes, said "If a woman is in good health, her family, her community and the society around her also benefit." In other words – the health of those we love starts with us.

Included in this fold-out is a stunning original artwork from talented Australian artist Belinda Suzette. Please enjoy it with our best wishes.

### Dr Helen Brown

Head of Translation, Education and Communication  
**Jean Hailes for Women's Health**



### BREATHE BY BELINDA SUZETTE

*Feet on the ground,  
Head in the clouds,  
I stand in the sun and breathe.*

Belinda Suzette is an Australian cross-disciplinary folk artist, illustrator and designer, inspired by culture and celebration.

She is also a teacher with a focus on community engagement, cultural development and creative practices.

# TAKING TIME



Time is precious. But one easy way to waste it is by not living 'in the now'.

Do you slowly savour every sip of a delicious cup of tea, or stop to breathe in the beauty of a still, crisp morning? We can spend so much time overthinking what has happened in the past, or worrying about the future, that we can often forget to appreciate or enjoy the moment.

One way to overcome this is with **mindfulness**.

Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment without judgment. It teaches us how to use our minds to focus on the 'here and now' and to work out whether the stress we feel is due to things that are actually present or in our imagination. Imagining causes of stress that aren't real can take a toll on both our mental and physical health.

Mindfulness teaches us to focus on the things that are most helpful in our lives. Studies show it can help people to deal with negative experiences such as:

- pain
- stress
- sleep problems
- anxiety and depression
- frequent worrying

Mindfulness can improve our overall wellbeing, help with our emotional balance, and increase our compassion for ourselves and others.

#### SUGGESTION BOX

**Is it time you gave mindfulness a try? Anyone can do it, and learn to experience life as it happens. Techniques for practising mindfulness include:**

- 1 **Meditation and focused breathing**
- 2 **Mindful eating and drinking, free from distractions such as work, screens or chatter**
- 3 **Resisting the urge to fight unwanted thoughts – learning to simply notice them, but not react to them.**



Listen to a podcast



Watch a video



Read an article



# TIME TO LOVE YOUR BONES

**Bones** are like the framework of a building; they help provide shape and, if strong, provide protection throughout our lives.

Our bones are living tissue that continually changes. New bone is made as old bone tissue is broken down. As children and young adults, our bodies make new bone faster than it breaks down. By about the age of 30, we reach what is called 'peak bone mass', which is when our bones are strongest and most dense.

From then on, we lose slightly more bone than we gain, making them less dense. That's why it is important to look after our bones; by having plenty of calcium in our diet, exercising, and getting a small amount of sunshine every day. If we don't, we can increase our risk of developing osteoporosis, a condition that makes bones more fragile.

Women are more likely to get osteoporosis than men for two reasons:

- Women tend to have smaller, thinner bones than men
- The hormone oestrogen (which protects bone) decreases rapidly when women reach menopause. This can contribute to low bone density, and is why the risk of osteoporosis increases as women reach menopause.

## SUGGESTION BOX

**Get ready to be that woman out playing golf, tennis and swimming in your older age. It's never too early to start looking after your bones – the time is now! How?**

- 1 Calcium – milk, yoghurt, cheese, salmon, sardines and almonds are just some sources of calcium. Include plenty in your diet every day
- 2 Exercise – aerobic exercise plus strength/resistance training is excellent for bone health. Jogging, boxing, playing, lifting
- 3 Hello sunshine – 5-10 minutes walking mid-morning aids vitamin D production, which helps with strong bones.



Find out more about bone health

# TIME TO MOVE

Does the word 'exercise' fill your mind with images of jogging shoes and sweaty gyms – and maybe a little fear? Well, try these words instead – 'physical activity'.

**Physical activity** simply means getting your body moving. It doesn't mean you have to start training for a marathon, or even play sport. It's great if you do, but any activity you do through the course of your normal day, no matter how small, can help your health. Those little changes can really add up.

How little? Use the stairs instead of the lift. Walk to your colleague's desk to ask a question instead of emailing or calling. Get off the bus one stop early, and walk a little bit further to work.

It doesn't matter what age you are, or how fit – everyone can lead active lives. Getting active can help reduce your risk of developing chronic problems such as:

- heart disease
- type 2 diabetes
- unhealthy weight gain
- anxiety and/or depression
- some cancers

## SUGGESTION BOX

**How much? Every bit of physical activity helps, but to gain these health benefits, the Australian Government recommends adults get active on most, preferably all, days of the week. In time, your week could look like this:**

### MODERATE

150 to 300 minutes  
(2 ½ to 5 hours) of  
moderate intensity  
physical activity  
each week

or

### VIGOROUS

75 to 150 minutes  
(1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours)  
of vigorous intensity  
physical activity  
each week

or

### COMBO

an equivalent  
combination of  
both moderate and  
vigorous activities  
each week



Watch a video



Ideas on how you can be more active



# TICKER TIME

A healthy **heart** is the engine room of the body – and what an amazing engine it is. The average heart beats over 100,000 times every day as it moves blood and oxygen around the body, keeping everything ticking over as it should. It's responsible for just about everything that gives our bodies life.

But did you know that coronary heart disease is the number-one killer of women in Australia? Many women are surprised to hear this – in fact, heart disease is responsible for FOUR times the number of deaths of women in our country than breast cancer.

Did you also know that cardiovascular disease – which includes not just heart disease, but stroke, heart attack and deep vein thrombosis – can look very different in women to men? In women, heart disease:

- can develop symptoms at a much later stage of illness than men
- can show vague or non-specific symptoms, such as breathlessness, nausea or back pain
- can be less accurately detected in diagnostic tests than it can in men.

## SUGGESTION BOX



**There are some risk factors for heart disease you cannot change, such as your age and family history. But there are many more factors within your control, so the time for your heart health is now! What can you do to help your heart?**

- 1 Don't smoke – at all
- 2 Achieve and/or maintain a healthy weight with a healthy diet and physical activity
- 3 Know your numbers. Get your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar checked regularly
- 4 Look after your mental health. If you need help to manage stress, anxiety or depression, ask your doctor.



Find out more about cardiovascular health



# CRAVING PILLOW TIME

As adults, we need about 7-9 hours of **sleep** per day. They're the numbers, but what's just as important is the quality of sleep. What is known as 'healthy' sleep includes falling asleep easily, getting at least 4 hours of deep slumber, being able to fall back asleep easily if woken, and waking up feeling refreshed.

We know we feel better after having a good night's sleep, but what does it actually do for our body? A whole lot of good, including:

- helping the cells of our body to regenerate (important for skin and muscles)
- aiding hormone production (from our reproductive hormones such as oestrogen to our 'happy hormones' such as serotonin), making us less sensitive to pain
- helping with weight management
- improving our daytime function (including memory, alertness and safety).

We also know that, for about 1.7 million adults in Australia, getting a good night's sleep can be easier said than done. Changes in sleeping patterns, or sleep habits that can negatively affect health, are called sleep disorders. Common sleep disorders include insomnia, snoring, sleep apnoea, teeth grinding, sleepwalking and night terrors.

## SUGGESTION BOX



**Bedtime is ideally your time for relaxing and recharging, not tossing and turning. You can improve your chances of getting 'healthy' sleep. How?**

- 1 Try to go to bed at a similar time each night. Spend the hour before bedtime winding down; read a book, have a bath
- 2 If you are not asleep after 20 minutes in bed, get up until you feel tired again, then go back to bed
- 3 Remove electronic devices – phones, computers, television – from the bedroom.



Find out more about sleep and fatigue