



“Doctor, Doctor, Give me the News”

In a previous newsletter, I mentioned that our fellow Qld veteran, Dr Noel Brown, listed the three crucial health areas that we need to be giving attention to, as we get older:

- **Cardiovascular Health** (blood pressure, weight management, exercise)
- **Prostate Cancer** “the third most common cause of cancer death” (Cancer Council)
- **Bowel Cancers** – have you sourced your bowel cancer kit yet?

In the resources section I list a number of opportunities for us to manage our physical health better.

This Month’s Peer Support Resources

Veteran’s Health Checklist

Are you having an annual health check-up? This should include prostate, blood pressure, skin cancer check, bowel cancer (faecal occult blood test), cholesterol and glucose levels, cardio-vascular test, and mental health.

Dr. Noel provided the following information.



Enlarged Prostate

Nearly every man over 45 years of age has some degree of prostate enlargement, which is called *benign hypertrophy*. This condition is not dangerous but tends to make passing urine difficult.

Symptoms include – frequent urination, especially at night; difficulty starting a stream; a need to urinate again after 20 minutes.

Symptoms can be mitigated by reduction in alcohol and fluids at night.

Treatment includes drugs to improve urine flow, and surgical removal of the prostate.



Coronary Heart Disease

One in three deaths in Australia is due to Coronary Heart Disease – sudden heart attack or blocked coronary arteries leading to angina or heart failure.

There are well identified risk factors associated with this condition –

- High blood pressure – lower level of BP (*diastolic*) should be below 90
- Smoking – coronary heart disease is 70% higher in smokers!
- High Cholesterol – related to intake of saturated fats. Levels below 5.5 are good.
- Diabetes – (see following section)
- Overweight & lack of exercise
- Stress – what are the stress factors in your life? Modify these where possible and use relaxation techniques
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Family history of heart disease

Have you done a cardiac stress test? Ask your Doctor.



High Blood Pressure



Understanding blood pressure is simple – the higher the blood pressure the greater the risk. There are often no identifiable causes, and often no symptoms.

The condition is identified by regular checkups, and is very manageable by lifestyle changes.

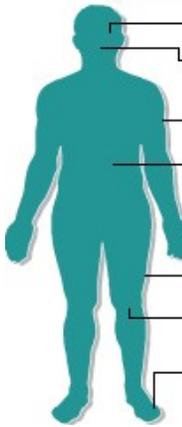
The risks of unchecked high BP are significant – high possibility of stroke or heart attack.

SELF HELP

- Diet – nutritious low-salt food
- Salt – reduce salt intake
- Weight – achieve your ideal weight
- Alcohol – reduce intake
- Stress – use relaxation to reduce
- Exercise – regular moderate exercise
- Smoking – please stop!



Diabetes



- Blurry vision
- Increased thirst or the need to urinate
- Feeling tired or ill
- Recurring skin, gum, or bladder infections
- Dry, itchy skin
- Unexpected weight loss
- Slow-healing cuts or bruises
- Loss of feeling in the feet or tingling feet

Diabetes is a condition where there is too much sugar in the blood caused by a lack of insulin, which controls the levels of glucose in the body. There are two types of diabetes:

Type 1 = insulin dependent diabetes. This is a physical deficiency of insulin caused by a malfunction of the pancreas, and is usually picked up in early life. This is controlled by insulin injections.

Type 2 = non-insulin dependent diabetes, also known as maturity-onset diabetes, because the sugar imbalance is caused by lifestyle and diet issues. This can usually be controlled by proper diet, but sometimes insulin is also required.



Bowel Cancer

Colorectal cancers are a significant health factor today, but are also easily diagnosed and effectively treated if caught early. Bowel cancer is a malignant growth that develops most commonly in the lining of the large bowel, mostly from tiny growths called 'polyps'. Cancer can narrow and block the bowel or cause bleeding. In more advanced cases, the cancer can spread beyond the bowel to other organs.



What can I Do about Bowel Cancer?

Faecal Occult Blood Test: Obtainable from your pharmacist or GP. Often very small



amounts of blood, invisible to the naked eye, leak from intestinal growths and pass into bowel movements before any symptoms are noticed. The test involves placing small samples of toilet water or stool on a special card and mailing them to a pathology laboratory for analysis. If blood is detected, you should contact your GP immediately to discuss the result.

Screening every 1-2 years from age 50 could save your life.

See <https://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org/> for comprehensive information

Veteran Regards,
Pierre van Blommestein



Veteran Pierre van Blommestein
SAMVOA
Welfare Officer