



Emotional wellbeing

Healthy ageing

As you get older, it's important to look after your emotional wellbeing as well as your physical health.

Lots of things can affect your emotional wellbeing as you get older. You may be affected by one major life change or many issues that build up over time.

There are many practical things you can do to have good mental health.

Stay active

Staying active as you get older has many benefits. Research shows that regular physical activity can improve mental and emotional health, social wellbeing and brain health.

You're more likely to make exercise part of your routine if you:

- do activities you enjoy (e.g. walking, dancing, yoga)
- do activities that suit your abilities
- exercise in a group or with friends
- have a weekly routine of activities and schedule them in your calendar.

Eat well

It's important to eat a variety of nutritious foods throughout your life, but certain nutrients, such as calcium and protein, are more important as you get older.

There are many health benefits associated with the Mediterranean diet. This diet includes lots of vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils and nuts. It also includes whole grains (e.g. whole-wheat bread and brown rice) plus extra virgin olive oil, fish and seafood. Research shows this diet promotes healthy ageing and increases life expectancy.

Sleep well

Sleep is important for good health and wellbeing throughout your life.

The most important thing you can do to improve your sleep is try not to worry about it. When you try too hard to sleep, it can make your sleep worse.

You can also:

- limit caffeine
- limit alcohol
- avoid eating late at night
- have consistent day and evening routines
- do regular physical activity.

Practise relaxation and mindfulness

Relaxation and mindfulness techniques can slow down your heart and breathing rates, reduce blood pressure and decrease muscle tension. There are many different relaxation classes and apps to explore. You might have to try a few before you find one that suits you.

For more information about different techniques like deep breathing, mindfulness, meditation and yoga, visit www.jh.today/managing-anxiety.

Connect with others

Staying connected to people in your family, friendship groups and community is good for your health and wellbeing.

As you get older it can be hard to maintain and build new relationships. But there are many things you can do to stay socially connected. For example:

- find a local community group that does activities you like
- learn a new sport
- enrol in a short course
- volunteer in your local area
- invite people over for regular catch-ups
- spend time with people who make you laugh, or listen to funny podcasts
- start a new hobby.

See a counsellor or psychologist

As you age, you may face challenges that impact your mental health. For example, health problems, loss of independence, the loss of loved ones and loneliness.

These challenges can make you feel worried, sad, anxious or even depressed.

If you are concerned about your mental health, talk to your doctor. They might suggest you see a psychologist or get help from other professionals such as counsellors.

You can also find useful information and supports on websites such as Grief Australia and Beyond Blue.

When to see your doctor

Talk to your doctor if you haven't been feeling yourself and your mental health stops you from doing things you normally do. They can refer you to local support services or other health providers to get the help you need.

For more information, resources and references, visit jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/healthy-ageing.



Phone 03 9453 8999
jeanhailes.org.au

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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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