

WINTER 2012 ISSUE: HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

# ADVANCING HEALTHCARE

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# WELCOME



*"At Bupa, we are committed to making healthier choices easier for all Australians."*

It is a pleasure to be editing my first issue of Advancing Healthcare as Bupa's new Chief Medical Officer and to be back in Australia after 15 years overseas. Early in my career as a practising GP in Sydney, I developed an interest in helping empower Australians to better understand their health and make better health choices – both areas of fundamental importance to Bupa.

In this edition of Advancing Healthcare, we look at the issue of supporting healthy food choices and showcase some of the programs and initiatives Bupa has embarked on in partnership with some of Australia's leading health and research organisations to empower Australians to help achieve their best of health.

A recent study by the Cancer Council<sup>1</sup> has predicted that cancer rates will increase by almost 60 per cent between 2007 and 2025 and that a quarter of these cancers could be prevented through improvements in diet and physical activity.

We know from our own research that Australians are actively seeking more information about the food they eat. Bupa's recent HealthWatch Survey<sup>2</sup> found that almost three out of four (73%) adults claim to read food labels, with 36 per cent reading them most or all of the time, and more than half (56%) make food choices based on labels.

The launch earlier this year of the FoodSwitch app, the result of a collaboration between Bupa and The George Institute for Global Health, aims to further support consumers to better understand food labels and make informed food choices. This is just one example of the way Bupa works in partnership with leading Australian health organisations to help educate, empower and motivate Australians to make healthier choices.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Paul Bates, Chief Medical Officer, Bupa

*"Almost three out of four (73%) Australians have taken measures to eat better in the last 12 months and almost two-thirds (63%) report having tried to exercise more."*

*"While eating better and exercising more were Australians' most popular health goals, only 51 per cent and 42 per cent respectively had maintained the improvement longer than three months."*<sup>2</sup>

# ABOUT BUPA

Bupa is a leading healthcare organisation, providing health cover to more than three million Australians.

We also offer aged care services with Bupa Aged Care, health coaching with Bupa Health Dialog, corporate wellness services with Peak Health Management and optical care with Blink Optical.

We provide our members with the assurance of being part of an international family – the Bupa Group – that reinvests its profits to provide better services and to ensure high quality healthcare remains affordable.

At Bupa, we exist to help our members live longer healthier, happier lives.

**BUPA. FIND A HEALTHIER YOU.**

# SHOP SMARTER, EAT BETTER

A revolutionary Australian app is helping shoppers to make healthier food choices and reduce their risk of dying early from two of the nation's biggest killers – heart attack and stroke.

By scanning the barcode of packaged foods, the FoodSwitch app provides immediate, easy-to-understand information on a product's total fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt content using a traffic-light style, colour-coded system. To encourage healthy food choices, the app also suggests healthier options of the type of food that has been scanned.

The result of a partnership between The George Institute for Global Health and Bupa, FoodSwitch has proven a big hit with consumers, with the app being downloaded more than 170,000 times in its first four months. More than 700 comments of thanks and suggestions for improvement have been received from keen users, resulting in a further 8,500 items being added to the FoodSwitch database.

The app has also attracted positive comment from Australia's health experts, including the National Heart Foundation and the Obesity Policy Coalition. CHOICE magazine also congratulated Bupa and The George Institute on the app, saying, "FoodSwitch has the potential to help many consumers who want to make healthier decisions but find it difficult to navigate the complex information on food labels."

 Visit [bupa.com.au/foodswitch](http://bupa.com.au/foodswitch) to download FoodSwitch

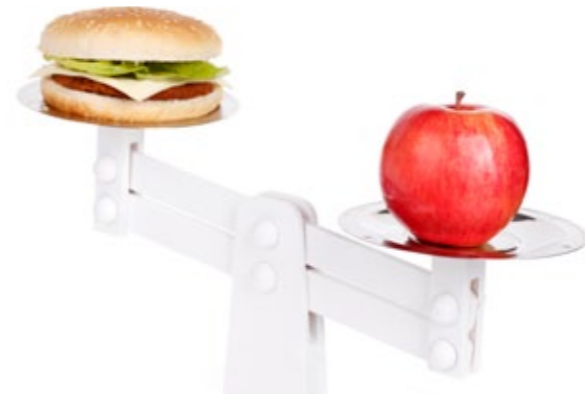


## DEBUNKING JUNK FOOD ADVERTISING

In Australia, despite strong community support for tighter restrictions on food advertising, children and parents are regularly exposed to food industry marketing and promotions aimed at encouraging the purchase and consumption of unhealthy foods.

A new Cancer Council Victoria study in partnership with the Bupa Health Foundation aims to explore the effects of running advertisements that encourage nutritional awareness and healthy food choices and that expose misleading promotions and unsubstantiated health claims.

“Our research shows that parents want their kids to eat healthily but they are pressed for time, have budget constraints and find all the different nutrition messages quite confusing,” said Cancer Council Victoria’s Dr Helen Dixon. “With the alarming rise in the prevalence of childhood obesity, and the serious chronic disease risks associated with that, anything we can do to support good food choices will be a constructive contribution.”



*“Around one in four (26%) overweight adult Australians and one in ten (11%) of those obese say they are happy with their weight. More than a quarter (26%) of obese Australians surveyed consider themselves to be fairly to very healthy.”<sup>2</sup>*

## IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

Australia’s leading child health experts are working together on a groundbreaking initiative to improve the wellbeing and life opportunities of young Australians (0-24 years).

The Nest Project is being facilitated by the Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY) in collaboration with principal partner, the Bupa Health Foundation. The Nest Project’s aim is to develop Australia’s first national action plan for child and youth wellbeing.

During 2012, there will be a comprehensive review of the evidence to decide on, and measure, what actions are most likely to shape the best possible future for young Australians, and a national public consultation to hear the views of young Australians and their families. The findings will inform the action plan that will be discussed at a National Summit in November 2012.

“The Nest Project is an exciting and highly promising initiative to get much-needed action on child and youth wellbeing in Australia,” said Dr Christine Bennett, Chair of the Bupa Health Foundation steering committee.



Visit [thenestproject.org.au](http://thenestproject.org.au) for further information, including how to get involved in this exciting initiative.

## HEALTHY INNINGS FOR CRICKET FANS

During summer, the sound of willow hitting leather can be heard around the country as the cricket season gets underway. A new partnership between Bupa and Cricket Australia aims to tap into Australia’s love affair with the game to help promote the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle.



“Health, sport and physical activity are a logical mix,” explains James Sullivan, Cricket Australia’s Chief Executive Officer, “Cricket Australia and Bupa objectives are closely aligned, with each being committed to the promotion of healthy lifestyles.”

As Cricket Australia’s official health partner, Bupa is working closely with the cricketing body to develop a program of national and community level activities to promote the long-term health benefits of physical activity and exercise. This includes the Bupa Healthy Innings channel on Cricket Australia’s website, featuring online health videos on nutrition, injury prevention, physical activity and skills development, and links to Bupa’s Online Health Assessment tool.

Cricket Australia is also getting behind the Bupa Family Challenge that aims to encourage families to develop healthy habits. Developed by Life Education, a long-term partner of Bupa, the Challenge is being promoted to around 3,200 schools nationally.



For further information, visit [cricket.com.au](http://cricket.com.au) and [bupafamilychallenge.com.au](http://bupafamilychallenge.com.au)

## INSPIRING A NEW GENERATION OF HEALTHY COOKS

With one in four Australian children overweight or obese, getting children interested in cooking and eating healthy foods will be vital in tackling this major public health issue that has significant short and long-term health implications.

The 2011 Junior MasterChef series was seen as the perfect recipe for Bupa to promote healthy eating and smart food choices to parents and their children.

Bupa’s involvement with the hit TV show, averaging more than a million viewers each night during its season, included sponsoring a Healthy Recipe section on the Junior MasterChef website and supplying 12 tasty, low-fat, low-sugar and nutritionally-rich recipes. Healthy eating and nutrition messages were also incorporated by Bupa into the show’s highly successful online trivia competition that attracted over 10,000 entries in its first week.

*“Nearly a third (31%) of 18-24 year old Australians believe themselves to be not very or not at all healthy.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“Low income Australian households (up to \$25,000) are more likely to rate themselves as not very or not at all healthy (29% versus 19% of the total sample).”<sup>2</sup>*



## TOWARDS A HEALTHIER WORKFORCE

Bupa's Employee Wellbeing Program (EWP) is a suite of health and wellness services, tools and resources that we offer our 2,200 plus employees year-round. Now in its third year, the program is designed to support our people to lead healthier, happier lives.

The EWP was originally shaped by employees completing Bupa's Online Health Assessment tool that identified the health risk factors of our workforce. This in turn drove the development of the program's four focus areas: healthier eating, improving fitness, managing stress and building resilience, and increasing general wellbeing.

Each month, employees are offered a range of activities in one or more of these areas to help inform, empower and support them to improve their health and make

healthier choices. These have included offering our employees subsidised membership of Weight Watchers @Work, a Quit Smoking Program, and discounted gym membership and work-based yoga sessions. With a focus on healthy eating, Bupa has recently hosted webchat sessions between our employees and our on-staff dietitians, as well as producing a Bupa Recipe Book featuring healthy eating tips and healthy recipes suggested by employees.

In 2011, a measure of the program's success was when more than half of Bupa's workforce signed up to participate in a national pedometer challenge.

In 2012, Bupa enhanced the EWP through the introduction of the Personal Program that provides our people with a tailored health solution, including one-on-one access to a professional health coach. In the first month since its introduction, around 20 per cent of the Bupa workforce joined the Personal Program.

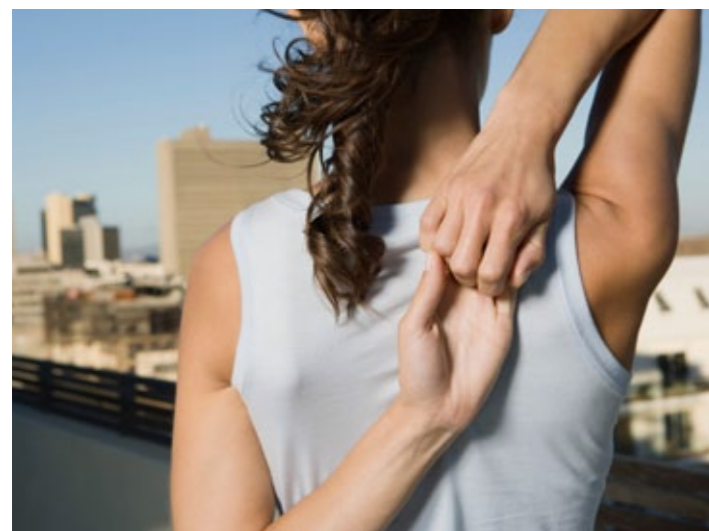
"Bupa views our people as one of our greatest assets and we actively encourage and support them to achieve their best of health," said Richard Bowden, Bupa's Managing Director.

Bupa's commitment to its employees has garnered a number of prestigious awards over the years including a 2010 HR Leader Compass Award for Best Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Bupa offers tailored wellness solutions to corporate Australia to help their workforce to perform at their best.

Bupa's corporate wellness services have been further bolstered with the acquisition of leading Australian corporate wellness business, PEAK Health Management.

Visit [peakhealth.com.au](http://peakhealth.com.au) for more information on Bupa's corporate wellness services



## NEWS

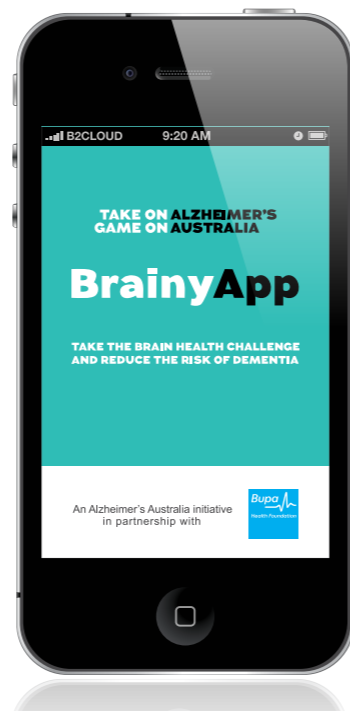
### BRAINYAPP UPDATE

BrainyApp, the world's first dementia risk reduction app, has been downloaded 180,000 times since its launch in November 2011.

The result of a partnership between Alzheimer's Australia and the Bupa Health Foundation, BrainyApp's rapid success indicates that Australians are eager for information and strategies to improve their brain health.

"It is fantastic that Australians want to make active lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of developing dementia," said Glenn Rees, Chief Executive Officer of Alzheimer's Australia.

To download BrainyApp, visit [brainyapp.com.au](http://brainyapp.com.au)



## RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

Research Australia  
An alliance for discoveries in health

The belief that a strong and sustainable health and medical research community is vital to Australia's health and wellbeing, productivity and prosperity, underpins Bupa and the Bupa Health Foundation's commitment to, and long association with, Research Australia.

Representing an alliance of over 170 partners in the health and medical research community, Research Australia was established in 2000 with the aim of raising the profile of, and strengthening funding for, Australian health and medical research. In 2012, Research Australia will be building on the 2011 successful pilot of its Cook for a Cure community outreach initiative that encourages Australians to join with friends and family to share a healthy meal and raise money for health and medical research.

In 2007, the Bupa Health Foundation became the sole founding member of Research Australia and over the past four years has partnered with the alliance on joint advocacy initiatives and supported its public opinion polls and other activities.

The Bupa Health Foundation itself is an important corporate funder of Australian health and medical research, having invested around \$19 million in 80 programs nationally since its inception in 2005.

In parallel, Bupa has supported Research Australia's Thank You Day Awards and, most recently, the 2011 Research Australia Awards at which Bupa presented the inaugural Bupa Advocacy Award. Speaking at the Awards, Bupa's Director of Strategy and Commercial Development, Hisham El-Ansary said, "Supporting Australian health and medical research is an important priority for us at Bupa as it delivers immense benefits to all Australians through better health and medical care."

Bupa is proud to be the official Awards Partner of the 2012 Research Australia Awards, taking place in Sydney on November 14.

For further information, visit [researchaustralia.org](http://researchaustralia.org)



Bupa's Head of Health Leadership Development, Justine Waters congratulates Professor Stephen Leeder, the Director of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy, on receiving the 2011 Bupa Advocacy Award in recognition of his long and distinguished career in public health.

## NEWS

### 2012 HEALTH AWARDS ANNOUNCED

On May 3, the Bupa Health Foundation (BHF) announced the eight recipients of its 2012 Health Awards that were selected from more than 544 applications.

- Professor Ian Frazer, University of QLD - Infection and immunity in squamous skin cancer
- Associate Professor Adam Guastella, Brain & Mind Research Institute, University of Sydney - Investigating oxytocins to improve social difficulties in patients with autism
- Professor Gavin Andrews, CRUfAD, University of NSW at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney - How to be brave: program to prevent anxiety and depression

- Professor Robyn Guymer, Centre for Eye Research Australia - Nanosecond laser to prevent vision loss from age-related macular degeneration
- Associate Professor Jacqueline Close, University of NSW - A national approach to improving outcomes for people with a hip fracture
- Associate Professor Julie Pascoe, Deakin University - Maternal Vitamin D in pregnancy and childhood growth
- Professor Paul Zimmet, Baker IDI - Addressing the Growing Burden of Sleep Apnoea - A Screening Pathway
- Ms Carol Bennett, Consumers Health Forum of Australia - Consumers and informed consent

For further information on BHF and the 2012 Health Awards, visit [bupa.com.au/foundation](http://bupa.com.au/foundation)

## RAISING THE ALARM ON SALT

Stroke risk could be cut by 25 per cent if Australians switched to lower salt foods, guests heard at a recent event in Sydney to mark World Salt Awareness Week.

Hosted by The George Institute for Global Health, Bupa's partner in the innovative and hugely popular FoodSwitch smartphone app, the March 28 event was opened by The Hon. Kevin J Humphries, NSW Minister for Healthy Lifestyles, and was attended by around 100 representatives of the food and catering industries, health professionals, food critics and academics.

At the event, The George Institute launched its report, *Reducing salt: preventing stroke* that revealed Australians consume on average 8 to 10 grams of salt a day, more than double the recommended amount.

"Excess salt in our diet greatly increases our risk of suffering from high blood pressure and stroke," explained Professor Bruce Neal, Senior Director at The George Institute and Chairman of the Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health (AWASH). "Most salt is hidden in processed and fast foods so that even people who don't add salt are still eating far more than is good for them."

Also speaking at the event, Dr Stan Goldstein, Bupa's Head of Clinical Advisory, said, "This is a public health issue that is just not being heard. Most Australians are still unaware that they can significantly lower their risk of potential catastrophes in their lives like heart attack and stroke simply by switching to healthier lower salt equivalent products. The FoodSwitch app represents a starting point in an exciting collaboration with The George Institute to help improve the eating habits of Australians."



For further information, visit [georgeinstitute.org](http://georgeinstitute.org)

## IMPROVING VETERANS' HEALTH AND CARE

An estimated 17,000 war veterans and war widows living with chronic disease are expected to benefit from an innovative new program aimed at helping them improve their conditions and reduce hospital admissions through better co-ordinated care.

The Australian Disease Management Association's (ADMA) National Conference in Canberra in September 2011 was seen as the perfect platform for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to launch its Co-ordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program. A distinguishing feature of the CVC Program is the dedicated care team approach, where the veteran, their GP and a practice nurse work together to plan and manage the co-ordination of care.

As a CVC primary service provider, Bupa Health Dialog (BHD) will play an integral role in the program by identifying those Gold Card veterans most at-risk and then inviting and encouraging them to take part. BHD is also managing the CVC Program Provider Helpline that will provide ongoing support and advice for providers and their practice staff.

BHD's General Manager, Brett Comer, said, "We are delighted to be a part of this pioneering initiative that has the potential to improve the lives and wellbeing of thousands of Australian veterans and war widows."

For further information, visit [bupahealthdialog.com.au](http://bupahealthdialog.com.au) and [dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au)



Ian Campbell PSM, DVA's Secretary, launches the CVC Program at the ADMA National Conference, while Brett Comer, BHD General Manager (in background) looks on.



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[advancinghealthcare@bupa.com.au](mailto:advancinghealthcare@bupa.com.au)

<sup>1</sup> Baade PD, Meng Xingqiong, Sinclair C, Youl Phillippa. Estimating the future burden of cancers preventable by better diet and physical activity in Australia. MJA 2012; 196:337-340.

<sup>2</sup> Kantar Health conducted the Bupa HealthWatch Survey of 1,204 Australian adults online between 17 and 24 August 2011.

Bupa Australia Pty Ltd

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