

# Healthy and active Carers

If you spend a lot of time caring for others, you'll know that it can be physically and emotionally challenging. Finding the time and the motivation to look after yourself, including eating well, sleeping well and getting some exercise, can be hard to do but it's worth the effort.

## Keeping healthy and active can help you:

- feel like you're on top of things
- find ways to deal with stress
- keep in touch with friends and family
- watch out for yourself, or have others watch out for you.

## Eat a balanced diet

Eating a balanced diet is very important for maintaining good health and wellbeing, especially when caring for someone.

### Why is healthy eating so important?

There are many reasons to make sure you eat well. A balanced diet gives you the strength to get through the day. It can help you be healthier and live longer.

## Exercise - how to get started

Getting exercise is important, but it can be struggle to find time and motivation. If you've decided it's time to get started – you're already on the right track!

### Why exercise is worth the effort

Exercise helps you to get or stay healthy. It can also help you meet the physical and emotional demands of caring.

## Mental health and wellbeing

Caring for someone can be tiring. It's important for you to look after yourself.

This takes time, and it can be hard to do.

## Health and happiness

Supports and services are available to help you and importantly allow you to focus on your own health and wellbeing.

To read the original transcript of this article and find more tips to keeping healthy and active, visit the Carer Gateway website at: [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)



# The Byron carer

August 2019

Volume 18 Issue 8

[www.byronrespite.com.au](http://www.byronrespite.com.au)

Byron Shire Respite Service is located at the Brunswick Valley Community Centre, South Beach Rd, Brunswick Heads.

**Our incorporated non-government community based organisation is managed by a local committee and covers the shires of Byron, Ballina and Lismore.**

Respite care is delivered through our Changed Behaviour, Day Respite and Social Support projects, with a person centred enablement approach across the respite continuum.

Telephone Janine Smith on: (02) 6685 1619

or Colin Munro: (02) 6685 1921

Website: [www.byronrespite.com.au](http://www.byronrespite.com.au)

Email: [service@byronrespite.com.au](mailto:service@byronrespite.com.au)



Byron Shire Respite Service acknowledge and pay respect to the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we live and care – and pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

# Osteoporosis and preventing fractures and falls

More than one million Australians have osteoporosis, a condition where bones become weak and fragile, increasing the likelihood of fractures. However, since most people do not have any symptoms or pain, they do not know that they have osteoporosis until they experience a fracture.

**Avoiding fractures is the main concern for those with osteoporosis. Once you have had one fracture, a second or third is more likely.**

**Many fractures are caused by falls – people aged 65 years and older are most likely to be affected. Falls can cause serious injuries, damage self-confidence, reduce independence and make your caring role even more difficult.**

According to the National Prescribing Service (NPS), preventing falls is an important way to reduce your chance of fractures. Your doctor, physiotherapist or occupational therapist can advise on ways to reduce your risk of falling, including:

- exercises to improve muscle strength
- 'fall-proofing' your house (eg, securing loose floor rugs and electrical or phone cords, using a non-slip mat for the bath or shower, fixing poor lighting)
- checking your vision
- ensuring the medicines you take are not affecting your balance
- checking your strength and whether a walking aid would help you.

## Make lifestyle changes

If you have osteoporosis or osteopenia, your doctor may advise you to make lifestyle changes, including:

- limiting your alcohol consumption
- stopping smoking
- doing weight-bearing and resistance forms of exercise.

Specific types of exercise, particularly weight-bearing exercise and progressive resistance training, are important for improving bone strength. Weight-bearing exercise include jogging, aerobics and dancing. Examples of resistance training are lifting hand or ankle weights.

If you have osteoporosis you may need to avoid exercises that involve twisting, sudden movements or bending forwards from the spine.

If you haven't previously undertaken physical activity, a low level exercise program is recommended. A physiotherapist or exercise physiologist can advise you on the most appropriate exercise program for your abilities and interest.

## Medicines for osteoporosis

**Osteoporosis medicines work by:** slowing the breakdown of bone – for example, bisphosphonates, denosumab and raloxifene (antiresorptives), or increasing the production of new bone – for example, teriparatide (an anabolic medicine). As a result, they increase your bone strength and reduce your chances of fracture.

## Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

may also be an option for some postmenopausal women. It is important to take your medicines for as long as your health professional advises, as it

can take between 6 and 12 months before osteoporosis medicines start to reduce your risk of fractures.

You will also need to use your osteoporosis medicines for a long time – 5 years or more (with the exception of HRT, which should be used as a short-term treatment of up to 5 years for women below the age of 60).

## Calcium and vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D work together to maintain bone strength, so it's important to get enough of each.

### Calcium

Most people require 3 serves of dairy per day to obtain enough calcium.

- 1 serve of calcium = 250 mL milk,
- 200 g yoghurt or
- 40 g cheddar cheese.

If you cannot eat dairy products or are unable to consume the adequate number of serves of dairy food each day, you may be able to get enough calcium by including other calcium-rich foods in your diet, such as:

- almonds
- baked beans or soy beans
- calcium-fortified breakfast cereals
- tinned salmon
- tofu.

Some other medicines (including calcium supplements) and foods may interfere with your oral osteoporosis medicine and stop it from being properly absorbed. Your health professional will usually give you this information. If you aren't sure what to do, it's worth asking.

For more information about your medicines, see the consumer medicine information (CMI) for your brand of medicine, available on the Medicine Wise website. Visit [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au), go up to and click on the 'Consumers' tab, where you will see the 'Medicine Finder' search panel.

NPS MedicineWise was established in 1998 as the National Prescribing Service (NPS) Limited. Through two decades of continuous national leadership and services provided in the health sector, NPS MedicineWise remains committed to supporting quality use of medicines to improve health decisions and health and economic outcomes in Australia.

Practical tips on your daily requirements and getting enough calcium in your diet are available on the Osteoporosis Australia website. Visit: [www.osteoporosis.org.au](http://www.osteoporosis.org.au)

Only consider a calcium supplement when you have trouble getting enough calcium from your diet, and ask your doctor or pharmacist about a supplement and dose that suits you.

### Vitamin D

Vitamin D is made by the body when bare skin is exposed to sunlight. Most people get enough vitamin D through short periods of sun exposure, but people who are vitamin D deficient or at high risk of deficiency may need a supplement.

To view and download the original transcript of this article about Calcium and vitamin D to maintain bone strength, visit the Medicine Wise website at <https://www.nps.org.au>

19 - 25th August  
**Be Medicinewise Week**  
Visit [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au) for more information about safer and wiser use of your medicines or speak to your health professional.

Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) for more information.

**Our Vision Statement:**  
With a focus on caring, wellness and reablement, provide person centred support to people with diverse needs to enhance their quality of life and maintain a familiar lifestyle in the community and in their own homes.



Although funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

# Need support?

● **My Aged Care** 1800 200 422 for information about the Australian Government's aged care system and services. [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

**If you require emergency respite, please call: 1800 052 222 (24hrs)**

- Call Colin or Janine at **Byron Shire Respite Service Inc.** to discuss your role as a carer. ph: (02) 6685 1921
- **National Dementia Helpline** ph: 1800 100 500
- **Carers Counselling Service** ph: (02) 6628 6416
- **Carers NSW** ph: 1800 242 636
- **Sandra Kimball Counselling** ph: 0458 175 962
- **Far North Coast Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre** ph: 1800 052 222
- **National Continence Helpline** ph: 1800 330 066
- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** ph: 1800 628 221

## Need Transport?

● **Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport** ph: 1300 875 895  
Transport to medical appointments, weekly & fortnightly shopping outings & monthly social outings. The service is funded to support older people living at home independently or have a permanent disability or Indigenous Australians aged over 50 years. Phone Kathryn in the Byron office on: 1300 875 895 for transport to medical appointments or Amanda for any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.

Travel for medical appointments free with travel voucher or for Veteran and Widow Gold Card holders:

- **Byron Shire Limousines** ph: (02) 6685 5008
- **Brunswick Limousines** phone David on: 0412 855 747.

## Aids:

- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service 1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay** ph: (02) 6685 7312
- **Bright Sky Cards for Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)** ph: 1300 886 601

## Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. Activity Timetable

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
10am – 2:30pm Changed Behaviours with Dementia	10am – 3pm Dementia Specific	10am – 3pm Changed Behaviours with Dementia	10am – 3pm Older people	10am – 3pm Dementia Specific

Lunch, morning and afternoon teas are provided and the cost for the day including transport is \$20.

## If you care for someone else, it can be difficult to deal with some of the situations you find yourself in – especially if you're already feeling stretched. Some people find it helps to talk to others in a similar situation.

We can't always put a stop to all of the stresses in our lives, but it's important to learn to recognise the signs that you are feeling stressed. This way you can identify stresses you can address before it becomes overwhelming.

### Ways to deal with stress

- Change what you can
- Accept what you can't change
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses
- Learn skills to help you manage
- Build resilience

### Identify situations that stress you

Read over the list of some of the symptoms of stress below and learn to recognise when you are becoming stressed:

#### Physical symptoms

- Having trouble sleeping, tiredness and fatigue
- Headaches and muscle tension
- Racing heart or sweating with no obvious cause
- Overeating or loss of appetite,
- weight loss or gain.

#### Psychological symptoms

- Feeling tense, impatient, resentful or irritable
- Misuse of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or gambling
- Lack of self-esteem
- Forgetfulness and indecision
- Feeling negative about things,
- withdrawing from other people or from activities you normally enjoy

The term 'stress management' means identifying what is causing stress in your life, then considering how stress is affecting you and what you can do about it. According to Carers NSW, carers can then plan ways to defuse tension or respond more effectively to difficult situations.

- Feeling depressed, helpless, anxious or guilty.

### Ways of dealing with stress

Managing your stress calls for work towards change – changing the source of the stress as well as your reaction to it.

## Change what you can and learn skills to help manage stress

### Change what you can

You may not be able to significantly change the demands of your caring role, but you can look creatively at small changes which might help.

For instance, you could ask friends and family to help out.

### Accept what you can't change

Focus on what you can do to make a difference and identify and accept the things you can't change. Stress can sometimes be reduced by changing how you react to it.

### Identify your strengths and weaknesses

You may be very good at mediating arguments or at switching off worries and thinking about something else. Someone else in your family may be good at finding practical solutions to problems. Build coping strategies around the strengths in your family.

### Learn skills to help you manage

Learn as much as you can about the condition of the person you are caring for and about techniques that can help you to manage your caring role better. Good planning can help you to balance your caring responsibilities better with the rest of your life.

### Build resilience

Try to nurture traits that are common in people who respond well to change and adversity:

- look at the funny side of things build self-esteem and believe in your ability to cope
- focus on good outcomes and experiences
- accept unpleasantness, learn from it and move on.

### Practical strategies for carers to reduce stress

- Keep healthy
- Eat well and exercise regularly
- Get a good night's sleep
- Don't drink coffee or tea in the evening and explore ways to wind down before bed
- Meditation, listening to music or reading can help if you have difficulty falling asleep.

### Find out what relaxes you and take regular time out to recharge.

Try to do something that you enjoy every day and spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself. Take a stroll when you start to feel stressed – it can help restore your perspective

### Talk with family and friends about how you feel.

Let off steam and encourage them to do the same. It may also help to talk with a professional counsellor

### Practise relaxation techniques.

Close your eyes and breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose and out through your mouth. Repeat ten times. This is a way of switching off, even if just for a few moments. Ask for and accept help!

To view the original transcript of this article and find more tips to prevent stress, visit Carers NSW at [www.carersnsw.org.au](http://www.carersnsw.org.au)