



+ Instead of chomping on chippies, nibble on nuts. Studies suggest they may improve the health of your arteries.



Healthypeople

JULY 2013 ISSUE 25

Welcome to **Healthy people**, the newsletter for administrators of Southern Cross Health Society work schemes.

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What is the topic of our latest awareness campaign?

How to enter: Send us an email with your answer, name, phone number and company to healthypeople@southerncross.co.nz

Entries close on 25 July 2013. View full terms and conditions of the prize draw at www.southerncross.co.nz/society/healthypeopleprizedraw

Winners of the five music packs from our last newsletter were: Marian T. from Christchurch, Lindy B. from Picton, Hilary S-H. from Christchurch, Sharon R. from Palmerston North and Pritee V. from Auckland.

Southern Cross toolbox

Useful tips and advice

Group direct debit

Earlier this year we introduced direct debit as a payment method for our group schemes. It means your Southern Cross invoices get paid automatically, saving your time and effort. Visit our [website](#) to find out more about getting direct debit set up for your scheme or call us on 0800 323 555.

Group Portal survey results

Recently we surveyed a number of group scheme administrators to find out whether an online portal for Southern Cross group schemes would be valuable

We asked you what sort of functions you'd like to see in a portal and how likely you would be to use it. Here's what we found:

- 86 per cent of you who responded to the survey said you were likely to use it
- Mostly you wanted administration, billing, renewal and payment functions
- You particularly liked the idea of being able to

Win a 12-month subscription to Good Health magazine

Eight to be won!

Each month Good Health brings you practical, realistic advice on health, fitness, food, fashion and beauty – giving you time out from your busy day and making you smile at the same time.



provide updated member details to Southern Cross and view details related to policies or members

- You didn't want the portal to replace the relationship you have with your Southern Cross account manager.

Armed with this information, we're planning our next move. Thank you very much to all participants for your time and feedback.

Children need health insurance too

Our latest awareness campaign promotes health insurance cover for children. It's timely, because children's health issues are more common in winter.

You should have received an email about this, which you can forward to your employees. The key messages in the campaign are:

- you'll benefit from a child's rate when you add your first two children to your policy
- it's free to add your third and following children on your policy
- your newborn baby may be able to receive cover for qualifying pre-existing conditions
- your children can enjoy the protection of your health insurance policy – right up until they turn 21
- from tonsillitis to ear infections, your children could be covered for a range of illnesses that could require specialist treatment.

Contact your Southern Cross account manager if you haven't received the campaign email, to order campaign posters or for more information.



Southern Cross updates

News and updates from our busy team.

Benefit review 2013

We regularly review our policy benefits to ensure they're delivering great value to our members or your employees. At our most recent review, we decided to implement these changes:

- A single per claims year maximum for specialist consultations and diagnostic imaging, which should

result in reduced shortfalls and a better claims experience for most members.

- More procedures are only eligible for reimbursement if performed by an **Affiliated Provider**. The Southern Cross Affiliated Provider programme aims to deliver value for members, by providing access to a range of healthcare services while better managing the impact of healthcare costs on premiums. It's easier for members too, because when they use an Affiliated Provider they don't need to apply for prior approval or send in a claim – their Affiliated Provider will take care of it for them.

For more information about these improvements, see your relevant plan documents on our [website](#).

'Let's get a healthier you' on Facebook

Our 'Let's get a healthier you' Facebook page - featuring Lisa Carrington - has been a great success since its launch in February this year. The page encourages Kiwis to live a healthier lifestyle and is full of motivational tips and useful advice about food and fitness. If your company's social media guidelines allow it, we encourage you to ask your employees to 'like' our page.



activa closing

If your work scheme offers activa Health Management Accounts, customers with activa cards will have received notification that the programme finishes on 20 July 2013.

Deciding to close activa wasn't an easy decision. We've had to do it because the cost of technology updates and meeting the government's new anti-money laundering regulations would have made activa unworkable. It's always our goal to provide great value for money to our members, and this wouldn't have been possible if we'd gone ahead with the upgrades activa needed.

If you have any questions about this decision or need more information, you can contact us on 0800 228 482.

In the press

Check out two recent press articles on the benefits of workplace health and wellness programmes.

Wellness is a boardroom issue – an article published in Employment Today magazine's May/June issue, by Peter Tynan, Chief Executive, Southern Cross Health Society. Read the full article [online](#).

Healthy workers better for your bottom line, study shows – an article in New Zealand Herald which can be found [here](#).

Winter water fun

Summer's over, but you can still have some water fun. Why not break away from the traditional winter exercise routines (gym classes, cardio machines, DVDs in the lounge) and discover the mood-enhancing benefits of H2O? Water-based exercise improves mental health as well as physical fitness.

Pool workouts

Sometimes called 'aquacise', pool workouts use water to create resistance. You can improve both cardio fitness and strength, plus there's less risk of injury because water workouts are low impact. Ask about water fitness classes at your local pool. It's also worthwhile to check



+ Swimming regularly can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

if your kids or older family members get free entry to council pools, like it's the case for under 16 year olds in Auckland now.

Lapping it up

Pools that are open in winter are comfortably heated. Winter's a great time to tighten-up your swimming technique – why not book a month's coaching to work on your style? You'll slip through the water faster and get more joy from swimming.

Ocean swimming

We're not talking about a polar bear plunge in your speedos. Winter open water swimming is done in a cosy wetsuit, with cap, gloves and booties for extra insulation. It's safer and more fun with a group – see if you can join an existing swim meet or form your own to beat the winter blues.

Sauna and steam

After a workout in the pool – or a hard run or cycle in the freezing cold – there's nothing nicer than recuperating with a sauna or steam session. Harvard experts say that

relaxation and a feeling of well-being are the only health benefits you can expect from sweating in a small room, but that sounds pretty good to us.

Hot pool holidays

Winter's a great time for hot pool holidays. There are geothermal resorts up and down New Zealand – from Ngawha in the far north to Onsen in the south. Some are delightfully rustic, like Kerosene Creek south of Rotorua. Others offer tempting spa therapies, such as The Lost Spring in Coromandel. Check out www.nzhotpools.co.nz to explore the world of hot pools.

Sources:

www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/health_benefits_water_exercise.html

<http://health.clevelandclinic.org/2012/10/benefits-of-water-based-exercise/>

www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/sauna_health_benefits

Try a Dry July

Instead of a dry martini or a dry white wine, consider the benefits of a Dry July. Steering clear of alcohol for a month can be good for your life in lots of ways.

There are many health problems associated with excess alcohol. They include weight gain, stomach upsets, headaches, anxiety, depression, poor concentration and bad sleep. More serious effects include accidents and injuries, liver disease, cancer, stroke and memory loss.

You're at increased risk of these problems if you're a woman having more than two drink units a day, or a man having more than three. A drink unit is 10mls of alcohol, which equates to around 100mls of wine or 200mls of beer. A large glass of wine can easily deliver three units.

The benefits of a Dry July

- Better-looking skin, since alcohol is dehydrating. If you're prone to dry skin, giving up alcohol could certainly help
- If you have acid reflux, dandruff, eczema or rosacea you may see an improvement in your condition
- Weight loss, because a large glass of wine has a similar calorie count to a slice of pizza
- A better memory. Even moderate drinking can lead to memory loss
- Happier state of mind, because alcohol is a depressant
- Improved sleep quality, which leads to increased energy during the day
- More money in the bank. Not just because you're not spending on liquor for home, but because dining out suddenly gets a whole lot cheaper

- If you want to start a family, a better chance of getting pregnant.

Non-alcoholic drinks to enjoy

Dry July is your chance to explore the world of non-alcoholic drinks. Get your blender or juicer going to create amazing 'mocktails' with juice, fruit, vegetables and ice. You'll get extra nutrients as well as a break from alcohol.

Sources:

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/concerned-about-alcohol/alcohol-harm
www.drinkaware.co.uk/check-the-facts/what-is-alcohol/what-is-an-alcohol-unit
www.telegraph.co.uk/health/wellbeing/4523420/Detoxing-the-pros-of-going-cold-turkey.html
www.womenshealthmag.com/health/stop-drinking

Less added sugar, more health

Many New Zealanders think that consuming a moderate amount of manufactured sugar is part of a healthy way of eating. However the nutrition guidelines for our nation clearly state that we need to limit our intake of foods with added-sugar.

That means sweet treats only occasionally, not every day. Cakes, biscuits, chocolate bars, ice cream and many breakfast cereals shouldn't be part of our everyday diet.

Why are health authorities coming down hard on added sugar?

Manufactured sugar has never been a recommended



food, but recently it's really been getting itself into health experts' bad books. It's been linked to diabetes, cancer, heart disease, high cholesterol, gum disease, tooth decay ...the list goes on. And of course it's strongly linked to obesity.

And the darn stuff is addictive!

When you eat food with a lot of added sugar, it stimulates the release of dopamine in your brain, which makes you feel good. The brain likes this feeling and sends you messages that it wants more sugar. This explains why it's so hard to have just one chocolate.

Getting off the sweet stuff

Everybody's different, so it's hard to predict how long it will take you to lose your sugar cravings. Some people say three days, others say two to five weeks. But there are various strategies you can try to help you reach no-added-sugar nirvana.

Tips for ditching sugar

- Consider yourself in 'detox' for the first week at least. Get support from friends, read books related to habit change, take naps when you can.
- If you don't want to go cold turkey, try tapering off your consumption over a few weeks. A little less sugar every day.
- Get enough sleep. It's easier to fight cravings when you're feeling well rested.
- Keep your blood sugar stable. Eat some protein with every meal and focus on natural whole foods.
- De-sugar your pantry. Get rid of foods that are full of sugar, so that you don't run into temptation all the time.
- Read food labels. Often there's added sugar in ordinary foods – like sauces, yoghurt, fruit drinks, pasta sauce, muesli, snack bars and dried fruit.
- Limit refined grains. White bread, pasta and pastry contain refined starches that convert quickly into sugar when you eat them.
- If you're in the habit of eating dessert every night, create a healthier replacement with fresh fruit, greek yoghurt and honey.

Sources:

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/nutrition/food-and-nutrition-guidelines/nz-food-and-nutrition-guideline-statements-healthy-adults
<http://nancyappleton.com/141-reasons-sugar-ruins-your-health/>
www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/26/dr-oz-sugar-addiction_n_2981172.html

Get more laughs into your life

Humans laugh, and so do some animals. It's a behaviour that's linked to ancient regions of the brain, so we've been doing it for a very long time. Our ability to laugh is linked to our survival on this planet.

Scientists say that we laugh for a number of reasons: to share relief at the passing of danger, to indicate trust in



+ Laughing can reduce your stress hormone levels and boost health-giving hormones.

our companions, and to make people feel better. Mostly, laughter is about strengthening our connection to others. The more laughter there is in a group of people, the more connected they feel to each other.

Whether you're watching a stand-up comedian or trading stories with a group of good friends, having a laugh is good for you. It sends endorphins to your brain, which make you feel good. It relieves stress and relaxes your muscles. It also improves your immune response. It can even relieve pain.

How to pump up the laughter volume:

- Share your humorous thoughts with people around you. It doesn't matter whether you're sitting in a cubicle at work or waiting at the bus stop, helping someone else to chuckle helps you.
- Have a joke swapping session with workmates. You could even institute 'joke day', when everyone has to bring their best joke to work. It's a great way to deal with work stress.
- Try laughter yoga. We hear it's a hoot.

Weird things about laughter

- Laughter is produced and recognized by people of all cultures.

- Laughter usually follows something said in conversation rather than intentional jokes.
- In groups, women generally laugh more than men. Women also laugh more at men more than men laugh at women.
- Most people can't genuinely laugh on command.
- Laughter is contagious. One laugh starts another laugh off. In 1962, Tanzania and Uganda experienced laughing epidemics that spread from village to village.

Sources:

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/laughter2.htm>

www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034

www.deliveringhappiness.com/10-fun-facts-about-laughter/

Mid-winter barley recipes

by Helen Jackson

With the chill of winter comes a desire for warm, sustaining food and one of our favourite pantry items this season is pearl barley. The word "pearl" attached to barley simply refers to the process whereby the tough outer husk on the barley is removed and the grains polished, thus making it more palatable for human consumption.

Pearl barley has many uses in the kitchen, it can be easily integrated into soups, stews, salads and risottos. It offers a lovely nutty flavour and defined texture. If substituting for rice in recipes such as pilaf or risotto then increase the cooking time by about 15 minutes.

Barley is highly nutritious, it is a great source of fibre, is low GI and is also thought to help lower blood cholesterol. It also stores well in a sealed container, retaining its goodness for years.



+ Pearl barley is a healthy alternative to pasta and rice and like most grains it is very economical.

Warm salad of barley, pumpkin, feta and spinach

300g pumpkin, chopped into 3cm chunks
4 cloves garlic, skin on
1 cup pearl barley
2 bunches spinach, rinsed
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
½ teaspoon salt
2 ½ tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
100g feta, crumbled
½ cup walnuts, lightly toasted

Preheat the oven to 180 C. Toss the pumpkin with a little oil and then arrange it in a single layer in a roasting dish along with the garlic and cook for 20 minutes or until the pumpkin is tender and starting to brown.

At the same time cook the barley in a large saucepan of boiling water for 30 minutes or until just tender to the bite. Drain well and then return the barley to the saucepan and toss with the spinach. Cover and set aside for 5 minutes.

Squeeze the garlic pulp from the skin and place in a small bowl along with the olive oil, salt, lemon juice and mustard. Mix well, ensuring the garlic is incorporated into the dressing.

Combine the barley, spinach, chickpeas, pumpkin, feta and walnuts in a large bowl and gently toss to combine. Drizzle with the dressing, toss again and serve.

Serves 4.



Barley, mushroom and prosciutto risotto

250g (1 punnet) button mushrooms sliced (in half or more)
75g prosciutto slices, roughly chopped
few sprigs of thyme
2 cups pearl barley
1/2 cup white wine
4 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
thyme leaves for garnish

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Heat a little oil in a large frying pan and cook mushrooms for a few minutes over a high heat until lightly coloured. Add prosciutto to the pan and cook, stirring until prosciutto is crisp.

Pour over the wine and allow to bubble and reduce by half. Add barley to the pan and stir for a minute and then transfer everything to a casserole or slow cooker, season with salt and a generous grind of black pepper.

Pour over hot chicken stock, cover and cook at 180°C for 35 minutes until stock is absorbed and barley tender or cook in a slow cooker set on low for 3 hours.

Stir through grated parmesan cheese and serve with extra shaved parmesan if you like and a few sprigs of thyme

Serves 4.



The information given in this newsletter is necessarily of a general nature and you should always seek specific professional medical advice for treatment appropriate to you.