

# HEALTH REPORT

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## AUSSIES THROW CAUTION TO WIND FOR GOLDEN YEARS

New research by health industry experts shows that one in three Australians needs a shake-up when it comes to planning a healthy and happy retirement.

The research reveals that 66 percent of today's Australians are planning to retire by 65, however one third of those surveyed are not even thinking about health and lifestyle choices which can make a world of difference to a happy retirement.

Published in the latest Pfizer Australia Health Report, the findings come from a national poll by The Jean Hailes Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation providing research, education and clinical care on healthy ageing, and healthcare company Pfizer Australia.

The survey shows that twice as many people have financial plans in place versus other retirement plans, such as transitional easing into retirement, maintenance of social contact, lifestyle planning and prevention of disease.

According to The Jean Hailes Foundation, financial planning is important as we age, but we need to broaden our planning to encompass other aspects of our lives when it comes to moving towards retirement.

"Many people make the mistake of solely focusing on financial planning for their later years. However, being proactive about your health, lifestyle and relationships throughout your life is crucial to reaping the benefits of a successful retirement," said Dr Helena Teede, Director of Research at The Jean Hailes Foundation.

When it comes to ageing, the Pfizer Australia Health Report survey reveals that 88 percent of people consider losing loved ones as their greatest fear. This is followed by losing independence at 77 percent, fear of physical health-related issues at 68 percent and fear of mental health-related issues at 65 percent.

Despite this, Australians report that they are neglecting their relationships with loved ones through overwhelming work and life commitments.

Interestingly, older Australians are more likely to share regular intimacy with their partners than younger Australians. The research shows that regular intimacy with partners increases after 50 years of age, with almost two-thirds of Australians aged over 50 years making a specific effort to have intimate time with their partner.



A key finding is that those aged 31-50 years are more likely than other age groups to feel that work, family and everyday life interferes with time alone with their partner.

"It's important for people to realise that finances aren't paramount. Maintaining healthy relationships and caring for your partner's health is just as important when it comes to lasting the distance," said Dr Teede.

The survey also shows that most Australians are not having health checks done regularly. For example, 60 percent of Australians are not having their blood sugar levels tested regularly.

"No matter what your age or stage of life, it is never too late to modify your lifestyle and relationships to make the most of your health and wellbeing and plan for a great retirement," said Dr Teede.

Key tips from The Jean Hailes Foundation for healthy ageing are:

- o **Keep mentally active** - to help ward off memory loss
- o **Be active** - regular physical activity has a positive impact on your body including the brain
- o **Enjoy rest time** - too little sleep can affect memory
- o **Stay relaxed** - meditate, do yoga or tai chi, or other stress-reduction techniques to help ease stress
- o **Keep healthy** - stay within a healthy weight range to lower your risk for illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease
- o **Talk to your GP** - discuss your health issues with your GP and develop an individual screening and prevention plan
- o **Connect with your community** - there is a clear association to improved health in anyone who has links and support in the community

For more information on healthy ageing, visit The Jean Hailes Foundation website [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au).

To assist with educating the public about Healthy Ageing, The Jean Hailes Foundation has collaborated with Pfizer Australia to produce this month's edition of the Pfizer Australia Health Report. Filled with useful information, free copies can be requested by phoning **1800 675 229** or by visiting [www.healthreport.com.au](http://www.healthreport.com.au) where people can also sign-up for email alerts of future editions.

The findings on Australian perceptions of healthy ageing are based on responses from 1456 Australians aged 18 years and over. The research was conducted in April 2005 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.

Pfizer Australia is the nation's leading research-based health care company, investing over \$A42m in local research and development annually. It discovers, develops, manufactures and markets innovative medical treatments for both humans and animals. For more information, visit [www.pfizer.com.au](http://www.pfizer.com.au).

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**NB: INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL SPOKESPEOPLE ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY.**

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