

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACU health expert tips on living stronger and longer at free seminar

Health and metabolism experts from the Australian Catholic University will draw on the latest science to deliver practical advice on ways to future-proof your health at a free public seminar on Thursday 18 May.

Leading experts from the Mary Mackillop Institute for Health Research will offer advice on key nutrition and exercise strategies to keep bones and muscles strong and boost metabolic health.

Leading bone expert and consulting physician Professor Mattias Lorentzon will talk about how to keep bones healthy while metabolic health expert Dr Evelyn Parr will explain why the timing of eating matters when it comes to metabolic health.

Dietitian Dr Caoileann Murphy will discuss the role of diet and exercise in muscle maintenance.

“We can expect to live about 30 years longer than our great-great grandparents did 100 years ago but the health quality with which we live these years can be impacted by lifestyle habits such as nutrition and physical activity,” Dr Murphy said.

Dr Murphy said people aged 40 and over typically lose one to two per cent of muscle every year. Over time this can lead to low muscle strength and muscle mass, known as sarcopenia, which impairs the ability to independently perform daily physical tasks such as walking, climbing and lifting, and increases risk of falls and physical disability.

Around the same age, bone mass and bone strength also start to decrease which can cause osteoporosis, a condition in which bones have become thinner and porous making them fragile.

“The good news is that engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviours like eating a healthy diet, regular physical activity, avoiding smoking and avoiding excess alcohol consumption can significantly help prevent and delay sarcopenia, osteoporosis, and type 2 diabetes” Dr Murphy said.

Research shows that regular resistance exercise (such as lifting weights) builds muscle, improves muscle strength and bone mineral density, and reduces the risk of developing a disability in older adults.

In terms of maintaining metabolic health as we age, insulin is an important hormone responsible for managing blood sugar levels.

Dr Evelyn Parr says the body’s sensitivity to insulin changes as we age – our body becomes less efficient at producing and responding to insulin.

“This impacts how efficiently sugar is cleared out of the blood,” Dr Parr said. “When this happens, we can become insulin resistant which can lead to type 2 diabetes but there are simple strategies that can be implemented to help to minimise insulin resistance, and therefore prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes”.

Exercise like walking, jogging and dancing is beneficial for maintaining metabolic health. Modifying the time window over which we eat during the day can also have beneficial effects on metabolic health.

“Time restricted eating involves limiting the daily feeding window to a specific period of time, usually eight to 10 hours, which has been shown to have beneficial effects for weight loss when energy is restricted due to the shorter eating window,” Dr Parr said.

“But even when energy intakes are matched there are benefits to blood sugar and measures of insulin resistance. We have also found that people generally find it easier to adhere to than specific dietary guidance.”

Dr Murphy is currently leading a study looking at the impact of potassium salt supplementation on muscle and bone health and is looking to recruit 20 women, aged 65 to 90, who do not have osteoporosis or kidney disease.

“Several studies have reported that supplementation with potassium salts reduces the rate of bone breakdown in older adults, with some even reporting improvements in bone mineral content and reductions in fracture risk,” she said.

If you are interested in participating, email: caoileann.murphy@acu.edu.au

Dr Murphy is available for interview.

What: Free public seminar - Habits to future-proof your health

When: Thursday May 18, 2023 at 5.30pm

Where: Philippa Brazil lecture theatre, ACU, 17 Young Street, Fitzroy

Register: Click [this link](#) to register.

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