



Wellness E-Bulletin

Winter 2022

This edition features:

- ❖ Slips, trips and falls
- ❖ 2022 Flu season and COVID
- ❖ Psychological health and safety at ANU
- ❖ Keeping up your exercise routine through Winter
- ❖ Pandemic Pets and connecting with the natural world
- ❖ Men's Health Week - 'Building Healthy Environments for Men and Boys'
- ❖ Spiritual Wellness
- ❖ Health and Wellness Calendar of events



Your contributions, news and feedback are welcome. To provide your suggestions email whs@anu.edu.au.

Health & Wellness Calendar:

June - Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

5 – 11 June - World Allergy Week

13 – 19 June – Men's Health Week

14 June – World Blood Donor Day

27 June – PTSD Awareness Day

10 – 16 July – National Diabetes Week

24 – 31 July – National Pain Week

24 – 31 July – Donate Life Week

August – Tradies Health Month

1 – 7 August Dental Health Week

8 August – Dying to Know Day

25 August – Daffodil Day

(see back page for details on all these events)

Slips, Trips and Falls

Following a wet autumn and anticipating a wet winter, there are a few extra factors to consider to prevent slips, trips and falls both on and off campus. Slips and falls make up a large number of our reported WHS incidents and can result in significant injury so this simple message of “go slowly and take extra care”, is an important one.

When walking, consider your footwear, ensure good grip or tread if there are wet or icy footpaths and that your footwear will keep your feet and ankles warm to help prevent strains and sprains. Be alert and stay off your phone so you can watch the path ahead for changes such as a covering of wet leaves or puddles that could result in you slipping and falling. Be aware that if it is a foggy morning or in the lower light of winter mornings and evenings, you will be less visible to cars and bikes so take extra care when crossing roads.

If you're bushwalking in snow or heavy frost ensure waterproof warm footwear and always be prepared for the conditions, ensure you have the right gear for any sudden changes in weather and ALWAYS submit a plan to the rangers if you're going on a longer walk or hike. A fall and injury out bush in the winter can present a significant risk.

When riding a bike or scooter be aware that there can be icy patches on roads and footpaths which can create a slipping hazard. If you're not sure, slow right down or walk it to be sure. Keep an eye out for pedestrians and allow yourself extra time to brake and stop so as to reduce the risk of skidding or sliding. DO NOT leave or park scooters where they are blocking pathways or stairs – particularly where handrail access is being impaired. Park them in bike racks or off the path to ensure other users access and safety.

For those new to Canberra please also be aware that although it is unlikely, if the roads are wet, there is the possibility for ice on the road in the early mornings (sometimes called black ice because you can't see it) which can be very slippery and very dangerous. Try to avoid any icy patches if you can safely do so but best advice is to slow down and take extra care when driving on cold wet winter mornings.



Photo credit: pexels-skitterphoto-4341

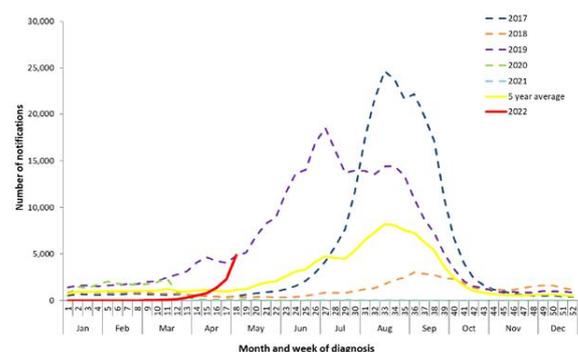


Resources

To report a hazard on campus:
[Figtree](#)

COVID and the 2022 Flu season

Figure 4. Notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza, Australia, 01 January 2017 to 08 May 2022, by month and week of diagnosis*



Source: NNDSS

*NNDSS notification data provided for the current and most recent weeks may be incomplete. All data are preliminary and subject to change as updates are received. Please refer to Data considerations for interpretation of the 5 year average.

Resources

Free Flu vaccine through ANU – Staff - <https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/wellbeing/flu-vaccinations> Students - <https://services.anu.edu.au/news-events/free-flu-vaccinations-for-students>
Information on Flu Vaccines – ACT Health - <https://www.health.act.gov.au/services-and-programs/immunisation/influenza-flu/free-flu-vaccination>
ACT Influenza Report - <https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/ACT%20Influenza%20Report%20-%20No.4%202022.pdf>
National Influenza Report (see graph above) - [https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-surveil-ozflu-flucurr.htm/\\$File/flu-03-2022.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-surveil-ozflu-flucurr.htm/$File/flu-03-2022.pdf)

After 2 years of relatively low numbers of influenza due to the precautions we were all taking for COVID, the 2022 Flu season is shaping up to be a challenging one. The return to communal activity, travel and social contacts combined with the worry and fatigue that many people feel on the back of the pandemic means that we, as a population may be more vulnerable to flu this year. We know that the combination of flu and COVID-19 results in particularly severe illness – so, if you haven't already done so, consider a flu shot this year (the University is providing free flu shots for [staff](#) and [students](#). For particularly vulnerable people (including carers of vulnerable people) consider having a conversation with your supervisor about utilising flexible work arrangements during this period to reduce your risk of exposure to COVID and the Flu.

For everyone, the precautions that we have been implementing to prevent the spread of COVID are the same things that will help prevent the spread of Flu. Wearing a mask, maintaining physical distance where you can and ensuring diligent hand hygiene are effective and simple steps that we can take to prevent the spread of Flu in our community.

The other thing we can all do to stay well is to give our immune systems all the support they need to do a great job! Ensuring that we eat well and have a good intake of fresh fruit and vegetables helps our immune system fight disease and recover quickly if we do become ill. Keeping up our exercise routines and staying well hydrated also supports good immune function and can be something that we overlook as the weather gets colder and the heaters stay on for longer!

Psychological Health and Safety at ANU

A healthy and safe workplace provides people with structure and purpose, a sense of identity, opportunities to develop skills and increased feelings of self-worth. For an individual, psychological safety in the workplace is the belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. It is being able to express yourself to others honestly and respectfully without fear of any form of harm. Psychological safety enables individuals to suggest new and creative ideas, report issues or concerns promptly and to innovate and sometimes fail, without fear of losing their reputation, their position or the respect and regard of their colleagues. A psychologically safe workplace is one where all forms of discrimination, intimidation and harassment are not tolerated, where psychosocial hazards are systematically identified and minimised and a positive and inclusive organisational culture is maintained.

Work is currently underway at ANU on a new Chapter for our WHS Management System for Psychological Safety with input from a range of ANU academics, researchers, student facing and other professional staff from across the University.

The University's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 identifies several priorities, relating to the provision of a work environment that is the best in the world with a focus on the safety and wellbeing of our staff. We are particularly focussing on Pillar 4 – "Being a Standard Bearer for equity and inclusion" to speak to the need for innovation and leadership in this area. Many organisations are new to the practice of incorporating psychological safety into their WHS systems in an overt and systematic way and so we have an opportunity for learning and leading in implementing such practice at ANU and supporting its development into BAU. Including Psychological Safety in the WHS Management System Handbook will provide support and clear guidance to staff and supervisors in navigating conversations and WHS principles around psychological safety and sends a strong message that psychological health and safety should be and will be part of our usual daily practices at ANU.



Psychological Safety Chapter Working Group - please contact the WHS Team whs@anu.edu.au

Psychosocial hazards | Comcare - <https://www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/prevent-harm/psychosocial-hazards>

Supporting mentally healthy workplaces | Comcare - <https://www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/mentally-healthy-workplaces>

Working well - An organisational approach to preventing psychological injury (comcare.gov.au) - <https://www.comcare.gov.au/about/forms-publications/documents/publications/safety/working-well-guide.pdf>

[Work-related psychological health and safety: A systematic approach to meeting your duties | Safe Work Australia](#) - <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/work-related-psychological-health-and-safety-systematic-approach-meeting-your-duties>

Maintaining an exercise routine through winter



Staying active in the winter time can be a challenge. And if your exercise routine involves an early morning walk, run or ride, it's an extra level of commitment to crawl out from under the doona and get out the door in the cold and dark of a winter morning. For our snow sport loving folk, winter is the peak season for physical activity and with snowfields on our doorstep for our Canberra based people, it's a great opportunity to regularly enjoy some uniquely winter sports.

As well as maintaining your strength and fitness, staying engaged in an exercise routine during winter is great for circulation and helps to regulate your body systems to cope with changes in temperature and to fight off winter colds and flu. Exercise is also vital for our mental health and we know that prolonged time spent inactive and indoors is not good for us. Getting outside and into the winter sunlight helps our body maintain its natural rhythms and helps provide us with essential "feelgood vitamin" D. To stay active and healthy over winter:

1. Stick to your routine. If you usually enjoy a morning walk, ride or run, keep doing it and enjoy the stillness and beauty of frosty early mornings. Make it easy to get up and go by having your warm clothes and sturdy shoes ready the night before. Consider using alarms that turn a light on to help you wake up. Take an extra few moments to warm up and mobilise your body before you step outdoors to keep your joints safe in the cold.
2. Try out a new sport or exercise activity. Many sports are seasonal so there is always something new to try out, or even just get out and watch (you can get a fair bit of exercise from jumping up and down and cheering on the sidelines!).
3. Go indoors - Check out the range of sports that are available indoors in the cooler months. Climate controlled, warm and dry all year round so you can maintain a solid routine.
4. Go online – one of the good things to come out of the past 2 years is a range of online exercise activities – with everything from Yoga to hip hop, zumba to line dancing, there's an online exercise channel to suit everyone. If you're new to exercise, take it slowly and consider talking to your health care provider before starting any new routine or activity.

Men's Health Week

Adapted from - <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/mens-health-week>

International Men's Health Week is celebrated every year [around the world](#) in the middle of June. It is an important opportunity to highlight the importance of men's health, and to promote and support the health and wellbeing of men and boys in our communities. Men's Health Week focuses on not just physical health, but also men's mental health and emotional wellbeing. During the week, we highlight the health challenges faced by men in Australia and worldwide and run events that can be replicated year-round to improve the physical, emotional and mental health of men and boys. Men's Health Week is designed to provoke thought and discussion about what needs to be done to improve male health.

The theme of Men's Health Week 2022 is **Building Healthy Environments for Men and Boys** - focusing on creating physically, mentally and emotionally healthy environments in the home, workplace and in social settings.

All this emphasis on the health of boys and men - what's that about? They're alright, aren't they? In many cases, the answer is no. A boy born in Australia in 2010 has a life expectancy of 78.0 years while a baby girl born at the same time could expect to live to 82.3 years old. Right from the start, boys suffer more illness, more accidents and die earlier than their female counterparts. Men take their own lives at four times the rate of women (that's five men a day, on average). Accidents, cancer and heart disease all account for the majority of male deaths.

Men's Health Week has a direct focus on the health impacts of men's and boys' environments. It serves to ask two questions:

- **What factors in men's and boy's environments contribute to the status of male health as indicated in the table above?**
- **How can we turn that around and create positive environments in men's and boy's lives?**



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Resources

[Men's Health Week | Why Men's Health?](https://westernsydney.edu.au/mens-health-week/education/why_mens_health)

([westernsydney.edu.au](https://westernsydney.edu.au/mens-health-week/education/why_mens_health)) -

https://westernsydney.edu.au/mens-health-week/education/why_mens_health

[Canadian Men's Health Foundation - Inspiring Men To Live Healthier](https://menshealthfoundation.ca/)

(menshealthfoundation.ca)

<https://menshealthfoundation.ca/>

[International Men's Health Month:](https://menshealthmonth.org/imhw/imhw)

<https://menshealthmonth.org/imhw/imhw>

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pexels-benjamin-lehman-1436134

“Pandemic pets” and being out in nature

Many of us instinctively feel that time spent in nature is great for both the body and mind, but now a growing body of research is proving its benefit in managing symptoms of depression and anxiety and providing stress relief. While many people enjoy the simple pleasure and mood lifting effects of exercise in the wild, camping out under the stars or a quiet afternoon at the park, only recently has research begun to explain why we're so drawn to time spent in nature. This instinct has a name – biophilia - or the innate human need to care about and connect with nature. There are many studies that show that time spent outdoors can: Improve stress levels; Lessen symptoms of depression; Reduce anxiety; Lower blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension; and Lower production of stress hormones such as cortisol.

A common contact with nature is our relationships with animals. Over the past 2 years, many households have either welcomed a new pet into their home or relied more heavily on their pet for companionship and emotional support. There are a range of studies that show both the protective factors of pet ownership on our mental health and the possible stressors of pet ownership such as worrying about who will care for them if we became ill. Some of the protective elements of pet ownership are that they can encourage greater physical activity (particularly for dog and horse owners) and that they provide companionship and reduce feelings of loneliness or isolation. Spending time with animals taps into our need for connection with nature whether that's a visit to the zoo, watching our fish in their tank at home, curling up on the couch with a pet or playing with our pets in the backyard.

In the winter time, spending time in nature remains important, but if you can't face the cold outdoors, studies have shown that, while not as good as getting into the real thing, engaging with nature through watching nature documentaries, having photos or images of natural scenes around you and cultivating indoor plants still has strong positive benefits.

Resources

[Nature healing for anxiety, depression and stress | MensLine Australia](https://mensline.org.au/deal-with-anxiety/nature-healing-for-anxiety-depression-and-stress/)

<https://mensline.org.au/deal-with-anxiety/nature-healing-for-anxiety-depression-and-stress/>

[Pets and the pandemic: the impact our animals had on our mental health and wellbeing](https://theconversation.com/pets-and-the-pandemic-the-impact-our-animals-had-on-our-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

([theconversation.com](https://theconversation.com/pets-and-the-pandemic-the-impact-our-animals-had-on-our-mental-health-and-wellbeing))

<https://theconversation.com/pets-and-the-pandemic-the-impact-our-animals-had-on-our-mental-health-and-wellbeing-153393>

[Nature walks around Canberra -](https://www.act.gov.au/our-canberra/latest-news/2021/october/the-best-nature-walks-around-canberra)

<https://www.act.gov.au/our-canberra/latest-news/2021/october/the-best-nature-walks-around-canberra>

Spiritual wellness

Spiritual wellness is often a misunderstood concept. It refers not to any particular religious or spiritual practice or ideology but to the human need for meaning, purpose and connection to something greater than ourselves. This aspect of our health may be met through the practice of a religious faith, through a deeply felt connection to nature or through a passion for our professional vocation. It is a very diverse and often individualised aspect to health, but some would argue it is the most important, giving context and meaning to all other parts of ourselves and our life experiences.

Times of change and disruption often result in some degree of questioning of "what is the meaning of all this?" Or "why is this happening?" It is easy to get caught up in the immediate moment. At such times it is a healthy thing to do to reorient yourself to your place in the world and your purpose beyond the needs of immediate events. That may be taking a few minutes reminding yourself of your long term research, study or professional goals and reconnecting with a larger body of work, it may be introducing or reintroducing a regular worship, prayer or meditation practice, or being very deliberate to go out in nature to observe, connect, appreciate and honour it. Make time each day - it doesn't have to be a long time if you can't spare it - to reconnect with the larger world.

The search for meaning is an essential human endeavour and can result in as many different conclusions as there are people in the world! For some people, engaging in our spiritual wellness is a wonderful opportunity to indulge in some deep thinking, prayer or meditation about ourselves and our world, for others it may seem overwhelming, uncomfortable and unwelcome. Be kind and respectful to yourself and others about what you need in regards to your spiritual health, but if you find that there is a gap for you, take the opportunity to try on some new approaches to life and living, to explore some different ways of thinking about the world and find a good fit for yourself and your daily life.



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Resources

- [ANU Chaplaincy service-](https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/chaplaincy)
<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/chaplaincy>
- [Head to Health. Spirituality](https://headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/connectedness/spirituality)
<https://headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/connectedness/spirituality>
- [Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander services -](https://iaha.com.au/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-connected-stronger-together/)
<https://iaha.com.au/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-connected-stronger-together/>
- [Spiritual Care Australia -](https://www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au/)
<https://www.spiritualcareaustralia.org.au/>

Supports for staff and students



For Staff:

ANU Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):

Staff and their immediate families are entitled to 4 free sessions (and more can be negotiated if required) per year

Relationships Australia:

Phone (02) 6122 7100

Website: www.relationships.com.au

Assure:

Phone: 1800 808 374

Website: www.assureprograms.com.au

Assistance for managers: Managers are encouraged to approach their local Human Resources (HR) Manager for assistance initially, then HR Division and/or the Adviser to Staff. Assure also offer a Manager Support Program (MSP) on **1800 505 015**.

ANU Adviser to Staff

Phone: Chancelry (+61) - 02 6125 3616 Counselling Centre (+61) - 02 6125 2442

Email: Staff.Adviser@anu.edu.au

For Students:

ANU Counselling: Free service, no referral required.

<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/health-safety-wellbeing/counselling/anu-counselling/appointments>

ANU Psychology Clinic: By referral and appointment only. Fees apply but at a reduced rate. Ph:+61 2 6125 8498; Email: psychology.clinic@anu.edu.au

ANU Thrive: Student led programs for wellbeing
<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/anu-thrive>

ANU Chaplaincy: Multi-Faith service.
<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/chaplaincy>

Respectful Relationships Unit:
<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/respectful-relationships-unit>

Academic Skills Can assist with time management, study/workload planning
<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/academic-skills>

Access and Inclusion: For students with medical needs and/or disabilities:
<http://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/access-inclusion>

Coming Events

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month - June	
	Bowel Cancer Awareness Month is Bowel Cancer Australia's signature event to raise awareness of Australia's second deadliest cancer and funds dedicated to prevention, early diagnosis, research, quality treatment and the best care for everyone affected by bowel cancer. Bowel cancer claims the lives of 101 Australians every week (5,255 people a year) - but it's one of the most treatable types of cancer if found early - register your interest , fundraise and/or order an awareness pack.
World Allergy Week 5 – 11 June	
	Professor Motohiro Ebisawa, President of the World Allergy Organization (WAO), warmly welcomes you to World Allergy Week 2022 (5-11 June). Each year, WAO selects a disease topic that has a need for greater attention and provides physicians and the general public with a webinar, infographic, and additional information to educate and spread awareness on the topic. This year the focus is on the connection between asthma and allergic airway diseases. Return to this page for updates including press releases, information about the webinar, and other resources.
Men's Health Week – 13-19 June	
	International Men's Health Week is celebrated every year around the world in the middle of June. It is an important opportunity to highlight the importance of men's health, and to promote and support the health and wellbeing of men and boys in our communities. Men's Health Week focuses on not just physical health, but also men's mental health and emotional wellbeing, highlighting the health challenges faced by men in Australia and worldwide.
World Blood Donor Day – 14 June	
	For 2022, the World Blood Donor Day slogan will be "Give blood and keep the World beating". It's a slogan that highlights the essential contribution that blood donors make to keep the world pulsating. That is by saving lives and improving other's health. It also reinforces the global call for more people to donate blood regularly. A significant focus of this year's campaign will be the role of young people in ensuring a safe blood supply. Worldwide, young people have been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at achieving safe blood supplies through voluntary, non-remunerated blood donations.
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Day – 27 June	
	Raising awareness of PTSD in the hope that when more people know about the condition, more people who suffer from it will get proper treatment. Did you know that over 1 million Australians at any one time have PTSD? PTSD is a set of reactions that can occur after someone has been through a traumatic event. The chance of developing PTSD depends on the type of event experienced, but about 5-10% of Australians will suffer from PTSD at some point in their lives.
National Diabetes Week 10 – 16 July	
	This year's awareness week will focus on the emotional health and well-being of people living with diabetes. Check the website for more details closer to the date - Diabetes Australia - Support for people living with diabetes
National Pain Week 24 – 31 July	
	Chronic pain is arguably Australia, and the world's, fastest-growing medical condition. 1 in 5 Australians live with chronic pain - including adolescents and children. This includes 1 in 3 people over the age of 65. 1 in 5 GP consultations involve a patient with chronic pain and almost 5% report severe, disabling chronic pain. The prevalence of chronic pain is projected to increase as Australia's population ages – from around 3.2 million in 2007 to 5 million by 2050.
Donate Life Week 24 – 31 July	
	Donate Life Week is a national campaign that promotes donation and encourages more people to talk to their family and register. While the majority of Australians believe it's important to be an organ and tissue donor, only one in 3 are currently registered. How can I get involved? Register to be an organ and tissue donor – it only takes a minute! You just need your Medicare card. Then tell your family and friends that you want to be a donor. Encourage them to talk about it and register too!
August - Tradies Health Month	
	August is Tradies National Health Month, focusing on the health of Australia's Tradies. Trades make up almost one-third (30%) of Australia's workforce and findings from Worksafe Australia show they represent over half (58%) of serious claims for workers' compensation. The most common are muscular stress injuries from lifting, carrying and moving loads, along with more serious claims of traumatic joint injuries, with shoulders, knees and backs being the most common. These sort of injuries not only cause pain, weakness and inability to work but can have a larger impact on health, fitness and overall wellbeing. Not to mention the financial impact time off work can have on individuals, families and the wider community.
Dental Health Week 1 – 7 August	
	Dental Health Week (DHW) is the Australian Dental Association's (ADA) annual oral health campaign. The 2022 campaign focuses on the importance of taking steps to care for your teeth and gums to help you to keep your teeth and smile for life. 1. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. 2. Clean between your teeth daily using floss or interdental brushes. 3. Eat a healthy, balanced diet and limit added sugar intake. 4. Visit the dentist regularly for check-ups and preventive care.
Dying to Know Day 8 August	
	The Groundswell Project Australia, is calling on Australians to 'get dead set' around death and dying as part of its annual Dying to Know campaign. This year, the campaign asks people of all ages and stages of life to prioritise compassionate conversations and 'get dead set' around the reality of death and dying. It outlines simple steps people can take around end-of-life planning, which is personal and unique to everyone. The campaign invites Australians to overcome their fears or discomfort around death and take action on end-of-life planning in a way that is right for them.
Daffodil Day – 25 August	
	The Daffodil Day Appeal is Cancer Council's most iconic and much-loved fundraising campaign. It's a chance for Australians to come together and show their Flower Power; their ability to create change in the lives of people impacted by cancer, by funding cancer research.