

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

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**NEW YEAR A GOOD TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH TO LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH**

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that the AMA is encouraging people who may have a medical or health problem that they are keeping to themselves to use the New Year to act and discuss it with their GP.

Dr Bartone said the New Year is a good time for people to adopt a new and better approach to looking after their own health.

“The ‘it’ll be right’ attitude can far too often lead to circumstances where it isn’t right at all,” Dr Bartone said.

“Prevention is better than any cure, and you don’t have to be sick to pay a visit to your GP. Identifying a problem sooner rather than later means better health outcomes for the patient.

“For example, the survival rate for people with eight of the most common cancers is more than three times higher when the disease is diagnosed early.

“Just as you regularly service the car, the New Year provides the impetus to get a check-up, identify any risk factors, and take steps to mitigate them so that you are ready for the year ahead.”

Dr Bartone said the summer New Year is the perfect time to have a skin check.

“That new mole or the one that has changed shape or is starting to itch needs to be looked at and looked at now,” Dr Bartone said.

“And with today’s busy lifestyles, feeling stressed is commonplace. Constantly feeling stressed is not only bad for your mental health, it is bad for your physical health.

“Being stressed all the time can lead to depression, lower your immune system, increase your blood pressure, give you heartburn, and increase your glucose levels.

“Your GP can help you with managing your levels of stress and help you prevent the occurrence of conditions such as gastrointestinal issues, coronary heart disease, or Type 2 diabetes.”

Dr Bartone said identifying risk factors for such conditions, and providing advice towards preventing their emergence or their exacerbation, is a fundamental part of what GPs do for patients every single day.

“Don’t think they don’t have time for you, because they do. All you need to do is book an appointment,” he said.

“If you haven’t had a check-up for a while, the holidays are a perfect time to schedule one.

“Giving up smoking, reducing your alcohol intake, eating a nutritional balanced diet, and being more active, are all things your GP could help you with.

“Start a conversation with your GP today about your health concerns, and partner with them in improving your health outcomes for the year ahead and beyond.”

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