

Has a doctor ever told you that you have:

- ◆ monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
or
- ◆ smouldering myeloma?

Not sure?

To be diagnosed with either of these conditions:

- ◆ You would have had a bone biopsy. This would have involved a doctor sticking a needle into your bone (probably at the back of your hip) to obtain a small sample and
- ◆ Abnormal protein or 'paraprotein' would have been found in your blood or urine.

What would we like you to do?

We would like to hear from people who have been diagnosed with MGUS or smouldering myeloma to ask them a few short questions.

These questions will only take 5–10 minutes of your time.

Hearing from as many people as possible is important to the success of our research into these conditions.

Please call us on
(03) 9635 5323
for more information



Eye health and alcohol

Health 2020 has found that moderate consumption of alcohol might adversely affect the health of our eyes.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of severe vision impairment in older Australians. The condition occurs when the central vision area of the eye deteriorates, making reading, close work and recognising faces more difficult.

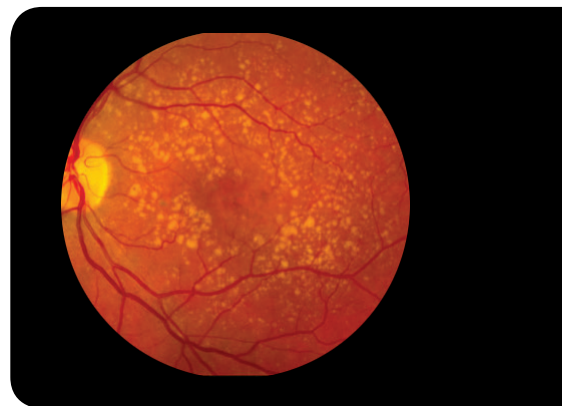
During the Health 2020 follow-up study, more than 20,000 participants had their eyes photographed to allow researchers to see whether factors such as lifestyle or diet were associated with eye health.

One of the findings was that the presence of AMD can be related

to participants' alcohol intake, as measured at the beginning of their participation in the study.

Drinking more than 20 grams of alcohol daily increased the likelihood of having AMD. This amount is equivalent to 2 Australian standard drinks. It was found that wine, beer and spirits all showed the same association.

These findings suggest that it might be beneficial to moderate our consumption of alcohol for the sake of the health of our eyes.



Eye retina showing intermediate age-related macular degeneration. *Image source: National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health*

HEALTH 2020

A study of lifestyle and health

www.cancervic.org.au/health2020

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Secret life of knees

Knees are something we take for granted until things begin to go wrong. These amazing joints serve us well, but their effectiveness can be reduced by conditions such as osteoarthritis, which can dramatically affect our mobility and quality of life. Health 2020 has carried out a study aimed at discovering how to keep knees healthy.

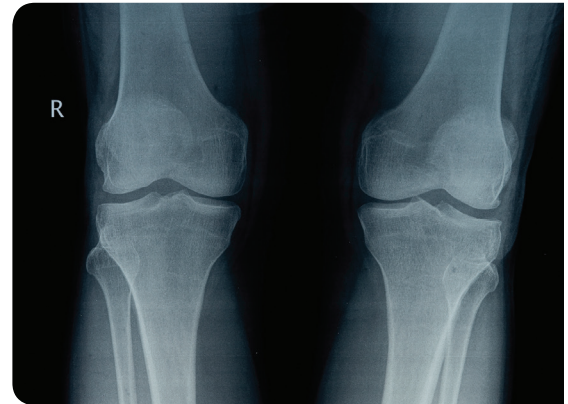
In a normal knee joint, the ends of the bones are covered by a layer of cartilage. Cartilage helps the joint move smoothly and cushions the ends of the bones. In osteoarthritis, the cartilage breaks down and becomes thin. While some of this cartilage damage is the result of wear and tear, the findings of the Health 2020 study suggest this is not the whole story.

Most researchers looking at osteoarthritis have studied people who are already suffering from the condition. The Health 2020 study instead looked at the healthy knee, aiming to identify ways of keeping knees healthy.

Almost 300 Health 2020 participants took part in the study. It took two years to complete, with the participants having an MRI scan of their knees at the beginning and end of the study. The scans allowed researchers to look inside the knee structure to see whether there were changes in the health of the joints over the two years. In particular, they were interested to see if diet had an effect on the knee.

The study found that knee health was affected by diet in a number of ways: both bad and good.

In a healthy knee, the tissue inside the bones appears normal. But when a knee is starting to develop problems, there can be visible changes in this bone marrow tissue. The study found that these undesirable changes were more likely to occur with a diet higher in saturated fats (e.g. animal fats, such as butter, cream and fat on meats).



However, it also found that there were foods that provided protection against these bone changes. Diets rich in vitamin C and fruit were found to be beneficial, and foods containing the substances lutein and zeaxanthin were found to decrease the risk of damage to the cartilage that covers the joints. The foods containing the most lutein and zeaxanthin are leafy green vegetables, but they are also found in a number of other foods such as broccoli, peas and sweet corn.

The findings suggest that changing diet might be one means of preventing knee osteoarthritis, however, more research is needed to confirm this.

A diet rich in fruit and vegetables and low in animal fats has been recommended for maintenance of good health in a number of areas.

This study suggests that protecting the health of the knee is another good reason to pay attention to what we eat.



Want us to email your next newsletter?

Just type into your email subject line 'e-news please' and include your name and Health 2020 ID number (if you know it) and send to: HEALTH2020@cancervic.org.au

OR tick the box at the bottom of the contact details strip