

## Thumbs up for homely husbands

What many women have known for years is finally official: that the more husbands are involved in housework, the higher the psychological wellbeing of their wives.

Research on more than 1600 couples has confirmed that in comparison with women whose husbands were highly involved in housework, those whose partners couldn't find the vacuum cleaner or toilet brush were 1.6 times more likely to be distressed, 2.9 times more likely to be uncomfortable with their husbands, and 2.7 times more likely to be unhappy.

Source: American Journal of Public Health, cited in Australian Doctor newspaper.



## Pre-diabetes danger

Diabetes has long been identified as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Now an Australian study has shown that diabetes can be dangerous even before it's fully established.

Research at the International Diabetes Institute in Melbourne has shown that people with pre-diabetes – where the body begins struggling to process sugar – have more than double the risk of dying from heart disease compared to people with normal blood sugar metabolism.

The study, published in the journal *Circulation*, involved 10,428 people who were tested for their ability to process an oral dose of glucose.

Over the following five years, there were 298 deaths. Of the 88 people that died due to heart disease, 65 per cent were either known diabetics, newly-diagnosed diabetics, or had higher than normal blood sugar levels. Following the findings, the authors stressed the importance of detecting and treating pre-diabetes.

Source: The Australian online at [theaustralian.news.com.au](http://theaustralian.news.com.au).

## Cut back on cola

If you often grab a cola to give you a kick-start during the day, you might want to consider cutting back. Drinking any type of cola could be putting your kidneys at risk, suggests a new study from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in North Carolina, USA.

If you drink more than two servings of cola a day, you more than double the likelihood of developing kidney disease, researchers found. They found no similar risk with other carbonated beverages.

The researchers did not believe it was either the caffeine or the sugar in cola that was the culprit. Instead, they pointed the finger at phosphoric acid, which gives cola its characteristic tangy taste, while also acting as a preservative.

Exposure to high levels of phosphates has been linked to acute and long-term kidney damage, as well as kidney stones.

While the lead researcher suggested the findings should be repeated before sweeping recommendations could be made on reducing cola consumption, the researcher did advise that moderation was always a good thing.

Source: Epidemiology, cited at Reuters Health.

## MYTH UNDERSTOOD

### Do copper bracelets help relieve arthritis?

Copper bracelets are often sold on the promise of relieving the pain of arthritis, a claim based upon a number of theories.

Some say that the copper dissolves in sweat and is absorbed into the skin, helping to rejuvenate the cartilage of the affected joint. Others believe that the electrical charges generated on the skin from the copper bracelet travel along the acupuncture meridians at the wrist, relieving pain. Still others argue that the bracelets reduce soreness by increasing the blood flow, and bringing more oxygen to the areas of inflammation.

While many people support these claims, and some studies have found that copper bracelets appear to improve pain, there is no conclusive evidence to back up any of the theories.

Many studies have looked at the role of copper, and how it affects the growth of cartilage, so in the future researchers may discover some new ways to use this important element.

In the meantime, copper remains a necessary part of our diet, essential for normal metabolism, brain development, and in the production of haemoglobin, myelin, collagen, and melanin.

The elderly may be at risk of copper deficiency because of an inadequate diet, while zinc supplements can also reduce your copper levels. Shellfish, whole grains, liver, and kidney are rich sources of copper, as too is dark chocolate.

Given how toxic copper can be in excess, don't take a supplement unless it's been prescribed. If you like the look of copper bracelets and jewellery, however, wearing them won't do you any harm!

Main sources: [mydr.com.au](http://mydr.com.au); [about.com](http://about.com); and Health Minutes at [abc.net.au](http://abc.net.au).

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