



Asthma Awareness Week

1 - 7 September

Asthma Week 2019 is themed **Asthma in Disguise**.

Find it hard to breathe in spring? It may actually be asthma in disguise. Asthma and hay fever are closely linked, so managing hay fever is an important part of asthma care.



Asthma and hay fever affect over 2.5 million Australians



About 80% of people with asthma also have hay fever



Asthma impacts 1 in 9 Australians



Asthma is common in children, however it can start later in life

What is asthma?

Asthma is a medical condition that affects the airways. From time to time, people with asthma find it difficult to breathe in and out, because the airways in their lungs become narrower – some describe it as trying to breathe through a thin straw. At other times their breathing is normal.

There is no cure for asthma, but it can usually be well controlled with the use of medications, regular check-ups with your GP, and having an adequate action plan for when symptoms occur. Most people with asthma can stay active and have a healthy life.

The most common symptoms of asthma are:

- wheezing – a high-pitched sound coming from the chest while breathing
- a feeling of not being able to get enough air in the lungs or being short of breath
- a feeling of tightness in the chest
- persistent coughing.

You don't have to have all these symptoms to have asthma.

Asthma symptoms can be triggered by different things for different people. Common triggers include exercise, cold air, cigarette smoke, colds and flu, and allergens in the air (e.g. grass pollen).

Hay fever and asthma

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to allergens breathed in through the nose. This causes inflammation of the nasal passage causing itchy or runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes, blocked nose and coughing. People with asthma who have hay fever experience more asthma flare-ups, more GP visits and hospitalisations, more time off work, and higher annual medical costs.

It is important to treat and manage both your asthma and hay fever well.

Remember, if you experience persistent coughing, wheezing or sneezing, talk to your doctor to be diagnosed, or pharmacist to help manage your asthma and hay fever.

R U OK? day

R U OK?[™]

A conversation could change a life.



12 September is R U OK? day which encourages everyone to connect with the people around them and start a conversation with anyone who may be struggling with life or work. You don't need to be an expert to reach out - just a good friend and a great listener!

How to ask:

Ask are you ok?

- Be relaxed, friendly and concerned in your approach.
- Help them open up by asking questions like "How are you going?" or "What's been happening?"
- Mention specific things that have made you concerned for them, like "You seem less chatty than usual. How are you going?"

Listen without judgement

- Take what they say seriously and don't interrupt or rush the conversation.
- Don't judge their experiences or reactions but acknowledge that things seem tough for them.
- If they need time to think, sit patiently with the silence.
- Encourage them to explain: "How are you feeling about that?" or "How long have you felt that way?"
- Show that you've listened by repeating back what you've heard (in your own words) and ask if you have understood them properly.

Encourage action

- Ask: "What have you done in the past to manage similar situations?"
- Ask: "How would you like me to support you?"
- Ask: "What's something you can do for yourself right now? Something that's enjoyable or relaxing?"
- You could say: "When I was going through a difficult time, I tried this... You might find it useful too."

- If they've been feeling really down for more than 2 weeks, encourage them to see a health professional. You could say, "It might be useful to link in with someone who can support you. I'm happy to help you find the right person to talk to."
- Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times.

Check in

- Pop a reminder in your diary to call them in a couple of weeks. If they're really struggling, follow up with them sooner.
- You could say: "I've been thinking of you and wanted to know how you've been going since we last chatted."
- Ask if they've found a better way to manage the situation. If they haven't done anything, don't judge them. They might just need someone to listen to them for the moment.
- Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.

For more information, go to www.ruok.org.au

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

If you need to talk to someone call Lifeline on **13 11 14**, or access their Online Crisis Support Service at www.lifeline.org.au (available nightly).

Chocolate peanut butter 'nice' cream

Do you want to satisfy that chocolate craving without feeling guilty? Here is a great alternative to sugary ice-creams which is sure to hit the spot.

Ingredients

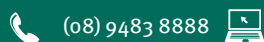
- ▶ 4 frozen bananas (chopped)
- ▶ 3 tbsp peanut butter
- ▶ 1 tbsp cacao powder
- ▶ ¼ cup almond milk

Method

1. Blend all ingredients together until desired consistency is reached.
2. Enjoy!



Lvl 3 170 Railway Parade,
West Leederville WA 6007



(08) 9483 8888

www.lgiswa.com.au

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Contact Renee Wockner, LGIS WorkCare Services Manager,
on 9483 8826 for more information on our health and wellbeing services.