

# HEALTH matters

# Travel health

Tips to help your travels go off without a hitch this holiday season



PERINATAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Signs and symptoms and where to go for help

TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR HEALTHCARE

Tips on how you can become actively involved

EATING DISORDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The facts and where to go for support



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  AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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Editor: Lauren Deering

# Calendar

#### **NOVEMBER 2016**

ALPHA-1 Awareness Month — supporting people affected by Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency

0 - 12	Australian Food Safety Week
13 – 19	Perinatal Depression and Anxiety (PNDA)

Australian Food Cafety Wook

**14** World Diabetes Day

**14 – 20** Antibiotic Awareness Week

Awareness Week

World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day – Lung Foundation Australia

20 – 26 National Skin Cancer Action Week

21 – 27 National Asbestos Awareness Week

#### **DECEMBER 2016**

Decembeard Month – Bowel Cancer Australia

1	World AIDS Day
25	Christmas Day (UniHealth Insurance closed)
26	Boxing Day (UniHealth Insurance closed)
27	Public Holidau (UniHealth Insurance closed)

#### **JANUARY 2017**

1	New Year's Day (UniHealth Insurance closed)
2	Public Holiday (UniHealth Insurance closed)
26	Australia Dau (UniHealth Insurance closed)

#### **FEBRUARY 2017**

**REDFEB Heart Research Month** 

6 – 10	Tube Feeding Awareness Week – supporting
	those affected by eosinophilic disorders

**4** World Cancer Day

**14** Heart Research Day

**26** Wear Red Day – Heart Research Australia

The dates and events listed are major awareness days, weeks and months related to health and ageing. For further information, please visit **health.gov.au** and click on 'Calendar of Events'.



# From the CEO

At UniHealth Insurance we continuously strive to improve our members' experience. We listen to you. We understand that you want simple and efficient interactions with us. Projects are now underway to lift our internal capabilities to support our member service channels, so that we can provide members with a firstclass experience, regardless of when or where you choose to interact with us. This initiative will deliver significant improvements in the member experience over time. In the last 12 months the first initiatives have been rolled out with the launch of our new website, online join form and mobile claiming app. This is an exciting time and we look forward to delivering more improvements in the coming months.

We also understand that you want the most out of your private health insurance cover and your Fund. Over the last year we have introduced enhancements to products and expanded our service offerings through additional health and wellbeing programs and resources.

In an ever changing and increasingly challenging health

insurance environment, our members can be confident that UniHealth Insurance remains committed to operating in an open and transparent manner. We will strive to work in the interests of our members more broadly through the active lobbying of government, participation in industry forums, providing submissions and discussion papers on key health reform issues and by seeking opportunities to work with relevant bodies.

We pride ourselves on operating for the benefit of members and delivering value for money.
We continue to give back to members and in the last financial year returned 91 cents in every dollar of contributions received. If you would like to read more about our financial results for 2015/16, our Annual Report is available for download from unihealthinsurance.com.au.

Yours sincerely,

Brad Joyce

Brad Joyce, CEO

# NOTICEBOARD

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^Eligibility criteria and conditions apply. Visit <u>unihealthinsurance.com.au/spreadtheword</u> for terms and conditions.

#### **MOBILE CLAIMING**

Download our mobile app for simple and convenient claiming. Don't forget to:

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- submit official receipts, not HICAPS receipts
- include your correct membership number when submitting your claim
- send any supporting documents that are required

For more information and to download the app, visit <u>unihealthinsurance.com.au/using-your-health-cover/how-claim/claiming-extras/</u>

#### FRAUD PREVENTION

To help ensure that your membership is protected from fraud or misuse, remember:

- report any stolen or lost membership cards within 24 hours
- never leave your membership card with service providers
- check your limits online
- keep your online member services password safe and change it regularly
- always check your receipts including signing for services claimed electronicallu

 $\label{thm:cover_loss} Visit\ \underline{unihealthinsurance.com.au/using-your-health-cover/} \ \underline{how-claim}$ 



# Travel health tips

With the holidays fast approaching, you might be thinking of planning a trip overseas. We've compiled some useful tips to help your travels go off without a hitch this holiday season.

#### **PLAN AHEAD**

Planning ahead will not only increase your sense of excitement ahead of overseas travel, it can also help to keep you safe and healthy. Don't forget to research your travel destination to ensure you are aware of any health risks and security situations, that you understand entry and exit requirements and can observe local laws and customs.

#### **VISIT YOUR DOCTOR**

Visit your GP or travel health clinic to find out whether vaccinations or booster doses are needed. Remember you might is legal there need a number of doses, and time for your body to develop full immunity.

Some countries also require proof of immunisation before you enter, so check with your doctor.

#### **PACK A MEDICAL KIT**

Make sure you pack enough of any medications that you need or organise a prescription to take with you. Remember, it's illegal to take PBS medicines out of Australia unless the medicine is for your personal use or that of someone travelling with you. If you are taking PBS medication with you:

- check with the embassy of your travel destination to make sure your medicine
- obtain, and carry with you, a letter from your GP stating that the medicine

is for your own use or that of a person travelling with you. Details of what the medicine is for and how you'll be taking it should also be included

■ leave the medicine in its original packaging so it can be easily identified.

#### **ORGANISE TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Travel insurance can help to protect you and your family while you're travelling. Explore the world with peace of mind knowing that expenses arising from unexpected events, such as medical emergencies and evacuations, are covered. Visit

unihealthinsurance.com.au/otherinsurance/travel-insurance for more information.

## → Travel tip!

Don't forget to give someone at home a copy of your itinerary and register your travel plans at smartraveller.gov.au

To reduce fatigue caused by travel across time zones, make sure you've had enough sleep before you leave and sleep during your flight where possible. Drink plenty of water, avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks and eat small, light meals. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and when allowed, walk around the cabin. On arrival, spend time outdoors daylight will help to 'reset' your internal body clock. Speak with your GP if you're considering using medications, such as sleeping tablets, during your flight.

#### **DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)**

A DVT is a blood clot that forms in the deep veins of the leg. While there's debate as to the contribution flying makes to the formation of DVT in susceptible people, it's worth remembering ways to reduce your risks. These include wearing loose clothing, drinking plenty of fluids, avoiding alcohol, moving around the cabin whenever possible, performing leg and foot stretches while seated and avoiding sitting with crossed legs.

## ■ Travel tip!

If you suffer badly from jet lag, it could be worthwhile considering a westerly route if possible - travelling in a westerly direction prolongs the body clock's experience of its normal day-night cycle reducing jet-lag.

#### WHILE YOU'RE AWAY

#### **EATING AND DRINKING**

The most common travel-related illnesses are gastrointestinal. To help avoid the unpleasant and dangerous symptoms associated with these illnesses remember to keep hydrated (boiled water, bottled water with a safety seal lid or water purifiers where necessary) and avoid ice in drinks. When it comes to food, avoid shellfish and unpasteurised milk or dairy products, choose thick skinned fruit and vegetables that you can peel yourself and make sure food is cooked thoroughly and eaten while hot.

#### **INSECT BITES**

By protecting yourself against mosquito bites, you may be avoiding some potentially serious infections. Wear mosquito repellent (at least 30 per cent DEET) and apply it to your clothes and bedding, stay indoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes generally feed, stay in air-conditioned, screened accommodation and use a bed net.

#### **SUN SAFETY**

Whether you're heading overseas or staying at home, it's important to protect your skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation. This month marks National Skin Cancer Action Week so remember the Cancer Council's simple guidelines:

**Slip** on sun-protective clothing

**Slop** on broad-spectrum, water resistant SPF30+ or higher sunscreen (20 minutes before you go outdoors and reapply every two hours)

Slap on a broad rim hat

Seek shade

**Slide** on sunglasses that meet the Australian Standards.

## Y Travel tip!

Snow activities such as skiing or snowboarding also pose a high risk of sunburn and skin damage. Snow is highly reflective of UV radiation and exposed skin is at risk even on cold and cloudy days, so always cover up with clothing, eye protection and sunscreen and seek shade from the

#### **WATER SAFETY**

If you're enjoying a day at the beach or an inland water way, lazing by the pool or out boating, it's important to stay safe and vigilant around water. Remember these simple tips and make sure that children are supervised at all times in and around water.

**Beach safety:** swim at patrolled beaches, between the flags

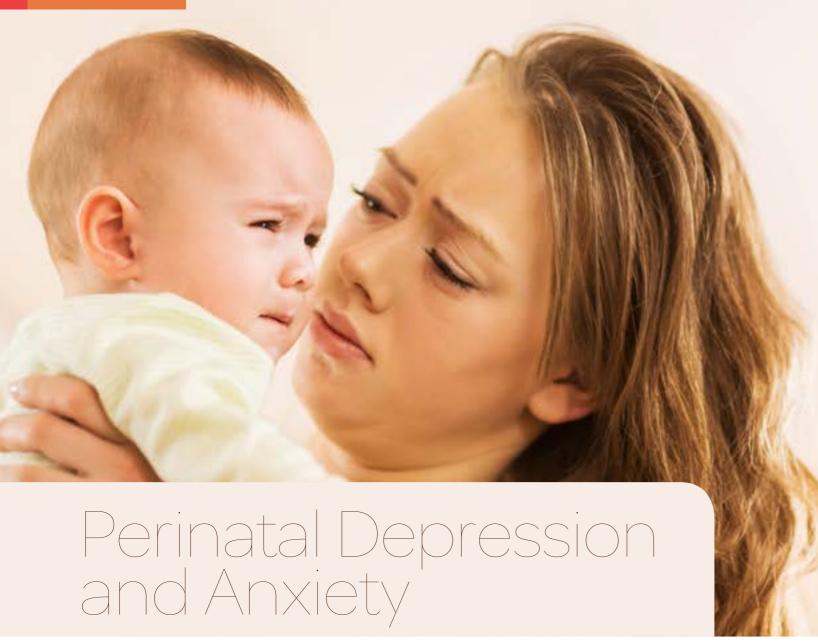
#### Inland water (lakes, rivers, dams):

check the water depth before entering slowly, beware of submerged objects and never dive in head first. Check for strong currents and fast-flowing water and be aware of changing water conditions. Cold water can be lethal and it is often much colder beneath the surface than you think

**Pool safety:** ensure pools have a secure and working fence and gate

**Boating:** check both the weather and vessel before heading out on the water. Make sure your vessel is appropriate and that you have experience for the conditions. Ensure there's an appropriately sized life jacket for each person on board.

Sources: Better Health Channel betterhealth.vic.gov.au, Smart Traveller smartraveller.gov.au, Cancer Council cancer.org.au, NSW Government Water Safety watersafety.nsw.gov.au, UniHealth Insurance Travel Insurance unihealthinsurance.com.au/ other-insurance/travel-insurance, Allianz Global Assistance allianz-global-assistance.com



anxiety or postnatal depression. This can be a particularly difficult time for new parents as they care for their newborn whilst trying to deal with the symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. It's a time of great adjustment for new parents which can bring about mixed emotions of happiness, fear or doubt.

Both women and men can experience perinatal mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. While many know that anxiety and depression can affect new mothers, many new fathers aren't aware of the risk.

#### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

There are varying symptoms that both men and women may experience, from persistent worry or constant tiredness to withdrawing from friends and family. These include:

- Panic attacks
- Persistent, generalised worry, often focused on fears for the health or wellbeing of the baby
- The development of obsessive or compulsive behaviours
- Abrupt mood swings
- Feeling constantly sad, low, or crying for no obvious reason

- Being nervous, 'on edge', or panicky
- Feeling constantly tired and lacking energy or experiencing issues with sleep
- Having little or no interest in the things that usually bring joy
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Being easily annoyed or irritated
- Finding it difficult to focus, concentrate or remember
- Engaging in more risk taking behaviours
- Having thoughts of self-harm.

#### WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

- Speak to your GP or health professional you are not alone
- Contact Pregnancy, Birth & Baby on
   1800 882 436 free call 7 days or visit pregnancybirthbaby.org.au for more information
- Contact Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA) on 1300
   726 306 (Monday – Friday 10am –
   5pm) or visit panda.org.au for more information
- Speak to trusted family members or friends.

Call Lifeline 13 11 14

Crisis Chat Support

If life is in danger call **000** 

#### com.au/health-support/teachershealthcare-services/

SMS4Dads

I need help

NOW!

Men also experience their partner's pregnancy and birth of a new baby which can be a stressful time filled with new challenges and adjustments. SMS4Dads is a free service that keeps in touch with dads before and after birth via their mobile phones. Dads who register will receive text messages with tips, information and links to other services, as well as monitoring

wellbeing. Register at sms4dads.com

**RESOURCES FOR NEW PARENTS** 

collaboration with early childhood experts,

members to navigate the first few months

of life with a newborn. The innovative and

specialised program provides practical information and support on a range

of early parenting matters including

sleep and settling routines. Members

participating in the program also receive

access to telephone consultations with a

trained Safe Sleep Space consultant. For

more information, visit unihealthinsurance.

Safe Sleep Space & Nourish Perinatal

Wellness with the aim of helping our

UniHealth Insurance's New Family

program has been developed in

**New Family Program** 

PERINATAL, ANTENATAL, POSTNATAL – a snapshot

- Antenatal depression/anxiety before birth or during pregnancy
- Postnatal depression/anxiety
   after birth or up to a year later.
   This is different to the baby blues
   common during the first weeks after
   birth
- Perinatal depression/anxiety collective term to describe both antenatal and postnatal

pregnancybirthbaby.org.au

Pregnancy and having a baby can be one of life's most rewarding experiences for expecting and new parents, but it can also be one of the most challenging. This month marks Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week which aims to raise awareness of signs and symptoms and where to go for help.

The combination of physical, social and emotional changes in pregnancy and early parenthood may lead to mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety in some people. Up to one in 10 expecting mums and one in 20 expecting dads experience antenatal depression and more than one in seven new mums and up to one in 10 new dads are diagnosed with postnatal depression each year. Even more are thought to suffer with anxiety<sup>1</sup>.

Sources: Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA) **panda.org.au**, Beyond Blue **beyondblue.org.au**, Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE) **cope.org.au**, Way Ahead Mental Health Association NSW **pnda.wayahead.org.au**, SMS4dads **sms4dads.com**, Pregnancy, Birth & Baby

<sup>1</sup> PANDA - www.panda.org.au/images/FINAL\_PDF\_Anxiety\_and\_Depression\_in\_Early\_Parenthood.pdf

WHAT ARE PERINATAL
DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY?

Depression and anxiety can start before or during pregnancy and continue after childbirth. The term 'perinatal' is used to cover the whole period from conception to when the baby is 12 months old. During this time, it's normal for new parents to experience a degree of anxiety due to all the changes, but some may develop a more pronounced anxiety, or depression, which can impact on day-to-day life.

Anxiety or depression that begins in the year after birth is referred to as postnatal

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# in your healthcare

It's common to feel overwhelmed by all the information you receive relating to your health and wellbeing, but evidence suggests that people who take an active role in their healthcare are better able to manage chronic conditions and recover more quickly from

Actively participating in your healthcare means choosing to be included in all decision making, planning and goal setting. Understanding your condition and treatment will help you to make informed decisions about your care and be better prepared. Here are some tips to help support you in becoming actively involved in your healthcare.

#### **GOOD COMMUNICATION**

Best possible health outcomes, tailored for you, are based on honest, open and effective two-way communication between you and the healthcare professionals you engage with. Your healthcare team can help with a huge array of health issues throughout your life, including the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions, education to support self-management and access to support services. It's important to understand everything your healthcare

professional says, including information about your condition(s), treatment options, potential side-effects and costs, and prognosis. It is also important that you feel confident to ask questions and seek clarification or more information.

A significant proportion of healthcare is delivered by primary care services and providers. Primary healthcare is usually the first level of contact that individuals, families and communities have with the healthcare system. Primary healthcare providers include a range of healthcare professionals who work in the community, including GPs, practice nurses, dentists and allied health professionals such as physiotherapists and dietitians. The role of primary healthcare providers is to work collaboratively with you to help maintain or achieve your best possible state of health. It's important that you play an active role in your health, including

shared decision-making and open and trusted communication with uour health professionals.

#### FINDING THE RIGHT HEALTHCARE **PROFESSIONAL**

Different people want different things from their GP and other healthcare professionals, so it's important to find the

# Healthcare and medication

To help avoid unexpected bills, ask your healthcare providers about their charges and Medicare rebates before your appointments. Refer to your membership documents, visit unihealthinsurance.com.au or contact us for information on the benefits available to you as a UniHealth Insurance member.

trained health professional, based on trust and openness, can pave the way to consistent, quality and safe healthcare. Consider recommendations from familu and friends and issues such as location, opening hours, billing and rapport.

It's also good to be prepared for when you aren't able to access your regular GP or healthcare services. The Australian Government's National Health Services Directory (NHSD) can help you find a GP, pharmacy, emergency department and other healthcare services easily, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Visit **nhsd.com.au** for more information.

#### **GET THE MOST OUT OF A VISIT WITH YOUR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**

- 1. Be open and honest and if your health professional isn't familiar with your medical history, make sure you let them know about your medications, including over the counter medications, home remedies, vitamins and minerals. Lifestyle habits such as smoking, diet and physical activity and any prior illnesses or family history that might be relevant to your visit are also important to talk about. Be as specific 5 as you can about any symptoms you are experiencing.
- 2. Write down a list of questions you have about test results, diagnoses, treatment plans and medications before you see your health professional. Include questions

about tests or procedures, the risks involved, possible alternative options and associated costs. If you have lots of things you want to discuss, book a longer visit if possible so you and your healthcare professional don't feel rushed. Don't be afraid to ask even seemingly embarrassing questions - your health professional is trained to answer them.

- 3. If your health professional recommends a course of treatment that you are not comfortable with, ask about possible alternatives and an explanation of the pros and cons of each so you can make an informed decision. Remember, if you start taking medication and encounter problems, don't change the treatment without speaking to your health professional.
- 4. Make sure you are clear about your instructions before the end of your appointment. If you are in doubt about what they mean, ask for more information. Take notes or consider taking a friend or family member with you to help you remember the information. Ask for printed information to take home with you if necessary. Don't forget to ask how you can prepare for your next appointment.
- Remember that your pharmacist is also a good source of information. If you have been prescribed medication, ask your pharmacist any further questions you may have - they may be able to provide you with extra information to help you understand.

### **USEFUL RESOURCES**

Choosing Wisely Australia® is an initiative which encourages conversations and questions about tests, treatments and procedures. Visit **choosingwisely.org.au** for more information and recommendations regarding tests, treatments and procedures to discuss with your health professional.

**Lab Tests Online AU** aims to provide you, the consumer, with all you need to know about pathology tests used to confirm a diagnosis and manage treatment, including information on conditions and diseases, tests and results, health checks or health screenings and a glossary of medical and scientific terms. Visit **labtestsonline.org.au** for more information.

**Know Pathology** aims to inform the Australian public about pathology and its role in informing their healthcare. While everyone born in Australia receives their first pathology test just moments after they are born, and one in two Australians has had a pathology test in the last 12 months, many do not understand pathology or its importance. Visit

**knowpathology.com.au** for more information.

Visit the **Trusted Resources** section of our website for a list of trusted and authoritative organisations which will provide you with safe, correct and up-to-date information on a variety of health topics. Visit unihealthinsurance.com.au for more information.

Sources: RACGP racgp.org.au, Better Health Channel betterhealth.vic. gov.au, Raising Children Network raisingchildren.net.au, Choosing Wisely Australia® choosingwisely. org.au, Lab Tests Online AU <u>labtestsonline.org.au</u>, Know Pathology knowpathology.com.au National Health Services Directoru nhsd.com.au



Adolescence is a time of significant WHAT ARE EATING DISORDERS? change and development, and the physical and social changes that young people experience can impact on their body image and mental health. In this article we look at the facts surrounding eating and Eating Disorders (OSFED). Each disorders and where parents, educators and carers can go for support.

In a recent youth survey conducted by Mission Australia<sup>1</sup>, body image ranked in the top three of all concerns for young people, following stress and school. The media and social media are seen as major contributors to body dissatisfaction, with daily exposure to unrealistic and altered imagery arguably promoting a perception of perfection. Body dissatisfaction can occur as a result of feeling inadequate compared to the ideals presented in these images. This can impact upon an individual's psychological and physical wellbeing and may make some people more vulnerable to developing eating disorders.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) recognises four separate eating disorders: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder and Other Specified Feeding are serious mental illnesses involving an unhealthy obsession with eating, exercise, body weight and shape, and all have a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

Eating disorders can also be related to other serious medical conditions including, but not limited to, depression, anxiety and substance abuse. In some cases, the effects and consequences of an eating disorder can impact every organ of the body and be lifethreatening.

#### **THE FIGURES**

Eating disorders have a significant and often underestimated impact on society. In Australia, about one in 20 has experienced an eating disorder, with as many as one in four Australians through food deprivation and often coincides with over-exercising.

**Bulimia Nervosa** is characterised by repeated binge-eating episodes associated with a sense of auilt and shame. This often leads to compensatory behaviours such as self-induced vomiting, fasting, overexercising and/or misuse of laxatives.

Binge Eating Disorder is characterised by regularly consuming excessive amounts of food, often when not hungry. Where it differs from Bulimia Nervosa is in the absence of purging, despite suffering similar feelings of guilt and shame.

Other Specified Feeding and Eating **Disorders (OSFED)** may present with similar symptoms to other eating disorders, but do not meet the full criteria for diagnosis. OSFED is characterised by feeding or eating behaviours that cause clinically significant distress and impairment in areas of functioning.

knowing someone who has. Two to three in every 100 females in Australia has anorexia or bulimia nervosa and around four in 100 Australians have symptoms of binge eating disorder. While eating disorders are often portrayed as illnesses that only affect females, up to a quarter of people with an eating disorder are male. The peak period for the onset of eating disorders is between the ages of 12 and 25 years, with a median age of around 18 years. Eating disorders do not discriminate and can affect people of any age, gender and cultural or socioeconomic background.

#### **UNDERSTANDING THE SYMPTOMS**

People who suffer from an eating disorder can display one or a combination of symptoms. In some cases, they may not show any signs or symptoms at all. Warning signs may include:

- Rapid weight loss or frequent weight change
- Lethargy and low energy
- Preoccupation with eating, food, body shape and weight

- Feeling anxious and/or irritable around meal times
- A distorted body image
- Using food as a source of comfort or as self-punishment
- Dieting behaviour such as fasting, counting calories, avoiding food
- Frequent trips to the bathroom during or shortly after meals
- Compulsive or excessive exercising
- Secretive behaviour around food.

#### WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

If you recognise one or more of the signs or symptoms in yourself or someone you care about, seek help immediately. Available support services include:

- Your doctor
- The Butterflu Foundation (1800 ED HOPE/1800 33 4673)
- Lifeline (13 11 14)
- Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800)

#### RESOURCES FOR PARENTS, **EDUCATORS AND CARERS**

It's important to encourage conversations around eating disorders and mental health. Parents, educators and carers play a crucial role in the care, support and recovery of people with eating disorders.

The National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC) has developed Eating Disorders in Schools: Prevention, Early Intervention and Response. This is a resource to assist education professionals working in schools to understand eating disorders, promote health and wellbeing within their schools, recognise and respond to eating disorders, and support students who are undergoing treatment for an eating disorder. Visit **nedc.com.au** for more information.

**The Butterfly Foundation** operates a National Eating Disorders Support Helpline that includes support over the phone, via email and online. The Butterfly Foundation also provides workshops, presentations and resources to help young people, professionals and parents address factors influencing negative body image, disordered eating and the development of eating disorders. Visit thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

Sources: National Eating Disorders Collaboration nedc.com.au, BeyondBlue beyondblue.org.au, The  $Butterfly Foundation \\ \underline{the butterfly foundation.org.au}, Eating Disorders Victoria \\ \underline{eating disorders.org.au}$ <sup>1</sup> Mission Australia 2015 Youth Survey: missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-

# Introducing the Member Wellbeing **Network**

To support our members' health and wellbeing, our Member Wellbeing Network has been created to offer our members access to high quality care and a personalised service.

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To find out more visit unihealthinsurance.com.au





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