

Are you the one in 200 with haemochromatosis

Haemochromatosis, or inherited iron overload disorder, is the most common genetic disorder in Australia. It causes the body to absorb excess iron which builds up in the organs and joints over many years and eventually becomes toxic.

Early symptoms include fatigue, aching joints and sexual loss of libido.

If untreated it can lead to more serious and potentially fatal symptoms including diabetes, liver cancer and cirrhosis, heart failure and osteoarthritis.

Despite being so common (one in 200 have the genetic pre-disposition) it is not well known and is under-diagnosed. Often only the individual symptoms are treated and the underlying cause is not recognised.

Those of Irish and European descent are more at risk of carrying and inheriting haemochromatosis. One in seven people carry the condition, and it is equally likely in both sexes.

Tests for the condition are simple and cheap.

If people are diagnosed early and treated then haemochromatosis is no barrier to a normal healthy life.

Treatment is simple, drug free and uncontroversial. Regular venesection, like giving blood at a blood bank, unloads iron. Often this can be done at the Red Cross Blood Service and the blood is useful.

The hereditary condition is estimated to cost Australia's health system about \$280 million annually and add further cost burdens by compounding other chronic conditions when left undiagnosed and untreated.

Recent research showed that undiagnosed haemochromatosis quadruples the risk of liver disease, doubles risk of arthritis and causes higher risk of diabetes and chronic pain.

If you know someone in your family has haemochromatosis, or you have been feeling tired and aching for an extended period, talk to your GP about haemochromatosis.

Social Media campaign *Iron Out Your Health*

Haemochromatosis Australia is running a three-month social media campaign commencing 27 February 2019 to raise awareness about this condition which is easy to test, simple to treat but tragic to ignore. The target audience is 20-35 year olds.

Key points:

- **Haemochromatosis is the most common genetic disorder in Australia**
- **If you are the 1 in 200 affected, it can cause serious health problems**
- **Ask your doctor, find out if you are storing too much iron**



Haemochromatosis Australia

Haemochromatosis Australia is the support, health promotion and advocacy group for people with haemochromatosis and their families. The group has operated continuously for 25 years.

We are a not for profit group run entirely by volunteers. We have been endorsed as a deductible gift recipient by the ATO and are registered as a charity.

We operate an INFO LINE 1300 019 028 and informative website www.ha.org.au . We print publications, quarterly newsletter and organise local support group and information sessions. As part of the campaign we commissioned a number of videos of people telling their haemochromatosis story. The videos can be viewed on our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/HaemochromatosisAust .

Our medical advisors include some of the leading academics and clinicians in the field of haemochromatosis. See our website home page for more information.

Further information

Haemochromatosis Australia website www.ha.org.au

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