

Jingle draws attention to haemochromatosis and Irish heritage

It is the most common genetic disorder in Australia which many have never heard about and don't know their Irish ancestry makes them more at-risk.

That's why Haemochromatosis Australia has chosen St Patrick's Day to release a new jingle to raise awareness of iron-overload which is often under-diagnosed because symptoms are general.

The catchy jingle was written by ABC Illawarra announcer Nick Rheinberger when prepping for a live radio interview with Haemochromatosis Australia president Dr Dianne Prince and he played it on-air during the interview.

Nick said: "The HA word reminded me of James Brown and I just cobbled the jingle together in the ABC Illawarra studio, using a crappy nylon string guitar and an iPhone looping app. It seemed like a fun way to help communicate a serious health condition with a complicated name and message."

HA embraced the jingle, which Nick kindly re-recorded in his home studio as a 30-second community service announcement, and it is now available for play on social media channels, radio and television, as part of the ***Iron out your health*** awareness campaign.

"It is wonderful to have creative people like Nick helping raise awareness about haemochromatosis, which is tricky to say but easy to detect, simple to treat and tragic to ignore," Dr Prince said.

One in 200 Australians have haemochromatosis and one in seven carry the gene, which is more prevalent in people of Celtic and northern European origin. If you inherit the condition from parents, you absorb too much iron from food and this iron overloads body tissues, damages organs and can cause premature death.

"The good news is that early detection means haemochromatosis is no barrier to a normal life and the condition is easily managed through blood donations."

"Haemochromatosis is not a burden in your life if you get on to it early, and the treatment – giving blood – provides a benefit to others. The main symptoms are fatigue, aching joints and loss of libido. Early diagnosis is key to managing and reducing complications," Dr Prince said.

"We suggest young people ask their doctor for a blood test. Those of Irish and European descent are more at risk of carrying and inheriting haemochromatosis, and it is equally likely in both sexes.

"If you're celebrating the Irish in your blood on St Patrick's Day, spare a thought for whether this means you've also inherited the condition sometimes referred to as Celtic's Curse."

Visit the Haemochromatosis Australia website ha.org.au or view the jingle

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qN4rH1HExEIUa9aenGpE1Bg5NK2UsqU_/view

Awareness campaign videos are here <https://www.youtube.com/user/HaemochromatosisAust> or on social media channels.

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