

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**World Health Day: Reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses**

Some people living with diabetes may be more susceptible to infections caused by unsafe foods. On World Health Day (Tuesday 7 April), Diabetes Australia – Vic reminds all 300,000 Victorians living with diabetes to make informed and wise food choices.

This year's campaign message for World Health Day is 'Food safety: from farm to plate, make food safe', highlighting food safety along the whole food chain, from production and transport to preparation and consumption.

"Whilst food safety is an important issue for the whole public, people living with diabetes may be at higher risk of contracting foodborne infections and are more likely to have a lengthier illness and undergo hospitalisation", says DA–Vic Diabetes Education Manager Carolyn Hines.

"Diabetes can affect the body's immune response to infection. It can also affect the functioning of organs such as the kidneys and the gut, making them more prone to infection."

Unsafe foods containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances can cause more than 200 diseases – ranging from diarrhoea to cancers. According to the Australian Food Safety Information Council, food poisoning results in almost 32,000 hospitalisations, more than 80 deaths and 1 million visits to doctors on average each year.

People living with diabetes should be extra cautious when handling, preparing and consuming food. Examples of unsafe foods include raw or undercooked foods (especially meats and eggs), unpasteurised 'raw' milk and 'raw' milk cheeses, improperly reheated food, fruits and vegetables contaminated with faeces and raw shellfish containing marine biotoxins.

DA–Vic recommends following the four basic steps to food safety (clean – separate – cook – chill), and to become a careful shopper. When doing the supermarket shopping it is important to read the labels carefully to make sure foods are not past their use-by-date.

"Reading food labels can often be confusing which is why we offer supermarket tours where local dietitians teach how to accurately read and understand food labels, selecting healthy food alternatives", says Ms Hines.

Learn more about DA–Vic's supermarket tours: [diabetesvic.org.au/type-1-diabetes/healthy-eating/supermarket-tours](http://diabetesvic.org.au/type-1-diabetes/healthy-eating/supermarket-tours)

*Diabetes Australia – Vic is the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes.*

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