

The power of lifestyle medicine in improving the health of our community

“General practice is at the forefront of healthcare in Australia and in a pivotal position to deliver preventive healthcare...Prevention of illness is the key to Australia’s future health – both individually and collectively.” (The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2016)



We recently sat down with Dr Sarah Chu, from Turbot Street Medical Centre in Brisbane, to talk about her passion for preventive health and the role for general practice in shaping the health of our community.

The first step, Dr Chu says, is starting the conversation. “I start by asking what is their long-term goal, then how do they see themselves in five, 10, 20 years?”

“For many people it isn’t about their life span, but their health span - making sure they have quality years ahead of them. And this will look really different for every person.”

Dr Chu says general practitioners are the key to helping patients understand the importance of making lifestyle changes to improve their health.

“I believe we are there to help unlock their why, and while we can’t walk their journey for them, we can work together to unlock the reasons why they want to make a change, and provide the tools and resources for them to start.”

That’s where preventive health programs such as *My health for life* become part of Dr Chu’s tool box.

“*My health for life* supports the patients and myself on multiple levels,” she said.

“Having a program that is evidence-based, delivered by trained health professionals who offer tailored health coaching by a variety of modes is invaluable in supporting them on their health journey.

“I’ve seen reductions in cholesterol, and improvements in sleep and mood. Whole families are benefitting because they’re eating healthy meals and making healthier choices.

“The power of lifestyle medicine shouldn’t be underrated despite all the advancements in medicine.

“About 80 per cent of chronic disease is potentially preventable with three behaviours – poor diet, smoking and inactivity being major risk factors.

“I would happily retire if all of my patients were healthy,” she said.

For more information or support to embed *My health for life* in your practice, please contact *My health for life* via email info@myhealthforlife.com.au or call 13 74 75.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2016, [Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice](#), 9th edition, accessed 14 September 2021.