

## Empowering

people with arthritis and osteoporosis via information, education and support; by

## promoting

healthy lifestyles and self-management to optimise health outcomes; and

## advancing & disseminating

understanding of arthritis and osteoporosis.

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Musical Jam

# jointNTed

## Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT

The Arthritis Foundation of the  
Northern Territory Inc

February - March 2024



.... and best wishes to all our continuing and new members for a safe, and healthy and happy 2024! As always, our goal is to provide six issues of interesting and informative newsletters. Members are encouraged to contact the office with suggestions for features and articles.

## Congratulations to

Professor Sami Azam and  
His Honour Professor the Honourable Hugh Heggie  
AO PSM Administrator of the NT

A member of the AONT Board, and a Senior Lecturer at Charles Darwin University (CDU) since 2020, Sami has been promoted to Professor in the Discipline of Information Technology, CDU. As well as his research, teaching and academic research, Sami is a strong supporter of the Bangladeshi Student Association, CDU as well as AONT.



Our patron, His Honour Professor the Honourable Hugh Heggie AO PSM Administrator of the NT, was recognized in this year’s Australia Day Honours List, receiving the award of Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of his long service to the community.

# Arthritis Australia is creating independence through good design

Article provided by Arthritis Australia, Accessible Design Division, January 2024

Inaccessible products and packaging can cause day to day frustration for anyone, not just people with a disability or chronic condition. For those who are living with arthritis these can cause unnecessary physical pain, discomfort, stress, frustration and greatly impact independence. For just these reasons, Arthritis Australia created the **Accessible Design Division** to advocate for change and work with companies to make products and packaging easier to use for the arthritis community.

Examples of consumer feedback on hard to open packaging and its impact.:

**Jar of jam:** “Couldn't open it. Had to wait until I saw my brother to open it, in another country town. My problem is I can't eat things if I can't open them.”

**Seals on milk bottles:** Needed a pointed knife to lift and stabbed myself in the process. I live by myself so no-one else to ask. Unless I go to a neighbor, which is embarrassing”

Packaging is a key area where Arthritis Australia is determined to make change. Often when unable to open packaging, people use their teeth or tools like knives and scissors. This can pose a risk of injury with reports of cracked teeth and deep cuts from these strategies. A safer alternative includes using non-slip grip mats to provide extra leverage when opening products like jars.

Arthritis Australia has worked with leading researchers in accessibility design to develop first-of-their-kind free guidelines that companies can use to develop easily openable packaging. To aid consumers Arthritis Australia has introduced ‘**Easy to Open Certified**’ labelling for products that have been tested with arthritis consumers.



An example of a product with improved design becoming certified is the Kellogg's portion-controlled cereal packaging. They now have an easy-to-tear sachet with a large tear notch and clear labelling, significantly improving the user experience.

Arthritis Australia also has an ‘**Ease of Use Certified**’ program designed for product certification and currently has a medical inhaler in the program. Arthritis Australia knows that products are often sold with false hope and promises with features which are challenging to use. Arthritis Australia will only promote products that can pass rigorous consumer testing.



When you struggle with products and packaging it's important that the manufacturers know, otherwise they won't see it as an issue they need to address. Arthritis Australia is interested in hearing about your good and bad experiences in opening of packaging.

An online form on the Arthritis Australia website is designed for consumers to register their concerns, and Arthritis Australia will endeavour to contact relevant companies to advocate for product improvements. **Go to <https://arthritisaustralia.com.au/accessible-design-division/consumer-information/>**

For AONT members who do not have computer / internet access, and have specific packaging concerns, please contact the AONT office so that we can pass on those concerns to Arthritis Australia through the online form.

**Phone 8948 5232 or Freecall 1800 011 041**

See over page for a summary of  
Arthritis Australia's "Best and Worst Packaging"

The Arthritis Australia Accessible Design Division has also spearheaded the creation of an Accessible Product Design Alliance, made up of a group of 11 not-for-profit health consumer organisations, to advocate about the issue of inaccessible products and packaging experienced by the 5 million consumers living with chronic conditions and disability, across Australia and New Zealand. The Alliance is focused on raising their consumers' voices to industry and government for change.

There is more about Arthritis Australia's Accessible Design Division and their work at [arthritisaustralia.com.au/accessible-design-division/](https://arthritisaustralia.com.au/accessible-design-division/).



## Arthritis information brochures—new style

Developed by Arthritis WA, these brochures are written for:

- Gout
- Lupus
- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis

They are written in simple every day language, making them easy to understand. The format is:

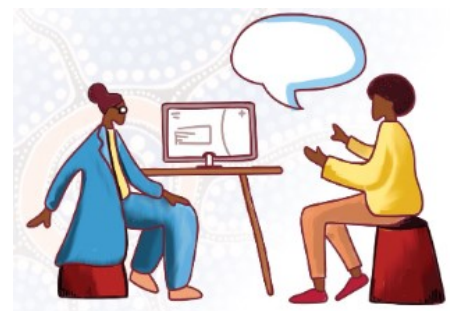
- What is it (the condition)?
- What does it feel like?
- How do I know if I have it?
- How can I look after it?

Lots of useful information for each condition. Contact the AONT office if you would like a copy of any of these. Common themes are to work with your health care providers, and do all that you can to improve your general health, as well as your specific condition.

In particular, they include "**LIVE HEALTHY**" tips:



- Eating healthy
- Using medicines wisely
- Staying active
- Cutting back on alcohol
- Cutting back on smoking



# That's a Wrap: Best and Worst Packaging"

## an annual campaign by Arthritis Australia

### Best packaging 2022 - 2023:

"Goodness Me Really Fruity" snacks - packaged in a pouch with serrated edges, requiring minimal force and grip strength for opening.

Dettol hand sanitiser dispenser (200 ml) - Easy to use and initially open. The dispenser fits comfortably in the hand and requires minimal force to break the opening seal.

### Worst packaging top five:

#### 2023

- 1 - Child resistant medication containers – described by one consumer as a "terrible torture device," and when even pharmacists struggle to open them on your behalf, we recognize the magnitude of the problem.
- 2 - Foil/Induction Seals - Frequently concealed beneath the lids of drink and sauce bottles.
- 3 - Jars - Plastic and glass jars with metal lids persist in causing discomfort to our consumers' hands.
- 4 - Blister Packs - Both foil and plastic blister packs pose challenges for arthritis sufferers.
- 5 - Peel Tabs - Often labeled as 'Peel/Pull Here', regrettably, many remain difficult to open.



#### 2022

- 1 - Push through tablet trays/blister packs – not being able to access medication in a timely manner is problematic and a serious issue with participants stating that it “causes pain” and the “super thick packaging” makes it impossible to access the tablets.
- 2 - Medication packaging (screw cap) – research has shown that hard to open packaging can mean that consumers are unable to use their medication when needed. Many participants described the anxiety felt when confronted with the task of opening certain medicine packaging.
- 3 - Plastic bottles –The small and hard to grip caps were identified as problematic by voters. Our community also shared stories of needing to ask strangers in public or family at home to access their beverages.
- 4 - Jars – Both plastic jars and glass jars with metal lids are problematic for consumers with arthritis.
- 5 - Pre-packaged sealed trays –commonly used for food products such as meat and seafood. These trays are almost impossible to open by hand and many consumers used tools such as knives to open the “stubborn” packaging.



“They say a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.”  
Tom Bodett (American author, voice actor and radio host).



## Staying healthy: cover up while enjoying the great outdoors!

### Melioidosis

Melioidosis is a disease caused by bacteria in the soil (*Burkholderia pseudomallei*) and **can be fatal**. The bacteria rise to the surface after rain. **Symptoms** can be a cough, fever, breathing difficulties or a wound that will not heal.



### Prevention

When gardening or doing other outdoor activities wear protective clothing including gloves and footwear. Cover any cuts, sores or other skin injuries.



### Respiratory Protection

If using high pressure hoses wear a mask.

### Weather Awareness

Stay indoors during heavy rains and strong winds when the bacteria rise to the surface. Avoid contaminated water.

**Flood waters** may be contaminated with the bacteria. Do not walk or swim in floodwaters and do not swallow them.

### Prompt Medical Attention

Seek medical attention immediately if you exhibit symptoms or suspect you may have melioidosis, as it is a serious disease and requires prompt medical treatment.

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**Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus** can result from mosquito bites.



**Symptoms** can include a rash on the trunk or limbs, general illness with fever, chills, headaches and tiredness; joint pain, stiffness and swelling. See a doctor if you develop these symptoms. To avoid bites, cover up and use repellent.

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### Cellulitis Warning—From Top End Health Service

Reproduced from the December 2020 edition of “*joiNTed*”. Thanks to the then Potentially Preventable Hospitalisation (PPH) Project Manager Jeff Gaden.

Cellulitis often starts with a small cut sustained camping, fishing, hunting, gardening or playing sports. It is a bacterial infection under the skin surface.



**Symptoms:** in the early stages, cellulitis can cause redness, warmth, swelling and pain. Whether it's a cut, a scratch or even an insect bite you get while enjoying these outdoor activities, don't ignore it. Do something about it: clean it with an antiseptic and cover it with a dressing and a bandage.

Cellulitis is serious. On average one person ends up in the Intensive Care Unit every month as a result of this infection. While it can be minor to start with, cellulitis can go bad very quickly. It is one of the leading causes of potentially preventable hospitalisations in the Top End.

## Exercise options

**COTA NT (Council of the Ageing NT)** supports a range of health, fitness and well-being classes in its **Fit for Life** program. The following classes held at COTA NT's head office in Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin, are open to all and discounted for COTA NT Members.

- Pilates, also available on line
- Seated Aerobics, also available on line
- Strong and Functional  
with Sharon Kelly of Superageing, phone 0438 890 089 for more information
- Tai chi  
with Tom Rees, phone 0439 844 155 for more information

Any enquiries about which classes is best suited to you should be directed to the instructors and not COTA staff. Other programs at COTA include Yoga (basic yoga for the over 50's) and Musical Jam (refer to back page for the poster for Musical Jam). For Yoga and Musical Jam, phone Lorna at COTA 08 8941 1004 for more information.

**... and for a complete change of scene,** how about trying water cycling? Contact Sally Goetz, phone 0491 366 693 or email [sally@emerse.com.au](mailto:sally@emerse.com.au)



**WATER CYCLING CLASSES**  
CHASE THE WATER . ENJOY THE RIDE

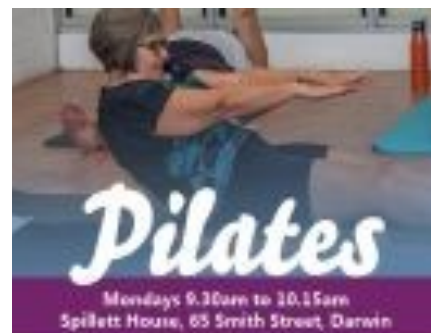
Water cycling is recommended for all ages and is a high intensity workout that is pain free.

**HOW CAN WATER CYCLING HELP YOU?**

- ✓ REDUCES IMPACT ON JOINTS
- ✓ REDUCES STIFFNESS & IMPROVES MOBILITY
- ✓ IMPROVES LOWER AND UPPER BODY STRENGTH ENDURANCE
- ✓ IMPROVES CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

**\$25** casual class   **\$220** 10 pass class   **\$200** 20 pass class

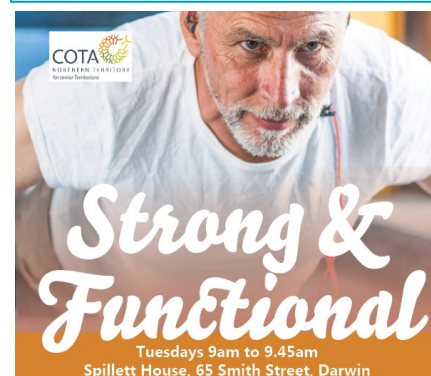
11 Henbury Avenue, NT 0810 (Henbury School) (access via Willeroo Street only)  
Sally Goetz - Accredited Exercise Physiologist  
0491 366 693 | [sally@emerse.com.au](mailto:sally@emerse.com.au) | [emerse.com.au](http://emerse.com.au)



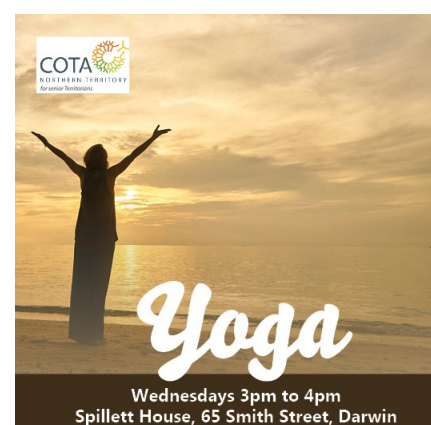
**Pilates**  
Mondays 9.30am to 10.15am  
Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin



**Seated Aerobics**  
Wednesdays 9.30am to 10.15am  
Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin  
Gentle sitting exercises designed to improve mobility and help prevent falls



**Strong & Functional**  
Tuesdays 9am to 9.45am  
Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin



**Yoga**  
Wednesdays 3pm to 4pm  
Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin



**Tai Chi**  
Thursdays Advanced 9.15am, Beginners 10.30am  
Spillett House, 65 Smith Street, Darwin



# Palmerston Support Group

Our Palmerston Support group continues to meet monthly

- at the Brennan Electorate Office, Palmerston Shopping Centre (opposite Target)
- on the fourth Monday of each month at 10:00 am



AONT members are welcome to join the group at any of their meetings. These are informal catch ups over a cuppa, and often with a guest speaker.

For further information on guest speakers and activities, please don't hesitate to call the office on 8948 5232, Monday to Thursday 9:30am to 2:00pm.

## Recipe: Speedy beef and noodle stir fry from the Heart Foundation

### Ingredients

- 400g packet wholegrain wok-ready noodles
- 2 tablespoons no added salt tomato paste
- 1 ½ tablespoons salt reduced soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon sunflower oil
- 500g lean beef mince
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 400g packet fresh stir-fry vegetables
- 1 bunch baby bok choy, stems sliced, leaves coarsely chopped



### Method

1. Place noodles in a heatproof bowl. Cover with boiling water. Stand 2-3 minutes, stirring to separate noodles. Drain.
2. Place tomato paste, soy sauce and sugar in a small bowl. Stir in ¼ cup hot water.
3. Heat oil in a large, non-stick wok or frying pan over a high heat. Add mince and garlic. Stir-fry about 8 minutes, breaking up mince, until well browned.
4. Add stir-fry vegetables, bok choy stems and 2 tablespoons water. Stir-fry 3-4 minutes, until vegetables are just tender.
5. Add noodles, bok choy leaves and sauce mixture. Toss over heat for 1-2 minutes until sauce coats noodles and mixture is hot.

### Tips

- A range of wok ready noodles and packaged stir-fry vegetables are available from major supermarkets. Check noodle labels and choose the brand lowest in sodium. If preferred, replace packaged stir-fry vegetables with a frozen stir-fry vegetable mix or 400g sliced fresh vegetables.
- Sprinkle with roasted, unsalted peanuts for added crunch or chilli flakes for a spicy touch.

**The Arthritis  
Foundation of the  
Northern Territory Inc.**  
Trading as  
**Arthritis &  
Osteoporosis NT**  
ABN 67 099 326 608

**Co-Patrons**

His Honour  
Professor the Honourable  
Hugh Heggie AO PSM  
Administrator of the NT  
and Ms Ruth Jones

**Vice Patron:**

The Honourable Vicki  
O'Halloran AM CVO

**Find us at:**

Shop 18 Rapid Creek  
Business Village,  
48 Trower Rd Millner

[www.aont.org.au](http://www.aont.org.au)

[facebook.com/  
arthritis.osteoporosis.nt](https://facebook.com/arthritis.osteoporosis.nt)

**Contact us:**

(08) 8948 5232  
Freecall: 1800 011 041  
PO Box 452,  
Nightcliff 0814  
[info@aont.org.au](mailto:info@aont.org.au)

**We are open:**

9:30am – 2pm  
Monday to Thursday  
(excluding Public Holidays)

**Staff**

**Administrative Assistant**  
Deirdre Moldenhauer

**Accounts**  
Natalie Valastro

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Hilary Fowler

**Treasurer and Public  
Officer**

Ruth Garden

**Ordinary Board Members**

Lyn Skipper  
Sami Azam

## What We Do

### Our work includes:

- Responding to walk in and telephone enquiries
- Providing personalised information packs in response to enquiries
- Hosting “Taking The First Step” and “What a Pain!” short courses. Call 8948 5232 for more details
- Providing information stands at a range of forums throughout the year
- Presentations to community groups
- Networking with other community health organisations and the services they provide
- Delivering bulk materials on request to a range of health services
- Producing this newsletter six times a year
- Liaising with Arthritis Australia, interstate arthritis affiliates and Healthy Bones Australia
- Making applications for various small grants to assist with special projects.

**Arthritis &  
Osteoporosis NT**



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**For more information Phone Lorna 08 8941 1004**

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