

NEWS

It's simple, this check could save your life

Finn Coleman

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He insisted there were alternative tests such as MRIs and blood tests and plenty of treatment options available.

"[Tests are] a very simple thing to do, and it saved my life," he said.

Wagga Prostate Cancer Support Group leader Mike Murray was diagnosed with prostate cancer 12 years ago and considers himself to be very lucky.

"Early detection is the key to survival. Nowadays, we have technology with MRI scans and good treatment options, but ongoing research is vital," he said.

"At the end of the day, if I hadn't gotten tested, my stage one would have eventually ended up with stage four. I would not have had the experience of ... three grandchildren, a great quality of life, and all because a proactive doctor sent me for a simple blood test."

Mr Lewis said when he was first informed he had prostate cancer and would be required to have his prostate removed, it initially put

him in a "very dark spot". Dr Sowter said anyone who had a strong family history of cancer could start PSA tests as early as 40 years of age.

"Men with no family his-

tory should consider a PSA check from the age of 50," he said. "In its early stages, prostate cancer may have no symptoms, which is why it's vitally important to be aware of your risk factors, including

your family history.

"The most common symptoms are urinating more, having lower back pain, or you may have difficulty maintaining an erection."

Mr Lewis said he is still



Coolamon prostate cancer survivor Wayne Lewis. Picture by Bernard Humphreys



Wagga Prostate Cancer Support Group leader Mike Murray. Picture by Bernard Humphreys

In its early stages, prostate cancer may have no symptoms.

Associate Professor Steven Sowter

working on his mental health and his erectile dysfunction but is happy to be alive.

"I now tell my three sons to get their PSA checked. They're sick to death of me telling them," he said.

Through the Wagga Prostate Cancer Support Group, which meets the second Thursday of each month, Mr

Lewis learnt about others' experiences with diagnosis, treatment and surgery.

"They're a terrific bunch of blokes," he said. "It's great to have a chin wag with other blokes about it."

■ Support is available.

Phone Lifeline 13 11 14; Mensline 1300 789 978; beyondblue 1300 224 636



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Wed 9.30pm