

Lethal to superbugs

MANUKA IS the latest buzzword in the battle to fight antibiotic-resistant superbugs.

Some special health honeys can destroy the drug-resistant superbugs that are killing patients in hospitals around the world, a team from Sydney University's School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences has confirmed.

Prof Peter Molan of New Zealand's Waikato University, the man who discovered the superbug-killing ability of Manuka honey, applauds the finding but says it is crucial people use the right sort of honey.

"I'm pleased to see that the Sydney University team emphasise that not all health honeys have this factor," Prof Molan says.

"It would be disastrous if a honey was used in good faith by a frontline medical practitioner against a superbug infection, but it was the wrong sort of honey."

For the past 18 months, Prof Molan and his team at the NZ Honey Research Unit have been refining testing methods to identify and rate the potency of different Manuka honeys (unique Manuka factor).

"Unfortunately neither the words active Manuka honey, nor some rating numbers, necessarily mean it's the right sort of honey for superbugs and some other conditions," Prof Molan says.

"The new method will give specific values to a natural substance with natural variability."

One of New Zealand's leading honey companies has worked with Prof Molan to develop the new system.

Manuka honey can be applied to the skin as a balm, or taken orally to help soothe the throat and digestive tract.

It can also be eaten like other honey products to help maintain general health.

Watson and Son Manuka honey is now available at selected pharmacies and health food stores nationally.

DANIEL HOY

Right: Manuka honey can be applied to the skin, or taken by mouth to help soothe the throat and digestive tract.



» expert

**ANDREW JOBLING
AUTHOR**

Q I know I need to exercise regularly, but I just don't enjoy it. What would you suggest?

A Many people, including myself, don't like to exercise. I guess the question you need to ask yourself is do you want and would you like the results of regular exercise? The reality is that exercise is an integral part of being fitter, leaner and healthier and if you want the result, enjoying it is just a bonus.

I don't love brushing my teeth, but I do love healthy, white teeth so I need to brush my teeth to get the desired result.

In terms of exercise, what I have found works for me is to change my perspective about exercise. Though I don't enjoy the act of exercise, I do love the way I look and feel as a result. So when I'm in the middle of the pain and discomfort, I don't think about it, I focus on how good I will feel when I have finished.

It works every time. When I run I visualise finishing strongly with an adoring crowd on their feet applauding.

When I run stairs I count down and focus on the last one and the euphoric feeling of an exercise session that will help move me closer to my goal.

There are many people who, just like you and I, don't enjoy exercise. Only a very small percentage of them will actually change their perspective and do it anyway because they want the incredible result that is possible from consistent quality exercise.

A quote that has always motivated me goes like this: "I will do today what others won't so I can live tomorrow like others can't."

To summarise: decide on the exercise that you will do regularly, even simply walking. Focus firmly on the reason why you are doing it and as you are in the middle of it think only about how fantastic you will feel when you have finished.

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Wii yourself fit



Get active: American researchers have found gaming or walking uses two or three times more energy than watching television.

Interactive video games can help children get fit but they are no substitute for sport, writes **Daniel Hoy**

GET off that treadmill, flog that exercise bike in the next garage sale... if you really want to get fit in the comfort of your own home, switch on a video game.

Research has found interactive video games, particularly those that involve several body movements, can help to shrink that waistline and improve your health.

A study by the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma's College of Medicine compared energy expenditure rates in children playing the physically active video games, *Dance Dance Revolution (DDR)* and Nintendo's *Wii Sports* to treadmill walking.

They measured energy expenditure, heart rate, step rate and perceived exertion in 14 boys and nine girls aged 10 to 13 while watching television at rest, playing *DDR*, playing *Wii* bowling and boxing, and walking at 2.6, 4.2 and 5.7km/h.

They found that energy expenditure during the active video games was comparable with moderate-intensity walking.

The study said: "For children who spend considerable time playing electronic screen games for entertainment, physically active games

seem to be a safe, fun and valuable means of promoting energy expenditure."

Compared with watching television, energy expenditure while gaming or walking was two to three times higher.

Similarly, high rates of energy expenditure, heart rate and perceived exertion were elicited from playing *Wii* boxing, *DDR* level two or walking at 5.7km/h.

Jane Martin, senior policy adviser at the Obesity Policy Coalition, says: "It's great that some video games appear from the research to have some physical benefits, but there are many more benefits to getting outside and playing games with friends."

"That includes improving your motor skills, learning about teamwork and improving social skills. Also there's the opportunity to do incidental exercise on the way to sports."

"We know that kids are actually getting enough exercise — figures show exercise is on the rise — but the real problem is what they're eating."

"Parents need to develop the confidence to let their children play outside so they can enjoy all the benefits of playing sports or games with friends, which in the long run will be far greater than a video game."