

I can't get sick, I don't have time!

We are all busy... and getting busier. Unfortunately this can often mean delaying or putting off appointments that are not only important, but can be life saving or changing. In the article below, Editor, Journalist and former Lawyer Georgina Dent explains why missing appointments because we are busy is not always the best idea.



Last night I went to bed wondering why I had left it this long. For about 12 months I have been having some trouble with my right hip. It's extremely painful and quite debilitating. It started out as a smaller problem – the pain was haphazard and it didn't bother me as much. Gradually though, it became more constant and harder to ignore. I haven't exercised for months now because even without exercise at the end of the day I struggle to move much.

When it started my youngest daughter was three months old so I assumed it was related to having been pregnant. During both my pregnancies I had some sciatic pain so figured it was to do with that. It became clear, however, that it wasn't going to disappear on its own. So after one particularly bad weekend I finally organised to see an osteopath.

Part of the reason I had waited so long was because it was almost impossible to envisage how I would get to an appointment without taking my young daughters with me. And how could I be treated with a three month old and a two and a half year old terrorising the clinic?

After fielding an emergency call, a girlfriend kindly offered to mind the girls while I ducked off to my appointment. After a few more appointments, including two disastrous treatments with my baby in attendance, I gave up. It was too hard.

So I persevered with very haphazard management of my hip. I would ignore it until it got so bad that I couldn't ignore it.

It was bad enough a few weeks before Christmas that I finally got organised and saw a GP who suggested I get an x-ray and see a specialist.

The physio asked if I had had any falls and finally I remembered that this time last year I fell down a flight of stairs at a friend's house. I was in a lot of pain later that day and for the next little while but I didn't think too much of it. By the time the pain in my hip became more consistent I had forgotten about the fall and assumed it was pregnancy related.

Earlier this week I finally got an x-ray and this morning I have seen a specialist. It's not definitive but it's possible there is, or was, a small fracture in my pelvis. The result is my joint is irritated and inflamed and because I haven't done anything the muscles around it have got weaker so the problem has worsened. Hopefully now, with the right treatment and a proper commitment to the right treatment, I will be on the mend.

But the uncomfortable truth is I have been in an incredible amount of discomfort for twelve months. Writing that, and telling the doctor earlier today how I managed, or didn't manage, this made me realise how I have let myself down.

I have been sitting on this problem for 12 months and last night, before I fell asleep, I had to ask myself why. We might not have immediate family in Sydney and we might not have had a babysitter at the time but writing this I am acutely aware that there are lots and lots of people that I could – and should -- have called on to help. I wish I recognised that I would never listen to anyone say 'I don't have time for my health' without immediately taking them by the hand, making them the requisite appointments and driving them there myself.

No one doesn't have enough time to look after their health. So today if you are sitting on any unusual symptoms (or you know someone in your family is) promise me you will act on them. Pick up the phone and make the appointment you need. Right now.

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