Crumbling chocolate? Go on, just do your block

CHOCOHOLICS may be better to resist their waistline and give in to cravings than fighting temptation and stressing their brain, making mistakes or having an accident.

Mouth-watering new Australian research has linked dangerous cravings — in particular for chocolate — with unusual strain people’s brains so badly they cannot concentrate or complete other tasks until they are satisfied.

“We need to be the first to share this great news with everyone that we are expecting a new addition to our family. Love, John, Kelly and Ella.”

— Carly Crawford

Travolta baby on the way

SIXTEEN months after the tragic death of their young son, Hollywood stars John Travolta and wife Kelly Preston have revealed they are expecting another child.

Their website announced a “traumatic period marked by the accidental death of their 16-year-old Jett.”

Just this week, the family’s pet dogs were struck and killed by an airport service truck on a US airstrip.

“A woman ran to an ambulance station, screaming for help as her husband lay dying in their home 150m away”

Marlene Gouge had already called an ambulance after her husband Richard, 78, had a heart attack.

But she said it took the best part of an hour for the ambulance to arrive.

“The Maryborough great-grandfather died waiting, becoming the latest in a string of deaths linked to rural ambulance delays.

It is believed the local ambulance was with a non-urgent patient at Bendigo Hospital for 2½ hours, waiting for a bed to become available.

It was therefore unable to respond to three Code 1 emergency callouts in the area that night, May 13.

Mr Gouge’s ambulance came from Arcoona, 26km away.

Mrs Gouge became desperate during the long wait and ran to the nearby station.

“She was screaming. ‘Please, somebody help me’ and I was crying,” she said.

“I thought, ‘somebody’s going to come soon it’s going to be too late.’

“She rang the doorbell several times, but nobody was in.

‘I was screaming. ‘There’s just nobody around. Why can’t someone come and help me?’

‘I just ran back home.

‘I just wanted to be with him. and I lay on the bed-room floor with him. It was pretty tragic.’

She can’t understand why Maryborough’s newly built ambulance station was not manned 24 hours a day.

“People had been here within five minutes of my phone call. Nobody was there,” she said.

What is actually going on with the ambulance around here? It was a small community, somebody had to show up around when your husband is lying on the floor dying.’

An Ambulance Victoria spokesman said the ambulance looked as if it had been locked.

The State Government’s benchmark for Code 1 emergency ambulance responses is 15 minutes.

“It’s a problem we have in a lot of country areas,” he said. “It is very frustrating to have one more job than you have ambulances. The situation in rural Victoria is that the next ambulance has to come from the next town,” the spokesman said.

Ambulance Employees Australia secretary Steve Dowie said regional ambulancealla were an area of concern.

Health Minister Daniel Andrews said he had asked for a detailed report on the matter.

SICK and injured Melburnians in outer suburbs have been left without local ambulance crews for entire nights as shortages hit.

The January and February months saw the Pakenham/Berwick area and Berwick region show paramedics were drafted in to try to cover gaps that were short of crew members on two separate nights.

The Herald Sun has previously revealed problems in outer suburbs after Officer

Grant McArthur

medical reporter

outlining their findings in a journal Current Directions in Psychological Science, the researchers found “habitual chocolate cravings” had slower reaction times and could not remember words or solve maths problems in the same way as those in chocolate-free environments.

For those with potentially dangerous food cravings, the researchers believe visualising something such as a rainbow could be a calorie-free way to reduce the obsession. “Engaging in a simple visual task seems to hold real promise,” they wrote.

Why can’t someone help? Marlene Gouge, with a picture of her husband Richard, outside the ambulance station. Picture: NORM OORLOFF

Ambo shortages hit outer suburbs

“The Rudd Government has scrapped its promise to send 300,000 households a $50 green rewards card and will instead ask them to send receipts to claim a $50 refund on the cost of energy-saving devices.

The scheme promised by Kevin Rudd before the election was a rewards pack of energy and water-saving products, but has changed several times. It was part of a Green Loans scheme that has been axed, although the home energy audit part of the package has been expanded.

The Government announced last week that it would end the $50 giveaway on May 11 but would send the rewards card to 300,000 households who have received a free energy audit.

But Climate Change Minister Penny Wong yesterday said the card would be replaced with a “simpler” scheme.

Missing in action

Marianne Betts

Health reporter

A WOMAN ran to an ambulance station, screaming for help as her husband lay dying in their home 150m away.

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But she said it took the best part of an hour for the ambulance to arrive.

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The Herald Sun has previously revealed problems in outer suburbs after Officer

Matt Johnston and Stephen McMahon

grandmother Lorraine Pignam was left to wait in agony for 1½ hours.

Ambulance Victoria said the missed shifts were small in number.

Opposition Leader Ted Baillieu said the system was broken and government incompetence meant Victorians were suffering.

“John Brumby promised 11 years ago to fix Victoria’s health system, yet Victorian families are suffering from a desperate shortage of ambulances because things have got worse, not better,” Mr Baillieu said.

Ambulance Victoria metropolitan regional manager Stephen McMahon said missed shifts were a reality at any volunteer or rural ambulance service.

“When an illness occurs at short notice we take all efforts to fill that vacancy,” Mr Thomson said.

“When this occurs on a Friday or Saturday night, it can be harder to get paramedics to work over-time.

“During that time we use other neighbouring resources to provide coverage.”

Mr Thomson said the number of missed shifts was actually small in the metropolitan area.

He said Ambulance Victoria’s 32 new graduate paramedics would make an impact as they came on line.

Reward rejigged

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