

APRIL-MAY 2015

Your next appointment:



> Shin splints



> Memory Loss



> Asbestos Exposure



> Puberty – Normal or Not?



Enjoy this free newsletter

Please remember that decisions about medical care should be made in consultation with your health care provider so discuss with your doctor before acting on any of the information.

www.healthnews.net.au

● PRACTICE DOCTORS

Dr Michelle Barrett

BMBS, DRANZCOG, FRACGP

Family Medicine

Monday2:30pm - 6:00pm
Tuesday 9:00am - 12:00pm
Wednesday1.30pm - 4.30pm

Dr Patrick O'Callaghan

MBChB, BAO (NUI), FRACGP

Monday8:15am - 4.30pm
Tuesday 9:00 - 4:30pm
Wednesday 8.15am - 12.00pm
Thursday.....8.30am-12pm & 2-5pm

Dr Kate McCallum

MBBS, DRACOG, DCH

Family Medicine

Tuesday9.30am - 5.00pm
Friday9.30am - 5.00pm

Dr Caroline Luke

MBBS, Dip Sports Medicine, Mast Occ Medicine

Monday1.00pm - 4.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 9.00am - 12md

Dr Hayley Clifford

MBBS, Dip Child Health

Monday & Wednesday8.30pm - 4.30pm
Thursday.....9:30am - 6:00pm

Dr Ambreen Ali

MBBS

Wednesday 9.00 - 5.00pm
Friday10:00 - 6:00pm

Dr Ying Chow

MChD

Monday 8.30am - 12.30pm
Tuesday8:30am - 6.00pm
Friday8:30am - 5:00pm

● PRACTICE STAFF

Practice Manager: Graeme Sellar

Practice Nurses: Jane & Danielle (RN)

Reception Staff: Jo, Aristeia, Dana, Debbie, Imogen & Samantha.

● SURGERY HOURS

Monday – Friday 8.00am – 6pm

● AFTERHOURS & EMERGENCY

For afterhours care please phone:
1300 422 567

● BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

Please pay all fees on day of consultation.

All children below the age of 5 are bulk billed.

▷ **Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.**

● YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of this practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised members of staff.

● SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Healthnews. After a mixed summer we are all hoping for some more decent rain prior to winter. Fingers crossed.

The government funded flu vaccination program will commence late this year. ACT Government have just advised that stock will arrive in the third week of April so we will commence vaccinations from Monday the 20th April. Please don't forget to ask your doctor if you are eligible for a free vaccine. Private vaccines for those outwith the government programs are also available via script or our own in-house stocks. Whilst the worst of the flu season is a few months away it is never too early to increase your protection.

Some changes have been made with the doctors appointments schedules recently so that we offer a few early appointments and also some between 5pm and 6pm daily for those on the way home from work. This is in response to feedback from patients.

SMS appointment reminders, as many of you are aware we are sending appointment reminders via text message. This has resulted in an 80% drop in missed appointments. One issue to note is where you have an appointment with the nurse and doctor on the same day. You should receive a reminder for both appointments so please check the earliest time for arrival. Also our new website is up and running and we would love some feedback! Go to hughesfamilypractice.com.au and let us know what you think.

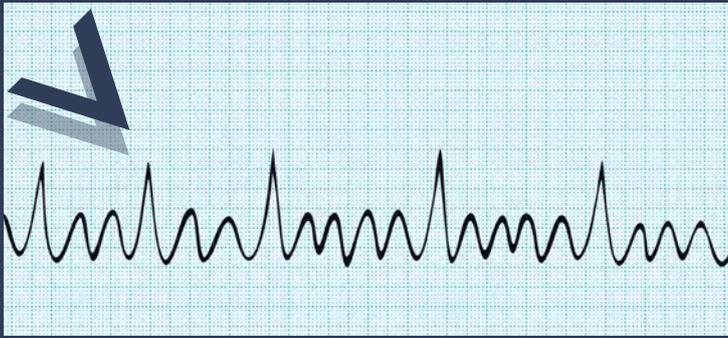
We are delighted to welcome Dr Gwenda Griffiths back to the surgery from late March. Many of you will remember Gwenda who having completed her post graduate training returns to us two sessions a week. Whilst on staff changes Ruth in reception has moved to New York for an internship at the National History Museum (half her luck!) and Georgie has joined the graduate program with the Department of Education. Luckily we have Imogen and Samantha who have fitted seamlessly into the reception team. Should you require medical treatment after-hours whilst the surgery is closed please contact CALMS our medical deputising service on 1300 422 567. The service is owned and operated by the Practices of Canberra and feedback on your consult to your regular GP.

The start of a new season for the sporting teams of the Capital including the Brumbies and the Raiders and things are looking promising for an improvement on last year. Lets hope that they bring us home a championship or at least a deep into the finals!!

We value your feedback, should you have any queries or complaints please do not hesitate to speak with one of our staff or ask for the practice manager. Otherwise the Health Complaints Commission can be contacted on 6205 2222.

Regards,
Graeme Sellar





Atrial Fibrillation

Our hearts beat over 100,000 times a day, mostly in a regular fashion, because the heart's electrical pacemaker sends an amazing electric signal each beat for the heart muscles to contract and pump blood.

During arrhythmias the heart beats irregularly. In atrial fibrillation (AF), the top two heart chambers can beat very fast in an un-coordinated way, which distorts the electrical message to the rest of the heart. The contractions of the heart become less efficient and the body knows it.

Typical symptoms include palpitations, shortness of breath, fluttering of the heart, dizziness and sometimes fainting. The fast and irregular heart beat of AF affects about 2% of people overall and 10% of those over age 75. Contributing factors include high blood pressure, established heart disease, trauma to the chest and certain drugs such as caffeine and alcohol.

Your doctor will take a history and physical examination. Diagnosis can be made with plain ECG test or if the AF is intermittent, a holter monitor (a 24-hour ECG).

Treatment with medication slows the heart rate and makes the beat more effective and regular. Prescribed blood thinners may decrease the risk of stroke from AF. Cardioversion (electric shock therapy) can jolt the heart out of AF and back to normal. In severe cases surgery (ablation) is an option.

Lifestyle changes like quitting smoking, reducing alcohol and caffeine, attaining a health weight and regular exercise all help to prevent and manage AF.



Weblink www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au search 'atrial fibrillation'

Memory Loss

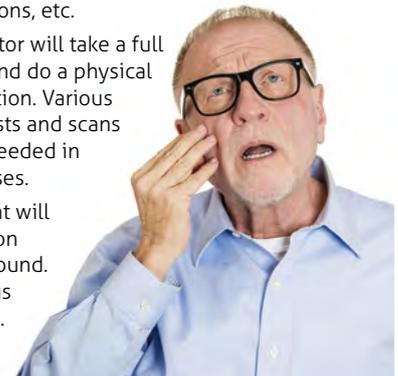
Potential loss of memory scares a lot of ageing people. We rely on memories, but have limited understand about how memory is maintained or lost. Memory may be short or long term. We may remember a phone number for a few minutes while other things we remember for a lifetime, often triggered by emotions, music or scents.

Memory loss may be temporary or permanent, limited in time, and limited to particular things or generalised. Some memory loss comes with ageing so it is normal for us to take longer to remember certain things. The brain is thought to "prioritise" memory so some memories we regard as less important or needed less often are "archived". There are many websites that encourage people to use their brains more ('use it or lose it!').

Memory loss together with loss of other brain (cognitive) functions is more serious. Doctors can test for dementia like Alzheimer's but remember there are some other treatable causes of memory loss – low vitamin B 12, under active thyroid, depression or anxiety, some medications, etc.

Your doctor will take a full history and do a physical examination. Various blood tests and scans will be needed in many cases.

Treatment will depend on what is found. Support is available.



Weblink <https://fightdementia.org.au>



Shin Splints

'Shin splints' are common in runners and those who play sports involving running and rapid acceleration. The exact cause is not known but is thought to be due to repeated stress on the shinbone and its attaching connective tissue. It is more common in females and in those with a previous leg injury and also more likely in those running often on hard or uneven surfaces.

The typical symptom is pain in the shin with running. There may be swelling too. At first, the pain starts at the beginning of a run and eases after warm up but then pain persists for longer and can even continue after ceasing exercise.

Diagnosis is from the story as there is no diagnostic test. X-rays (or rarely an MRI scan) may be done to rule out other causes such as a stress fracture.

Treatment aims to relieve symptoms – ice

packs and simple painkillers, along with rest and avoiding activity that worsens the pain. However you don't need to stop all exercise. Swimming or walking in water are two options to maintain fitness.

Attention to training techniques is helpful in some cases. Use of orthotics or insoles may also help as can change of shoes. For the more serious athlete, having a biomechanical assessment of their running style may lead to technique changes that are beneficial.



Weblink www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Asbestos – the 3rd Wave of Exposure

Asbestos importation and use in Australia has been banned for some years. Before this, hundreds of occupations including manufacturing, construction, ship building and mining were affected. Asbestos was included in many construction products that home renovators can now be exposed to. It is how we disturb asbestos products that can create the tiny fibres that when inhaled can cause cancer (mesothelioma) 20 or 30 years later.

From carpet underlay to fencing, asbestos products can create risk. Houses built before 1988 are most likely to contain asbestos materials. Undisturbed asbestos cement materials are not a problem while the fibres are bound together.

Chest x-ray has led to a greater understanding of the conditions associated with asbestos, such as mesothelioma, lung cancer, asbestosis and pleural plaques, and how they progress.

Asbestosis causes lung damage, is not a cancer, and can be managed medically.

Asbestos exposure at least doubles the risk of developing lung cancer, independent of risk from smoking. Work in the USA showed that annual screening with low dose CT scanning reduced lung cancer



mortality in high risk cigarette smokers. This has led to a trial of this screening method for mesothelioma, in place of a plain x-ray, knowing that 0.7% of those with prior asbestos exposure may have an early stage lung tumour, without warning symptoms. The hope is that early detection will improve cancer survival.

If you think you have had prior exposure to asbestos, discuss what to do with your doctor.



Puberty – Normal or Not?

We think of puberty as the start of children becoming adults but technically it is the development of the capacity to reproduce (sexual maturation). Some 95% of children start puberty between the ages of eight and 14 (girls) or nine and 14 (boys) and it goes on for about three or four years. What actually starts it, nobody knows.

Rapid growth often accompanies changes in the appearance of sexual organs. Emotional changes are common too. Parents often worry about their daughters' first periods, which usually start about two years before breasts develop. In boys, they may worry about a late puberty and short stature before the usual growth spurt. Knowing what is normal, helps.

The appearance of pubic hair does not indicate the onset of puberty. It comes from an increase in androgens (male sex hormones) by the adrenal gland – a separate process that may happen up to two years before puberty.

Precocious (or abnormally early) puberty is signalled by breast development (girls) and enlarged testes (boys) before the age of eight or nine, respectively. It warrants a medical check. So does puberty delayed to age 14.

Many of the problems of puberty are about changes in the adolescent's life than about puberty itself. Have a chat with your doctor about supporting your child or about any concerns you have. An x-ray for bone age and blood tests may be required.



Menstrual Problems in Female Athletes

Three things to watch out for in female athletes are low energy, minor menstrual problems and low bone density. Without early intervention, the periods can stop (amenorrhoea), anorexia develop (an eating disorder) and serious thinning of the bones occur (osteoporosis).

Menstrual irregularities are common in female athletes – almost all elite gymnasts, ballet dancers and light weight rowers, and less so in team sports, swimming and cycling.

Factors include diet (inadequate or weight loss diets), "excessive" exercise, altered hormone levels and psychological stress, all of which can affect the brain's regulation of periods. And being biologically prone can make things worse.

We know that reducing energy intake (food) by just 30%, while continuing exercise, can alter periods within five days!

Because about 70-80% of a woman's final bone density is formed during adolescence and peaks in their 20's, preventing thinning of the bones in athletes is important to prevent later stress fractures and premature osteoporosis.

Is further investigation necessary? Ask your doctor. Periods that don't develop by age 16 or stop for six months, are strong warnings. Taking the combined oral contraceptive pill can help as can the assistance from others such as a psychologist or dietician.



LAUGHTER the Best Medicine

- A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop any time....
- I was at an ATM yesterday when a little old lady asked if I could check her balance, so I pushed her over.
- The wife was counting all the 5c's and 10c's out on the kitchen table when she suddenly got very angry and started shouting and crying for no reason. I thought to myself, "She's going through the change."

SUDOKU Solution

9	6	8	2	7	1	3	4	9
9	2	7	4	3	8	6	1	5
4	1	3	6	9	7	5	8	2
3	8	1	2	1	2	2	1	9
6	4	7	6	7	8	9	6	8
6	9	6	3	8	4	2	7	1
1	7	7	2	2	2	1	4	7
7	4	7	9	6	2	5	8	3
3	6	5	9	1	8	1	2	7
4	9	8	3	2	7	5	6	1
8	1	6	4	5	6	3	8	7
2	2	1	6	4	5	6	3	8

SUDOKU

				4	5	9	3	
					7			1
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	3		2	5			4	
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9			7				8	
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Questions to Ask Others...

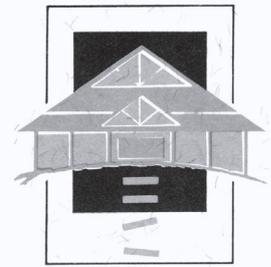
What are "shin splints"?

How old are homes that present most risk to home renovators?

What happens when the heart beats irregularly?

Memory decline may not mean dementia. How can your doctor help?

The Surgery



● MORE PRACTICE NOTES

Recall & Reminders. Our practice uses a Recall and Reminder system to flag patients for preventative health care. We recall patients who have had the following procedures; health assessments and checks, skin checks, breast checks, pap smears, colonoscopies, IUD and Implanon removal. This surgery participates in State & National registers.

Patient Feedback. We would like to hear about your concerns, complaints or suggestions. Please feel free to talk to your GP or the Practice Manager regarding any issues. If you prefer to make your concerns known outside the surgery, you can call the Western Australian Health & Disability Services Complaints Office on 1800 813 583

Patient Privacy. This practice protects your personal health information to ensure it is only available to authorised staff members for the intended purposes and to comply with the Privacy Act. To obtain a copy of our Privacy Statement or your medical records, please ask.

Telehealth. Our practice is fully set up for video conferencing with participating specialists. Using Telehealth may save you time and travel costs; ask your GP and Specialist for advice.

Healthful Hint

CHILDREN AND BREAKFAST.

Skipping breakfast is not healthy for children – it decreases school performance, leads to poor food choices ("hungry snacks") for the rest of the day. It denies them a nutritious start to the day. Research shows that eating a high fibre breakfast (like cereals oats or fruit) reduces fatigue and gives kids the plentiful energy they need.

WINTER VEGETABLE SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 brown onions or 1 leek, trimmed, halved, washed & thinly sliced
- 1 red capsicum, finely chopped
- 4 shortcut rindless bacon rashers, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini, halved lengthways & chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled & finely chopped
- 1 Desiree potato (about 250gms), peeled & finely chopped
- 3 celery stalks, finely chopped
- ½ cauliflower, cut into small florets
- 400gm can diced tomatoes
- 1 litre vegetable or beef stock
- 1 cup dried mini penne pasta or risoni
- ¼ chopped fresh basil leaves
- 1 cup canned red kidney beans, rinsed
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 cups water
- Salt & freshly ground pepper
- Grated parmesan

METHOD

Saute the onions, capsicum & add bacon. Cook bacon until golden brown.

Recipe for health



Add diced vegetables. Cook until vegetables start to brown, stirring occasionally.

Add tomato, stock and water. Cover & bring to boil.

Reduce heat and simmer for approx 30 mins – until vegies are just tender.

Add risoni or pasta and kidney beans. Season. Simmer uncovered until risoni/pasta is tender.

Sprinkle with grated parmesan & chopped basil and serve with crusty bread.