

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026 EDITION

FREE TO TAKE HOME!



Shingles Vaccination



Christmas Kilos



Back-to-School Health



Cervical Cancer Screening

● PRACTICE DOCTORS

Dr Ying Chow

MBBS, B Med Sci, FRACGP
Currently on Maternity Leave

Dr Michelle Hart

MBBS, FRACGP
Monday 8:30am - 12:00pm
Wednesday 8:30am - 3:30pm
Thursday 1:00pm - 4:30pm

Dr Jaclyn Moss

MBBS, FRACGP
Tuesday 9:00am - 5:00pm
Thursday 8:30am - 12:00pm
Friday 9:00am - 12:00pm

Dr Michelle Barrett

MBBS, DRANZCOG, FRACGP
Times Vary

Dr Dave Donnelly

MBBS BSc (Med Hon) FACCRM MPH & TM
Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Dr Gwenda Griffiths

MBBS (Hons), BAppSci (physio) Hons, FRACGP
Variable Sessions

Dr Matthew Lewis

MBBS (Hons), Bsc (Hons), FRACGP
Monday 9:00am - 12:30pm
Wednesday 9:00am - 12:30pm

Dr Katherine Lovat

MBBS, FRACGP
Monday 9:30am - 12:30pm
Wednesday 9:30am - 12:30pm
Friday 8:30am - 3:00pm

Dr Kate McCallum

MBBS, DRACOG, DCH
Family Medicine
Tuesday & Friday 9:30am - 2:00pm

Dr Patrick O'Callaghan

MBChB, BAO (NUI), FRACGP
Monday 8:15am - 5:00pm
Tuesday 8:15am - 12:00pm
Thursday 8:15am - 5:00pm

Dr Matt Smith

MBBS, FRACGP, MPHTM, BE
Monday 1:00pm - 5:00pm
Wednesday 1:00pm - 5:00pm
Thursday 8:30am - 12:00pm

Dr Seren Ovington

FRACGP
Tuesday TBC
Thursday TBC
Friday TBC
..... Starting beginning of March

● PRACTICE STAFF

Practice Manager:

Graeme Sellar

Practice Nurses:

Jane (RN), Danielle (RN) & Kirsty (EN)

Reception Staff:

Ann, Deb, Ned, Ashleigh, Olivia and Trystan

● SURGERY HOURS

Monday – Friday 8.00am – 6pm

● AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY

For after hours care please phone: **6260 3300**

In case of an emergency dial: **000**

● PRACTICE NEWS

Welcome to our end of summer edition and our first for 2026. Some very mixed weather caused issues for everyone across Australia, from floods to bush fires we had it all. A bit too dry in Canberra so some regular rain is badly needed. Fingers crossed!

As previously advised Dr Mannering has now moved on to complete her Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Fellowship and Dr Chow is now on maternity leave with a planned return date of August 2026.

We are delighted that Dr Seren Ovington is returning to the practice with her first week being from Monday 9th March. Seren worked at Hughes in her final terms of GP training and stayed with us for a couple of years after receiving her Fellowship. Seren will be working Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays with appointments available for booking from mid to late February.

We had a few of our GPs on leave in January. However, at the time of writing all were either back or about to return (other than those mentioned above).

The trial of online appointments for Dr Moss in the lead up to Christmas went well and is continuing. We will be adding most of the other Drs to the online booking platform by the end of February. More details in our next edition, on our website and at reception.

The Governments MyMedicare programme now provides some significant benefits for patients registered with us at the practice. We suggest that you investigate the programme on the governments website to see if you would benefit. Some information is also available at reception.

The practice operates a continuous quality improvement process. We utilise de-identified data from our clinical system to help identify areas for our clinicians to focus on. Should you have any queries about how we use the de-identified data please don't hesitate to ask your GP or our practice manager.

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.

Finally, we wish all of you a safe and enjoyable 2026, after the horrors of Bondi at the end of last year we all hope that no more such atrocities are perpetrated on Australian soil for many years to come.

Graeme Sellar, Practice Manager

▶ Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.

YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT:

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



Shingles Vaccination (Shingrix) & Dementia: What We Know

Shingrix is one of the leading shingles (herpes zoster) vaccines in Australia and is recommended for older adults to prevent shingles and its complications. Shingles is caused by reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, which remains dormant in the body after childhood chickenpox. While shingles is best known for causing a painful rash, growing research suggests it may also have broader impacts on long-term brain health.

Recent international studies have observed an association between shingles infection and an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Chronic inflammation and viral effects on the nervous system are thought to play a role. Interestingly, emerging evidence indicates that people who receive a shingles vaccine, particularly Shingrix, may have a lower risk of developing dementia compared with those who are unvaccinated. While this research does not yet prove direct cause and effect, the findings are encouraging.

Shingrix works by boosting the immune system's ability to keep the virus suppressed, reducing the chance of shingles occurring in the first place. By preventing shingles and the inflammation it can cause, vaccination may indirectly support long-term brain health.

Importantly, Shingrix is already recommended because it is highly effective at preventing shingles and post-herpetic neuralgia. Any potential added benefit for dementia prevention is an added reason to discuss vaccination with your GP.

If you are aged 65 years and over or 50 and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders then speak with your GP about your eligibility for a free vaccine.

Shedding the Christmas Kilos



The festive season is a time for celebration, good food, and relaxation, but it can also lead to a few extra kilos. The good news is that shedding Christmas weight doesn't require extreme dieting or intense exercise. Small, consistent changes can make a big difference.

Start by getting back into regular movement. Walking, swimming, cycling, or light gym sessions are excellent ways to burn calories and boost energy, especially during the warmer summer months. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.

Next, focus on balanced eating rather than restriction. Fill your plate with vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and fresh fruit. Reducing portion sizes, limiting sugary drinks, and cutting back on alcohol can significantly lower calorie intake without feeling deprived.

Hydration is also key. Drinking plenty of water helps control appetite and supports metabolism. Finally, be patient with yourself. Healthy weight loss takes time, and sustainable habits are far more effective than quick fixes.

By easing back into routine and making mindful choices, those Christmas kilos will gradually disappear.

Back-to-School Health & Immunity

As February marks the return to school across Australia, many families notice a familiar pattern: busy mornings, close contact with classmates, and the spread of common colds and bugs. Supporting children's health and immunity at the start of the school year can help reduce illness and keep them feeling their best.

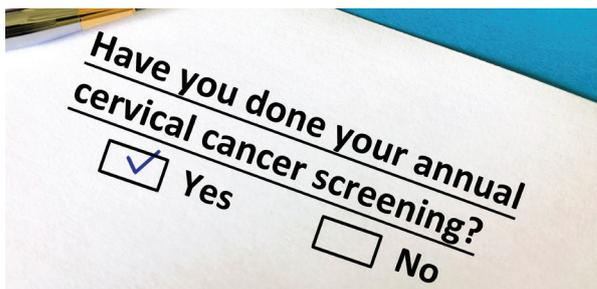
A strong immune system starts with the basics. Adequate sleep is essential, particularly as children adjust back into school routines. Establishing consistent bedtimes helps support immune function, concentration, and mood. Nutrition also plays a key role. Balanced meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy provide important vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, zinc, and iron, which support immune health. Packing a nutritious lunchbox can make a big difference to energy levels throughout the day.

Good hygiene habits are another crucial line of defence. Encouraging regular hand washing with soap and water—

especially before eating and after using the bathroom—helps limit the spread of germs. Teaching children to cover coughs and sneezes and to avoid sharing drink bottles can further reduce transmission of illness.

Staying physically active supports overall health and immunity, but it's equally important to allow time for rest. After-school downtime helps children recover from busy days and prevents burnout. Keeping vaccinations up to date is also an important step in protecting children and the wider school community.

By focusing on sleep, nutrition, hygiene, and routine, families can help children transition smoothly back to school and build resilience for a healthy year ahead.



The Importance of Cervical Screening with Your GP

Cervical screening is one of the most effective ways to protect women's health, yet many people delay or avoid it due to uncertainty or discomfort. Regular cervical screening with your GP plays a vital role in preventing cervical cancer and detecting potential problems early, when they are easiest to treat.

Cervical screening tests look for human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that can cause changes to cervical cells over time. Most people will have HPV at some stage in their lives, often without knowing it. In many cases the virus clears on its own, but in some women it can lead to abnormal cell changes that, if left untreated, may progress to cancer. Screening helps identify these changes long before symptoms appear.

Seeing your GP for cervical screening also provides an opportunity for personalised care. Your doctor can explain the test, address concerns, and ensure you feel comfortable throughout the process. They can also discuss your individual risk factors, screening intervals, and any follow-up that may be needed. For many women, reassurance and clear information from a trusted GP can make a significant difference in attending regular screening.

Importantly, cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Regular screening has been shown to dramatically reduce both the incidence of cervical cancer and deaths from the disease. Even if you feel healthy, have no symptoms, or have received the HPV vaccine, screening remains essential.

Prioritising cervical screening is a simple but powerful step toward long-term health. Booking an appointment with your GP could truly be life-saving.



Spirulina: A Nutrient-Dense Superfood

Spirulina is a blue-green algae that has gained popularity as a natural health supplement due to its impressive nutritional profile. Available as a powder or tablet, spirulina is rich in protein, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, making it a convenient addition to a balanced diet.

One of spirulina's key benefits is its high protein content, containing all essential amino acids. This makes it particularly appealing for people following vegetarian or plant-based diets. It is also a good source of iron, B vitamins, magnesium, and iodine, nutrients that support energy levels, muscle function, and overall wellbeing.

Spirulina is well known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, largely due to a compound called phycocyanin. Antioxidants help protect cells from oxidative stress, which is linked to ageing and many chronic diseases. Some studies suggest spirulina may support immune function, improve cholesterol levels, and assist with blood sugar control when combined with healthy lifestyle habits.

Additionally, spirulina may help combat fatigue and support recovery after exercise. It is often added to smoothies or juices, although its strong taste may take some getting used to.

As with any supplement, spirulina should be used responsibly. It's best to discuss its use with your GP, particularly if you are pregnant, immunocompromised, or taking medications.



SPIRULINA BLISS BALLS

These no-bake spirulina bliss balls are quick to make, naturally sweet, and perfect for a healthy snack or lunchbox treat.

Ingredients (Makes ~12 balls):

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup pitted dates
- 2 tablespoons almond butter or peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon shredded coconut (plus extra for rolling)
- ½ teaspoon spirulina powder
- 1–2 tablespoons water (as needed)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

Method:

1. Place the rolled oats and dates into a food processor and pulse until finely chopped.
2. Add nut butter, chia seeds, coconut, spirulina, and vanilla.
3. Process until the mixture begins to stick together. Add water gradually if the mixture is too dry.
4. Roll tablespoon-sized portions into balls.
5. Roll in extra coconut if desired.
6. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up.

Serving & Storage

Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to one week, or freeze for up to one month.

Why You'll Love Them

Spirulina adds antioxidants and plant-based protein, while oats and dates provide lasting energy. The sweetness of dates balances spirulina's earthy flavour, making these bliss balls both nutritious and delicious.

WORD SEARCH

G	I	S	C	N	U	T	R	I	T	I	O	N	N
M	H	P	Y	G	I	I	G	L	E	R	N	N	N
I	S	I	C	I	M	M	U	N	E	E	X	H	L
R	E	R	L	E	C	E	P	T	R	L	O	M	H
C	L	U	I	A	Y	G	A	I	I	G	E	M	N
S	G	L	N	G	O	W	E	G	L	H	I	M	T
H	N	I	G	L	I	E	S	L	E	E	P	A	E
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N	H	A	A	I	A	N	C	L	I	L	O	I	I
G	S	R	A	U	R	U	R	H	N	L	C	M	Y
R	E	G	I	I	I	L	L	O	U	A	G	C	
I	I	R	G	L	V	Y	O	A	M	O	U	A	I
X	U	S	C	R	E	E	N	I	N	G	L	I	M
X	H	U	M	A	N	N	N	I	E	T	O	R	P

SLEEP
HYGIENE
WATER
NUTRITION
SCHOOL
SPIRULINA
VIRAL
PROTEIN
IMMUNE
SCREENING
CYCLING
SHINGLES
ALGAE
SHINGRIX
HUMAN

Hughes Family Practice

● BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

Please pay all fees on day of consultation. All children below the age of 5 are bulk billed.

● APPOINTMENTS

Home Visits. If you need your doctor to make a home visit, please call the surgery first thing in the morning. **Walk in appointments cannot be accommodated.**

Booking a long appointment. Long appointments are available when required. They are not to be booked routinely, please ensure if you think you need a long appointment that you book one with reception. If a standard appointment is booked and there are many issues to discuss or resolve the doctor will require you return for another appointment rather than run very late in their session. Thank you for your co-operation.

Please notify us if you are unable to attend an appointment, well in advance. If more than one person from your family wishes to see the doctor at the same time, please ensure a separate appointment is made for each family member.

● SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Communication policy.

Our GP's cannot routinely take phone calls during consultations. A message can be left with staff and the GP may call back or arrange a staff member to book an appointment where appropriate. We don't communicate by email.

Test Results.

You will be contacted where there is an abnormal result or if your GP requests follow up. You can call the practice nurse between 12.30 and 1.00 pm for information.

Recalls and Reminders.

Our practice operates a recall and reminder system for a range of health issues and in response to test results as appropriate. Patients wishing to opt out of our recalls system should discuss this with their GP.

Patient Privacy.

The practice takes the privacy of your personal health information very seriously. If you have any questions please ask at reception for a copy of the practice privacy policy.

Repeat Scripts. You need to make an appointment for Repeat Scripts. Fees apply.

