

## APRIL - MAY 2026 EDITION

FREE TO TAKE HOME!



Flu Season in Australia



Seasonal Allergies



Boosting Immunity



Importance of Gut Health

### ● 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 ..... 9:45am - 2:00pm  
Thursday ..... 9:45am - 2:00pm  
Friday ..... 8:30am - 12:30pm

### ● 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 call our medical deputing service CALMS on **6260 3300**  
In case of an emergency dial: **000**

### ● PRACTICE NEWS

Welcome to our Autumn edition for 2026. After a hot summer we at least finished with some good rain. Anyone's guess what Autumn will bring! Flu season is well underway, and we have Government funded vaccines for those 65 and over and also adults with respiratory conditions. We also have a stock of Government funded vaccines for 0-5 year olds. Adult vaccines are given in concentrated clinics please ask at reception for the next available time. For child vaccines individual appointments can also be booked at reception.

Finally, we also hold stock of private vaccines for those not eligible for a funded vaccine. If you are unsure as to your eligibility or have questions around vaccination, please do not hesitate to ask your Dr or the nurse at your next appointment.

The recent press indicating that Australia was at risk of losing our herd immunity for diseases such as whooping cough or measles is a frightening thought. Some believe the population is suffering with vaccine fatigue after Covid 19. The science is irrefutable let's keep our vaccination numbers up. It also helps for your vaccination to be recorded on your medical record at the practice. The only way to ensure that information is part of your medical record here is by being vaccinated here.

Dr Seren Ovington has settled in well and proving to be very popular, as was the case when she last worked with us a couple of years ago. She is currently working three days a week, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. All Drs have a few appointments held for the day for more urgent matters so hopefully you can book with your Dr of choice on short notice when more urgent matters arise. These appointments can be booked by phoning from 8am on the day.

We have some Drs away during the school holidays in April and over Easter. We will ensure there are more appointments kept daily for more urgent matters during this period. For standard issues your next available appointment may not be till after the holiday period. We thank you for your patience.

The practice operates a continuous quality improvement process and utilises 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.

▶ Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.

Graeme Sellar, Practice Manager

### 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](http://www.healthnews.net.au)

# Flu Season in Australia and the Importance of Vaccination

Influenza (flu) season in Australia typically occurs between May and September, peaking during the colder winter months. The flu is far more than a bad cold — it is a highly contagious viral infection that can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia, worsening of chronic medical conditions, hospitalisation, and even death, particularly among vulnerable groups.

Young children, pregnant women, older adults (65+), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and those with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are at greatest risk. However, healthy adults can also experience severe illness and contribute to spreading the virus to others.

Annual vaccination is the most effective way to protect yourself and your community. Because influenza viruses constantly change, the vaccine is updated each year to target the strains most likely to circulate that season. Immunity develops about two weeks after vaccination, which is why health authorities recommend getting vaccinated from April onward, before flu activity increases.

The flu vaccine not only reduces your risk of catching influenza but also lowers the severity of illness if you do become infected. Importantly, widespread vaccination helps protect vulnerable people through community immunity, reducing overall transmission.

In Australia, the flu vaccine is free under the National Immunisation Program for high-risk groups and widely available through GPs, pharmacies, and community clinics.

Alongside vaccination, good hygiene — including handwashing, covering coughs, staying home when sick, and wearing a mask if symptomatic — helps limit spread.

Getting your flu shot each year is a simple, safe step that protects both your health and the wider community. Speak to your GP to book your vaccination.



## Managing Seasonal Allergies in Autumn

While many people associate allergies with spring, autumn can also trigger troublesome symptoms. During this season in Australia, falling leaves, increased mould spores, dust mites, and lingering pollen can provoke allergic rhinitis (hay fever) and asthma flare-ups. Common symptoms include sneezing, a runny or blocked nose, itchy eyes, throat irritation, coughing, and fatigue, which can affect sleep, concentration, and daily comfort.

Mould is a major autumn trigger, thriving in damp environments created by cooler temperatures and increased rainfall. Raking leaves, gardening, or spending time around compost can release mould spores into the air. Indoor allergens may also worsen as people spend more time inside with windows closed, allowing dust mites to accumulate.

Practical steps can significantly reduce symptoms. Check daily pollen and mould forecasts where available, and limit outdoor activities on high-count days. Wearing sunglasses and a mask while gardening can help reduce exposure. Showering and changing clothes after being outdoors prevents allergens from spreading inside the home.

Indoors, keep humidity low by ventilating rooms when possible, using exhaust fans, or running a dehumidifier. Wash bedding weekly in hot water to control dust mites, vacuum regularly with a HEPA filter, and consider an air purifier in bedrooms.

Medications such as non-drowsy antihistamines, saline nasal sprays, or corticosteroid nasal sprays can be effective when used correctly. People with persistent or severe symptoms, or those with asthma, should consult their GP for personalised advice and management plans.

With awareness and simple preventive measures, most people can keep autumn allergies under control and enjoy the season more comfortably.



# Boosting Immunity Before Winter

As winter approaches in Australia, colds, flu, and other respiratory infections become more common. Strengthening your immune system ahead of the colder months can help reduce your risk of illness and support faster recovery if you do get sick. While no supplement can “supercharge” immunity overnight, consistent healthy habits make a significant difference.

Nutrition plays a key role. Aim for a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats. Nutrients such as vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, and iron support immune function. Foods like citrus fruits, berries, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, eggs, fish, and legumes are excellent choices. Staying well hydrated is equally important, even when the weather is cooler.

Quality sleep is one of the most powerful immune boosters. Adults should aim for 7–9 hours per night, as poor sleep can reduce the body’s ability to fight infections. Regular physical activity also supports immune health,

circulation, and mood — even moderate exercise like walking most days is beneficial.

Managing stress is often overlooked. Chronic stress can weaken immune responses, so practices such as mindfulness, relaxation, social connection, and time outdoors are valuable.

Finally, staying up to date with recommended vaccinations, including the annual flu shot, provides targeted protection during winter.

By building these habits in autumn, you give your immune system the best chance to keep you well throughout winter.



personalised advice and management plans. With awareness and simple preventive measures, most people can keep autumn allergies under control and enjoy the season more comfortably.



## The Importance of Gut Health

Gut health has become a major focus in modern healthcare — and for good reason. Your gut is home to trillions of microorganisms, collectively known as the gut microbiome, which play a vital role in digestion, immunity, metabolism, and even mental wellbeing. A balanced microbiome helps break down food, absorb nutrients, produce essential vitamins, and protect against harmful bacteria.

Poor gut health has been linked to a range of issues, including bloating, constipation, diarrhoea, fatigue, skin conditions, weakened immunity, and mood disturbances such as anxiety and depression. Diet, stress, sleep, medications (especially antibiotics), and lifestyle habits all influence your gut health.

Supporting your gut starts with what you eat. A diet rich in fibre from vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds feeds beneficial bacteria. Fermented foods such as yoghurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, and miso provide natural probiotics that help maintain microbial balance. Limiting ultra-processed foods, excess sugar, and alcohol can also reduce inflammation and support digestive health.

Other helpful habits include staying hydrated, managing stress, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.

A healthy gut contributes to overall wellbeing, from stronger immunity to improved energy and mood. By making simple lifestyle and dietary changes, you can nurture your gut microbiome and support long-term health from the inside out.

If you have any concerns about your gut health, speak with your GP.



## Enjoying Easter Without Overindulging

Easter is a time for celebration, family gatherings, and, of course, chocolate. While it’s perfectly fine to enjoy festive treats, it’s easy to overindulge, leaving you feeling sluggish, bloated, or guilty afterwards. The key is balance — enjoying your favourite foods mindfully while maintaining healthy habits.

Start by choosing quality over quantity. Instead of grazing on multiple sweets throughout the day, select a small portion of chocolate you truly enjoy and savour it slowly. Eating mindfully — paying attention to taste, texture, and satisfaction — can help prevent the urge to keep reaching for more.

Avoid arriving at celebrations overly hungry, as this often leads to overeating. Having a balanced meal or healthy snack beforehand, such as yoghurt, fruit, or nuts, can stabilise blood sugar and appetite. Staying hydrated is also important, as thirst can sometimes be mistaken for hunger.

Try to keep to a regular meal schedule and include nourishing foods like vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. This helps maintain energy levels and prevents the “sugar crash” that often follows excessive sweets. Keeping active over the long weekend — whether through walks, outdoor games, or family activities — also supports both physical and mental wellbeing.

Remember, one day of indulgence won’t harm your health, but moderation will help you enjoy Easter without discomfort. By focusing on balance rather than restriction, you can celebrate fully while still feeling your best.



## EASTER CHOCOLATE & BERRY HOT CROSS BUN PUDDING

This warm, comforting dessert is a perfect way to use leftover hot cross buns after Easter while creating a crowd-pleasing treat for family gatherings.

### Ingredients (Serves 6–8):

- 6 hot cross buns, sliced in half
- 1 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- 100 g dark or milk chocolate, chopped
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- ½ cup thickened cream
- ⅓ cup caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Butter for greasing
- Icing sugar or extra berries to serve

### Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Lightly grease a baking dish.
2. Arrange sliced hot cross buns in the dish, overlapping slightly. Sprinkle the berries and chopped chocolate evenly between the layers.
3. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, cream, sugar, and vanilla until well combined.
4. Pour the custard mixture slowly over the buns, pressing gently so they absorb the liquid. Allow to stand for 10 minutes.
5. Bake for 35–40 minutes, or until golden on top and the custard is set.
6. Let cool slightly before serving. Dust with icing sugar or top with extra berries

Serve warm with yoghurt, custard, or a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

This indulgent yet comforting dessert captures the flavours of Easter while reducing food waste — making it both festive and practical but remember in moderation!



**EASTER FUN!**

## 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.