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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Cheryl Nicholas, Kerry Bennington,
Lisa Pemberton

SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

CONSULTATIONS can be arranged by
phoning. 5655 1355

Monday to Friday 9.00am–5.30pm

Saturday 9.00am–12.00noon
(phone lines open at 8.30am)

The practice prefers to see patients by
appointment in order to minimise people's
waiting time.

Home visits can be arranged when
necessary. If you need a home visit,
please contact the surgery as soon as
possible after 8.30am.

For After hours emergency medical
attention – at night, weekends or public
holidays please call 03 56542753 where
a nurse will triage your needs and contact
the doctor on call.

YOUR DOCTOR

DECEMBER 2024



**YOGHURT
POWER**



**SWEATY
ISSUES**



**UNDERSTANDING
SCIATICA**



**SMART
STRETCHING**

Compliments of your GP

Understanding and overcoming loneliness

The holiday season can be particularly lonely for those who are reminded of their losses or feel the absence of friends and family while others gather to celebrate. So, what exactly is loneliness, and how can you cope with it?

Loneliness is a complex emotional state characterised by feelings of isolation and disconnection. It often involves sadness, grief, fear, and anxiety; illustrating our natural need to seek connection with others.

Importantly, loneliness isn't the same as being alone; it's possible to feel lonely in a crowd or surrounded by loved ones. The reasons behind this can be complicated; being alone can be part of it, but it can also be related to feeling that you're different, or not understood. Sometimes there's no clear reason.

Can being lonely affect your health?

Persistent loneliness can harm both physical and mental health. It can lead to a decrease in physical activity, affect your sleep, increase stress, and weaken your immune system. These factors can result in a higher risk of general health problems.

Mentally, loneliness can lead to anxiety, depression, and substance abuse, and can also be a result of these issues. This creates a challenging cycle, making it important to address loneliness; it takes an effort to make changes, but it is worth it.

Simple suggestions to ease loneliness

Change the way you think. Firstly, think about why you're feeling lonely so that you know what steps to take. Think about what you can do rather than what you can't do; thinking positively can help you feel better.

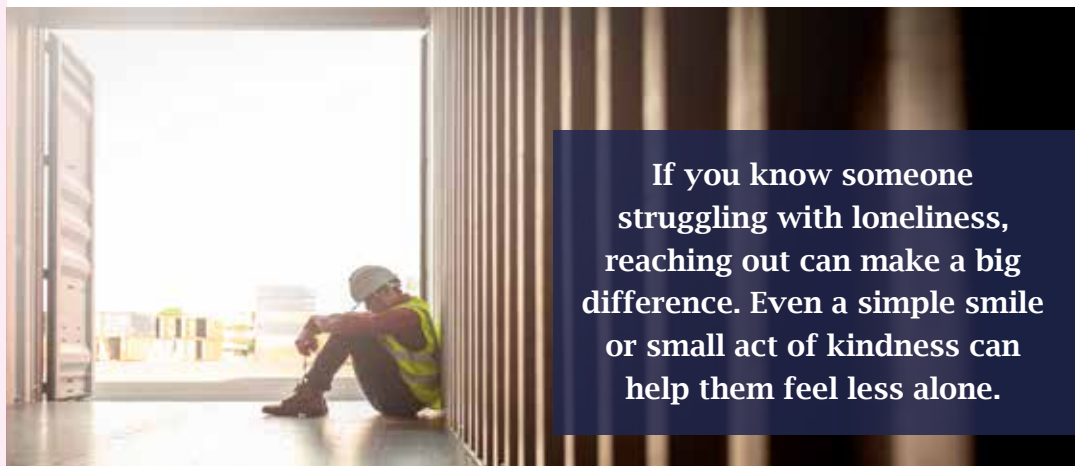
Improve your health. Good health will give you more energy and confidence to deal with loneliness. Even if you don't feel like it, start small.

- Exercise regularly – even a 20 minute daily walk can benefit your health.
- Make simple changes to your diet; start by replacing one unhealthy food with a nutritious one.
- Try mindfulness techniques, or calming activities like reading to deal with stress and anxiety.

Build relationships. If the thought of this is overwhelming, start with little acts, like calling or texting a friend or family member, or just saying hello to your neighbour. Remember lots of people feel the same way.

Think about what you enjoy and contact people or groups with similar interests. It's easier to meet other people when you have a sense of purpose and activities you can do together. Being social is one of the main reasons people get involved in groups, new hobbies, or volunteering.

If loneliness is affecting your health, consider reaching out to support groups or speaking with your doctor. If you're feeling overwhelmed, seek help immediately.



**If you know someone
struggling with loneliness,
reaching out can make a big
difference. Even a simple smile
or small act of kindness can
help them feel less alone.**

Our newsletter is free! Please take a copy with you.

Why do we sweat and why does it smell?

Sweating is a natural function in our bodies and is important for our health. Let's look at why we sweat, why it sometimes smells, and when it's normal.

Why do we sweat?

Sweating is your body's way of regulating temperature, helping to maintain a constant body temperature of around 37°C.

When you're too hot – whether from your environment, exercise, stress, or hormonal changes – your body responds by sweating. As sweat evaporates from your skin, it lowers your body temperature.

Sweat glands produce sweat; they're found all over your body, and fall into two main types:

- Eccrine sweat glands account for most of your sweat. They mainly produce a mixture of water, proteins, salts, and other chemicals.
- Apocrine sweat glands are mainly located in hairier areas such as the groin and armpits, and are more likely to develop an odour.

Why does sweat smell?

Sweat itself is mostly odourless, but when it comes into contact with bacteria on your skin it can start to smell.

Certain foods, like onions and garlic, can cause body odour because sulphur compounds from these foods are released in sweat. Eating spicy foods like curries can stimulate the sweat glands, increasing sweating, which may increase body odour if it mixes with bacteria. Alcohol, which is partly excreted through sweat, can also make you sweat more.

Other factors can also affect body odour, like hormones, stress, health conditions, age, smoking, drug use, and personal hygiene habits.

How to know if your sweating is normal

Sweating varies from person to person. It's normal to sweat more when you're active or in hot weather, and less when you're at rest or in cooler conditions.

However, if you find yourself sweating excessively when inactive, or notice a strong body odour despite good hygiene, it could indicate an underlying medical condition. If you're concerned about your sweating patterns, don't hesitate to discuss it with us – your health is important, and no concern is too minor.



3 TIPS TO HELP WITH THE HEAT AND SWEATING:

1 Wear loose-fitting, light clothes made from natural fibres

2 Wear socks that absorb moisture, and change them as often as possible

3 Good hygiene, like regular showers, can help keep bacteria in check

DID YOU KNOW...

Feet have around 125,000 sweat glands on each foot. This creates a moist, warm environment - ideal for fungi and bacteria!

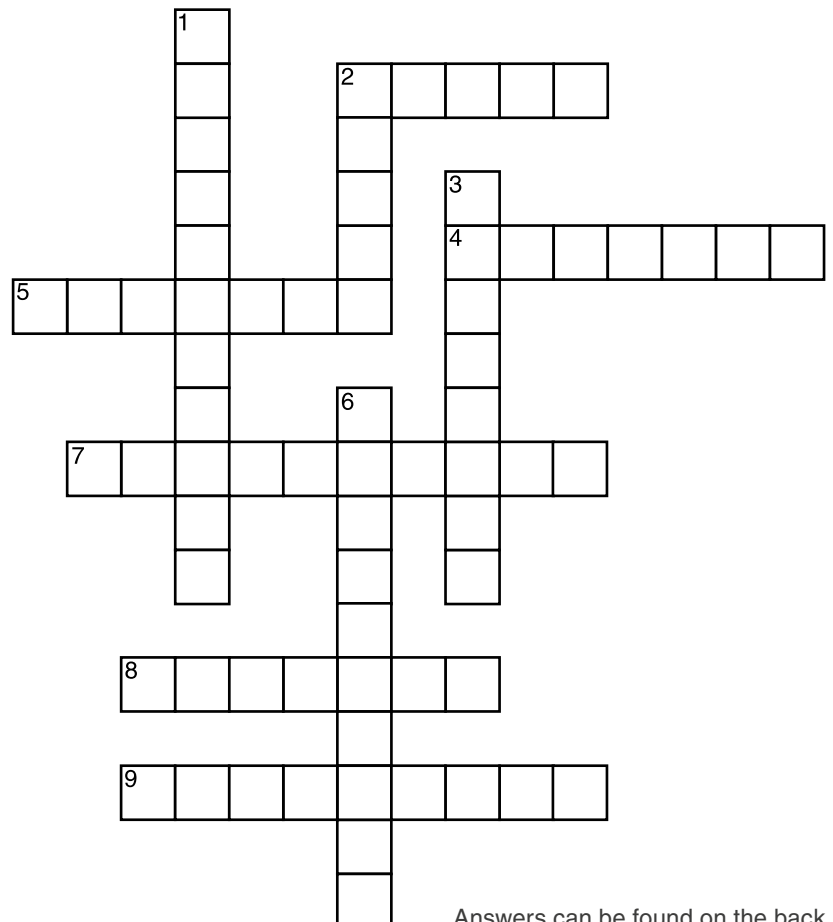
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across:

- 2: The line of bones down the center of your back that provides support for your body.
- 4: Continuing or occurring again and again for a long time.
- 5: A fermented food made when bacteria are added to milk.
- 7: Beneficial bacteria that help to protect your body and aid digestion.
- 8: A mineral that helps keep bones and teeth healthy and strong.
- 9: A mineral that supports muscle function, energy production, blood sugar regulation, and immunity.

Down:

- 1: A mineral that works with calcium to strengthen bones, help energy production, and cell growth and repair.
- 2: What your body does to help cool down.
- 3: A painful condition caused by pressure on the sciatic nerve.
- 6: An emotional state that can involve feelings of sadness, anxiety and grief.



Answers can be found on the back

Stretching tips for easy movement

Whether or not you lead an active lifestyle, regular stretching offers a simple way to improve your flexibility, posture, reduce your risk of discomfort, and prevent painful conditions like sciatica.



When we neglect stretching, our muscles can become shorter, tighter, and less flexible. This can lead to stiffness, reduced mobility and strength, poor blood flow, and chronic pain over time.

These issues are often made worse with poor posture, prolonged sitting, and after injuries. Stretching helps to counteract these negative effects, promoting better movement and overall well-being.

General Stretching Guidelines

Following safety guidelines is important. If you have an injury or any physical issues, only do stretches recommended for you by a health professional.

WARM UP: Always start with a light warm-up, such as walking, to prepare your muscles for stretching and reduce the risk of injury.

FREQUENCY: daily stretching is ideal, especially after long periods of sitting or after exercise; but even a few days a week is beneficial. Consistency is important.

MUSCLE GROUPS: Include all major muscle groups in your routine, such as your neck, shoulders, back, arms, legs, and core. You can choose a full-body routine in one session, or alternate upper and lower body stretches on different days.

RECOVERY: Allow at least 48 hours of rest between intense stretching sessions for the muscles to recover.

HOLD EACH STRETCH: Hold each stretch for at least 15-30 seconds. Breathe deeply and avoid bouncing, as this can cause injury. Repeat each stretch 2-4 times for effectiveness.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY: stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. Overstretching can cause injuries, inflammation and chronic pain, so take it slowly and be mindful of your limits.

Regular stretching helps maintain flexibility, good posture, and joint motion, all helping to reduce the risk of muscle stiffness, pain or injuries.

Sciatica: understanding the basics

Sciatica is a condition involving the sciatic nerve, the largest and longest nerve in your body. It forms from other nerves in your lower lumbar spine and tailbone, much like tributaries flowing into a river. Let's explore common causes and symptoms of this painful condition.

Each side of your body has a sciatic nerve that powers the muscles in your thighs, legs and feet. These muscles allow actions like pushing off with your toes, flexing your feet and tipping them outward. This amazing nerve enables activities such as dancing, sprinting, jumping, and walking.

Although the sciatic nerve itself doesn't cause sensations, its branches transmit feelings to your foot and lower leg. This connection explains why symptoms of sciatica are often felt in these areas.

Common causes of sciatica

The sciatic nerve originates in your spine and passes near the discs. If a disc bulges or is damaged, it can press on these nerve roots, affecting the sciatic nerve downstream.

Another cause is piriformis syndrome. As the sciatic nerve travels from your pelvis to your leg, it passes near or through the piriformis muscle. If this muscle tightens excessively, it can compress and irritate the sciatic nerve.

Symptoms and treatment

You may experience a variety of symptoms, but they typically include: sharp, severe pain

in one leg, numbness and/or tingling that radiates to your foot or toes.

Sciatica can be quite painful, but can resolve on its own - although this may take up to four to six weeks. However, some people continue to experience persistent pain, which can become problematic. If you experience symptoms of sciatica, seeking prompt assistance is advisable.

The first step is to obtain an accurate diagnosis. We will ask relevant questions, perform tests, and facilitate imaging if appropriate. This process helps you understand your condition, allowing us to make informed decisions about your treatment together.



Festive raspberry yoghurt dessert

Enjoy this refreshing and fruity dessert that's easy to make and delicious. It's a healthier alternative to ice cream, perfect for adding a festive touch to your Christmas celebrations or serving as a cool option for holiday gatherings!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ cups frozen raspberries
- 1½ cups plain unsweetened Greek yoghurt
- 2 Tbsp runny honey or maple syrup
- ½ cup finely chopped walnuts
- ½ cup freeze-dried raspberries or blueberries, lightly crushed

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Partially thaw 1 cup of raspberries in a medium bowl, add yoghurt, honey or maple syrup and blend.
2. Stir in walnuts, freeze-dried fruit, and the remaining ½ cup of whole frozen raspberries.
3. Pour into a small loaf tin and freeze for 4 hours, or until firm.

SERVING:

Remove from freezer, decorate and serve. Decorating suggestions: chocolate curls, nuts, mint leaves, berries, or edible flowers.

Yoghurt: a delicious way to boost your health

Yoghurt is a food many of us enjoy, both for its taste and health benefits. Let's explore the nutrients it offers and why it deserves a place in your fridge.

Unpacking the nutrients

Yoghurt is rich in calcium, which is essential for maintaining strong bones and teeth. Many yogurts are also fortified with vitamin D for enhanced bone health. It contains protein, which helps build and repair muscles and keeps you feeling fuller for longer, making it a great snack to curb hunger.

Additionally, yoghurt provides vitamins like B12 and riboflavin, important for energy and overall health, along with essential minerals like magnesium and phosphorus.

Magnesium supports muscle function, energy production, and blood sugar regulation, and a healthy immune system. Phosphorus works with calcium to strengthen bones, and plays a key role in energy production, cell growth and repair.

The power of probiotics

Yogurt contains probiotics – beneficial bacteria that promote gut health by aiding digestion, boosting immunity, and even improving mood. The label "live and active cultures" indicates that these probiotics are present. It's important to note that the benefits of probiotics can vary among different strains.

A healthy gut depends on a balanced microbiome, the collection of microorganisms in your digestive tract. Probiotics help break down food, absorb nutrients, and maintain gut health. A healthy microbiome balance can assist in weight management and reduce the risk of conditions like irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes, and heart disease.

Choosing the right yoghurt

Choose yogurt with live and active cultures, and select fat options that suit your dietary needs. Be mindful of added sugars and artificial ingredients. It's best to go for plain,

unsweetened yogurt and add fresh fruit or honey for natural sweetness.

What's the difference between Greek yoghurt and regular varieties? Greek yoghurt is strained more, giving it a thicker, creamier texture; this also makes it higher in protein and lower in sugar compared to regular yoghurt. Regular yoghurt is less thick but still nutritious.

If you're lactose intolerant, consider lactose-free options. The probiotics may help digest lactose, but individual tolerance varies, so consulting a healthcare provider is advisable.

Yoghurt is a tasty way to support your health. So, next time you need a snack, grab some yoghurt and enjoy all it has to offer.

Eat healthier over Christmas

Enjoy the festive season without overindulging by following these simple tips:

- » Healthy treats: keep snacks like nuts, vegetable sticks, and fruit easily available to avoid reaching for sugary treats. Choose yogurt and fruit-based desserts for a lighter option.
- » Portion control: use smaller plates and serve smaller portions.
- » Stay hydrated: drink water throughout the day to curb cravings.
- » Eat mindfully: slow down, savour your food, and listen to your body's hunger cues.
- » Decrease alcohol intake: alternate between alcoholic drinks and water, and try lower-alcohol options.

INFLUENZA IN 2024

Influenza is a common viral infection that affects people of all ages.

While it may be a mild disease for some, it can also cause serious illness and even lead to hospitalisation in otherwise healthy people.

Vaccination, administered annually by a health professional is the safest means of protection from influenza.

Each year the virus' circulating can vary, this is why annual vaccination is very important. There are different vaccine brands available for different age groups, all brands are quadrivalent, which means they contain 4 viral strains. Influenza vaccines have been around for many decades and are very safe. The vaccine does not contain any live viruses and therefore cannot give you influenza.

Common side effects are mild pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, more serious reactions are very rare.

Flu vaccination is strongly recommended and free under the National Immunisation Program for the following people:

- Children aged 6 months to less than 5 years
- Pregnant women at any stage during pregnancy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- People aged 65 years and over
- People aged 6 months and over with certain medical conditions.

If you are not eligible for the free vaccine you can purchase the vaccine from participating pharmacies or speak to your GP.

What else can you do to stay healthy during Flu season?

- Hand Hygiene - washing your hands regularly with soap and water or using handrub is the most important routine to include in your day.
- Cover your mouth – If you feel a sneeze or cough coming on and you don't have a tissue handy, it is important to cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a mask.
- Stay home – Staying at home while you are unwell is the best way to avoid spreading the flu or covid.
- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
- Stay active – 30 minutes a day of activity.

Flu vaccine will be available from late April, 2024.

Questions to ask at your next doctor's visit

Asking questions is key to good communication with your doctor. To make the most of your visit, write down what you want to know in the area below. Bring this list to your next appointment so you remember what you wanted to ask.

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME

1.

2.

3.

NOTES:

Crossword Answers

Across:

2: Spine

4: Chronic

5: Yoghurt

7: Probiotics

8: Calcium

9: Magnesium

Down:

1: Phosphorus

2: Sweat

3: Sciatica

6: Loneliness

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your health should always be made in consultation with your health care provider. Talk to your doctor first.