KORUMBURRA MEDICAL CENTRE

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YOUR DOCTOR

NOVEMBER 2026



MORE THAN SUNBURN



PREDIABETES: WHAT TO KNOW



EAT WELL, AGE WELL



MEN'S URINARY HEALTH

Compliments of your GP

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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.

IS YOUR CHILD HEARING CLEARLY? WHAT TO LOOK FOR



"Can you hear me?" You've asked your child something three times, and they still haven't responded. Is it simply that all-too-familiar selective hearing, or could they actually not be hearing you clearly?

Hearing can be surprisingly difficult to judge in young children. They may not realise that their hearing has changed, but you might notice them watching faces, sitting closer to the television or asking people to repeat themselves.

Could an ear infection be the problem?

Middle-ear infections are common in childhood, and most children have had at least one by the time they start school.

These often follow a cold, when fluid and inflammation build up behind the eardrum. They can cause pain and fever and your child may be irritable or pull at their ear. Sometimes the signs are less obvious. You may notice that they:

- frequently ask you to repeat things
- turn the television up louder than usual
- don't respond when you speak to them
- have difficulty following instructions
- seem frustrated or unusually irritable
- have more difficulty with speech or language than expected.

Even after an infection has cleared, fluid can remain behind the eardrum for several weeks, and in some children it can last for a few months. This is sometimes called glue ear. It isn't usually painful, but it can make sounds less clear.

Because the change in hearing can be gradual, a child may not complain about it. They simply adapt to hearing this way without realising anything has changed.

When ear infections keep recurring or glue ear persists, these hearing difficulties may affect communication, language development and learning over time.

It's not always an infection

Children can also have hearing loss for different reasons. Some hearing issues are present from birth, while others may develop later. Newborn hearing screening helps identify some problems early, but hearing can change as children grow.

Loud noise can damage hearing. Children may not know when sounds are too loud, so keep the volume down, especially when using headphones, and encourage them to move away from very loud noises.

Even something as simple as a blocked ear from wax can temporarily affect hearing. Avoid using objects to remove earwax, as these can push the wax further into the ear or injure the ear canal.

Trust what you notice

If your child has ongoing ear pain, fluid coming from an ear, frequent ear infections, or seems to be having difficulty hearing, talk to your GP. Their ears can be examined and, if appropriate, a hearing test may be arranged.

You don't have to wait for your child to tell you they can't hear properly. If their hearing, speech, behaviour or learning doesn't seem quite right to you, it's worth having it checked. Getting assessment and treatment early may help prevent longer-term problems.

Hearing clearly helps children connect, communicate and learn

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

PREDIABETES: what it might mean for you

Your blood glucose can be rising without you feeling any different. It may rise above the healthy range while still being below the level of type 2 diabetes. This is known as prediabetes.

Prediabetes usually has no obvious symptoms, so a blood test may be the only way to know. It's common, too, with around two million Australians estimated to have prediabetes.

What's happening in your body?

After you eat, carbohydrates are broken down into glucose, which enters your bloodstream. Insulin helps glucose move into your cells, where it can be used for energy.

With prediabetes, the body becomes less responsive to insulin. The pancreas can compensate for a while by producing more insulin, but over time this may no longer be enough to keep blood glucose in the healthy range.

Why does it matter?

Prediabetes is more than just a high blood test result. Having prediabetes makes you more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. It's also linked with a higher chance of cardiovascular disease.

However, progression isn't inevitable. A few manageable changes to your diet and activity, where appropriate, can improve blood glucose and lower your chance of developing diabetes.

What can you do about it?

You don't need to overhaul your life. Increasing movement can be as simple as taking a walk after a meal, walking to the shops or getting up and moving regularly if you spend much of the day sitting.

What you eat matters too. More vegetables, wholegrain foods, legumes, nuts and seeds can improve the quality of your diet. Cutting back on food and drinks high in sugar, as well as highly processed foods, can help reduce excess sugar and calories.

If you're overweight, even a little weight loss can improve your body's response to insulin. Not smoking and keeping blood pressure in a healthy range can also help. The most useful changes are the ones you can continue long term.

Could testing be helpful for you?

The tricky part is that you can't feel your blood glucose rising. However, some factors can increase your chance of developing type 2 diabetes. These include older age, having a close family member with diabetes, or if your mother had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes).

The Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK) can also help assess your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and guide a conversation with your GP about testing.

If you are concerned about these factors or simply want to know more, ask your GP whether a blood glucose test would be appropriate for you.

World Diabetes Day on 14 November is a good reminder to check your risk.

PUT YOUR HEALTH KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST

Quick tip: all the answers can be found in this newsletter.

1. As men get older, the prostate gland may gradually become _____.
2. The urethra is the tube that carries _____ from the bladder.
3. Small chemical groups can influence which genes are active without changing the _____.
4. Healthy diets include vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, legumes, nuts and good sources of _____.
5. Repeated UV exposure over many years is particularly associated with squamous cell _____.
6. _____ is a less common skin cancer that is more likely to spread, particularly if it isn't found early.
7. With prediabetes, the body becomes less responsive to the hormone _____.
8. Having prediabetes makes you more likely to develop _____.
9. Fluid that remains behind the eardrum after an infection is sometimes called _____ ear.
10. Persistent glue ear can cause hearing difficulties that may affect communication, language development and _____.

Answers at the back

CAN WHAT YOU EAT CHANGE HOW WELL YOU AGE?

You can't stop the clock – but could what you eat influence how well your body ages? Growing research suggests diet quality is linked to what's happening inside your cells as you get older.

Your age in years is known as your chronological age. But scientists are interested in biological ageing – changes that occur in your cells and tissues over time.

How biological ageing is studied

One way scientists study ageing is by looking at changes to DNA. Your DNA contains the instructions that tell your cells how to function, but cells don't use all these instructions all the time. Small chemical groups can help control which genes are more or less active, without changing the DNA itself. This process is called DNA methylation.

These chemical groups can be added or removed at different points over a person's lifetime. Some changes are a normal part of ageing, while others may be influenced by factors such as diet, smoking and the environment. By studying these patterns, scientists can get clues about how quickly some aspects of the body are ageing.

What the research found

A recent study involving more than 6,000 adults found that people with the healthiest eating patterns tended to show signs of slower biological ageing. Another study had similar results, strengthening the finding. However, these studies show an association – not proof that a healthier diet directly slows ageing.

Interestingly, although the diets differed, there was no specific 'winner'. The healthier diets shared some basic features: plenty of vegetables and fruit, wholegrains, legumes, nuts, healthy fats and good sources of protein, with minimal added sugar or highly processed food.

So, rather than looking for a "superfood" – focus on these basics. Limiting highly processed foods doesn't mean never eating cake or enjoying chips again. An occasional treat doesn't cancel out the benefits of a healthy diet, although regularly eating large amounts of less nutritious food may be harmful to your health.



The message isn't perfection or strict diets. It's the overall pattern of what you eat and drink over time that matters.

MEN'S URINARY HEALTH: changes worth checking

As you get older, changes in your urinary habits can be easy to dismiss as simply part of ageing. But persistent or troublesome changes are worth checking, as there are several possible causes and many can be treated or managed.

Is it my prostate gland?

As men get older, the prostate gland can gradually become larger. Because it surrounds part of the tube (the urethra) that carries urine from the bladder, an enlarged prostate can sometimes make it harder for urine to pass.

You might notice that you:

- need to go to the toilet more often, particularly at night
- suddenly feel a strong urge to go
- have difficulty getting started
- have a weaker or slower stream
- stop and start during urination
- dribble after you've finished
- feel like your bladder hasn't completely emptied.

It isn't always the prostate

These symptoms can occur at any age and have several possible causes. They don't automatically mean you have a prostate problem. Urinary infections, bladder problems, other conditions and some medicines can cause similar symptoms.

Needing to urinate during the night can also be linked to drinking habits, medicines and conditions such as diabetes.

When to get it checked

Mention urinary changes to your GP, particularly if they're getting worse or interfering with sleep and everyday life. Benign prostate enlargement doesn't increase the risk of prostate cancer, although both conditions can occur in the same person. Early prostate cancer often causes no symptoms.

There are also some symptoms that shouldn't be ignored. Blood in your urine, pain or burning when urinating need prompt medical attention. If you're unable to urinate at all, seek urgent medical attention.

Describing exactly what has changed can help your GP work out what's causing the problem and what may help.

Urinary changes may be common with age, but there's often a reason for them – and many causes can be treated or managed.



ROASTED VEGETABLE, CHICKPEA & QUINOA BOWL

Packed with vegetables, wholegrains, legumes, nuts and healthy fats, this colourful bowl is a simple example of a balanced and healthy meal. Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (200g) quinoa, rinsed
- 1 orange sweet potato, peeled and cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 red capsicum, chopped
- 1 zucchini, sliced
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 cups baby spinach
- ¼ cup (30g) toasted almonds, roughly chopped
- Lemon tahini dressing
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1-2 tsp honey

METHOD

1. Cook quinoa according to packet instructions. Set aside to cool slightly.
2. Heat oven to 200°C. Toss sweet potato, capsicum, zucchini, onion and chickpeas with olive oil and oregano. Roast for 25–30 minutes, turning once.
3. Whisk dressing ingredients together. Add water if it needs thinning.
4. Divide quinoa and spinach between four bowls. Top with roasted vegetables and chickpeas, drizzle with dressing and sprinkle with almonds.

Get to know your skin and check it regularly for changes – early detection can make a real difference. National Skin Cancer Action Week, 15–22 November, is a good reminder.

UV EXPOSURE: WHAT YOU MAY NOT REALISE

UV exposure isn't just something that happens when you're out in the sun or during summer. It can occur throughout the year. Everyday activities like gardening, walking, playing sport and even driving can all contribute to your lifetime exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

The tricky thing about UV is that you can't see or feel it. A cool or cloudy day can still have enough UV to affect your skin, and you don't have to get sunburnt for damage to occur.

Sun damage all adds up

Each time your skin receives UV radiation, it can damage the DNA in your skin cells. Your body can repair some of this damage, but repeated exposure can leave lasting changes.

Over time, these changes can accumulate and increase the risk of skin cancer , which may not develop until many years after the UV exposure.

Is it always about sunburn?

You don't have to get sunburnt for UV to damage your skin. It's easy to think that if you tan rather than burn, your skin is coping with the sun. However, a tan isn't harmless – it's actually your skin's response to UV damage.

How much and how often your skin receives UV matters. Repeated exposure over many years is particularly associated with squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), while occasional intense exposure – particularly sunburn – is associated with melanoma and basal cell carcinoma (BCC).

These cancer types differ – BCC and SCC are far more common and usually highly treatable when found early. Melanoma is less common, but more likely to spread, particularly if it isn't found early.

It's not too late to protect your skin

You can't change how much UV you've had, but reducing further exposure can lower your risk of skin cancer, regardless of your age. Protecting your skin isn't just for children – it's worth doing throughout your life.

Think UV, not sun or heat

Sun protection isn't just a summer issue. UV levels vary with the season, time of day, location, altitude and cloud cover. In much of Australia, protection is needed when the UV Index is 3 or above. In some areas, this occurs throughout much of the year.

Use the UV Index as your guide rather than how warm or sunny it is, and protect your skin with a combination of clothing, sunscreen, hat, shade and sunglasses.

Questions to ask at your doctor's visit

Asking questions helps you get the care you need. To make the most of your visit, jot down anything you'd like to know about in the space below. Take this list with you so it's easy to remember what you wanted to ask.

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME

1.
2.
3.
NOTES:

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Larger
2. Urine
3. DNA
4. Protein
5. Carcinoma
6. Melanoma
7. Insulin
8. Type 2 diabetes
9. Glue
10. Learning

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.

Life!
HELPING YOU PREVENT DIABETES HEART DISEASE & STROKE

INFLUENZA IN 2026

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

Government funded flu vaccine will be available from late April, 2026.