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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.

# YOUR DOCTOR

AUGUST 2025



**ESSENTIAL OMEGAS  
FOR HEALTH**



**HELP WITH  
HIP PAIN**



**FAQ'S ON  
INFLAMMATION**



**NAGGING  
COUGH?**

*Compliments of your GP*

## Cervical cancer is preventable — and Australia's proving it!

Thanks to advances in cancer care — including research, early detection, and prevention — survival rates in Australia have improved significantly — with around 69% of people surviving at least five years after a cancer diagnosis.

A powerful example is the decline in cervical cancer — showing how effective vaccination and screening programs are.

### What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer begins in the cells of the cervix — the lower part of the uterus at the top of the vagina. It's the fourth most common cancer in people with a cervix worldwide.

In Australia, around 930 people are diagnosed each year, and sadly, about 250 die from it. But with the right measures, cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers.

### Australia leads the way

Australia was the first country in the world to roll out a free, national HPV vaccination program. The vaccine protects against the high-risk strains of human papillomavirus (HPV) that cause most cases of cervical cancer. It's offered to adolescents before they're likely to be exposed to the virus.

These efforts are making a real difference. Australia is on track to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem by 2035 — potentially becoming the first country in the world to achieve this.

### What Is HPV?

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a common virus spread through skin-to-skin contact,

including sexual activity. Most people will contract it at some point in their lives, in most cases it clears up on its own without causing harm.

However, some strains of HPV can lead to cervical cancer, as well as other cancers and genital warts. The HPV vaccine protects against the most dangerous strains, but it doesn't cover all of them — so regular cervical screening is still important, even if you've had the vaccine.

### A better way to screen

Many will remember the Pap test, which looked for early changes in cervical cells. While it was an important tool, it's now been replaced by a more accurate test — the HPV cervical screening test.

This test checks for the presence of HPV itself, meaning it can detect risks before any cell changes occur. It's done in the same way as a Pap test but it's only needed every five years, not every two — making it both more effective and convenient.

### The power of prevention

Vaccination and early detection are two of the most powerful tools we have in the fight against cancer. The story of cervical cancer shows what's possible when prevention is prioritised — fewer cases, fewer deaths, and a real chance for a future without this disease.

On Daffodil Day (21 August 2025), we celebrate this progress while recognising the important work still ahead. Donations raised through events like this help fund vital research, prevention, and support programs for all types of cancer.

**If you're aged 25 to 74, have a cervix, and have ever been sexually active,  
regular screening is free through the national program.**

*Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you*

# Hip pain: causes, treatments, and prevention



**Our hips are remarkable joints that support body weight and allow us to move easily. But like any part of the body, they can be affected by pain or injury. Understanding the causes and types of hip pain can help guide treatment.**

Each hip is a ball-and-socket joint that connects the thigh bone (femur) to the pelvis. The hip joints allow a wide range of movement, such as walking, sitting, balancing, and turning, and are stabilised by muscles, ligaments, and cartilage.

## Common causes of hip pain

Hip pain can have many causes, including overuse, injuries, poor posture, or arthritis. Repetitive movements, sports injuries, or falls can strain muscles or damage cartilage.

Osteoarthritis is a common cause of hip discomfort and reduced mobility, particularly as we age. It may cause stiffness and

discomfort, often felt in the groin, thigh, or lower back.

The location of the pain can provide clues about its source:

- **Groin pain** – may indicate joint or ligament issues.
- **Outer hip or buttock pain** – often linked to muscle or tendon problems.
- **Radiating pain** – pain spreading down the thigh or knee may suggest nerve involvement.
- **Referred pain** – when pain is felt in the hip but originates from another area, such as the lower back or knees.

## Chronic pain versus acute pain

People sometimes describe pain as 'chronic' when they mean severe, but medically it means pain that lasts for months or longer. It may be linked to conditions like arthritis or past injuries, and can involve ongoing stiffness or aching.

In contrast, acute pain develops suddenly, typically from injury or inflammation. It can feel sharp and may need prompt attention.

## Preventing hip pain

Gentle activities, like swimming, walking, yoga, and Tai Chi, help hips stay mobile and strong without straining the joints. Regular stretching and strengthening exercises can further support hip function (see examples below).

A healthy weight and good posture reduces strain on the joints, and supportive footwear can improve alignment. Adjusting your

workspaces to improve posture, and taking regular breaks from sitting can also help prevent hip issues.

Looking after your hips supports your overall mobility and quality of life. If pain or discomfort persists, don't ignore it – early care can make a big difference. Whether through exercise, lifestyle changes or other treatment, support is available, and we're here to help.

## Stretch to improve flexibility:

- Sit upright on a firm chair.
- Cross one ankle over the opposite knee.
- Keeping your back straight, lean forward from your hips.
- Hold gently for 20 seconds, then repeat on the other side.

## Strengthen to help hip muscles:

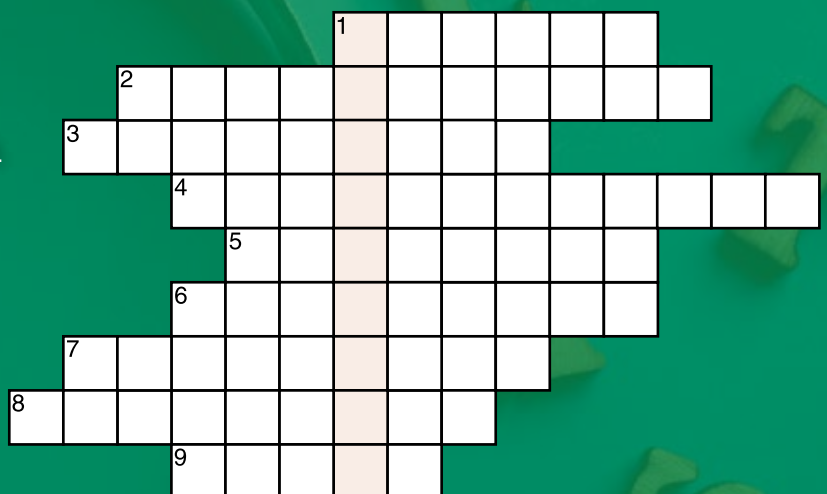
- Stand side on to a wall or chair for balance.
- Lift your outer leg out to the side without leaning or twisting.
- Hold briefly, then return to the starting position.
- Do 10 repetitions, then switch sides and repeat.

# HIDDEN WORD PUZZLE

Fill the answers to the clues in the puzzle. Once you have done this, you will find the hidden word in the bold rectangles. Good Luck!

## THE CLUES:

1. A 'brain-shaped' nut which is a good source of Omega-3.
2. A type of fat that your body needs, but too much can harm your arteries and increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.
3. A flexible connective tissue found in many parts of the body. Its main function is to connect bones together.
4. Your body's natural response to injury, infection, or anything it sees as a threat.
5. The ability to move.
6. This occurs when bacteria or viruses enter the body and cause harm.
7. A condition that causes, swollen, stiff and painful joints.
8. Chemical messengers released by immune cells.
9. Your body's way of clearing irritants from your airways.



The hidden word is:

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON THE BACK PAGE



## Inflammation: simple answers to common questions



### What exactly is inflammation?

Inflammation is your body's natural response to injury, infection, or anything it sees as a threat. It's a sign your immune system is doing its job – sending helpful substances to the affected area to protect and heal. You might notice redness, warmth, swelling, or pain in the area.

### Is inflammation always a good thing?

Acute inflammation – which starts quickly and settles as healing begins – is essential. Think of a sprained ankle or a sore throat. But chronic inflammation lingers, even after the original cause has passed. Over time it can contribute to health issues like type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some autoimmune disorders.

### What are “inflammatory markers”?

These are substances in your blood that can rise when there's inflammation in the body. Doctors may test these to help identify infection, injury, or ongoing inflammation. A common example is C-reactive protein (CRP). The results are considered along with other signs and symptoms.

## Why a cough can linger on and what to do about it



**You've been ill and recovered from the fever and aches, but that cough just won't go away. It's frustrating, tiring, and even a little embarrassing in public. So, what's going on?**

### Why do coughs linger?

Coughing is your body's way of clearing irritants from your airways. A viral illness can make your airways inflamed and sensitive. Even after the infection clears, this irritation can linger for weeks – sometimes even months.

The more you cough, the more your airways stay irritated – creating a bit of a vicious cycle. Cold air, exercise, or even laughing can keep triggering it.

### So... what kind of cough is it?

If your cough began with a viral illness, it's probably a post-viral cough. These are often dry and tickly – the kind that can flare up at night or in cold air. Some people may have a productive cough if there's still mucus or chest inflammation.

### What are some other common terms?

- **Cytokines** are chemical messengers released by immune cells. Some promote inflammation, while others help reduce it.
- **Autoimmune** refers to conditions where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own tissues, causing inflammation. Examples include rheumatoid arthritis and lupus.
- **Anti-inflammatory** describes anything that helps calm inflammation – such as certain medications, foods or healthy lifestyle habits.

### Can you feel chronic inflammation in your body?

Chronic inflammation can cause tiredness, sore joints, brain fog, gut troubles, or skin rashes – but sometimes there are no obvious symptoms. Paying attention to changes in your body and having regular check-ups can help catch it early.

### Can lifestyle really make a difference?

Yes! Regular physical activity, sleeping well, managing stress, eating a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and fibre – while avoiding smoking and excess alcohol – can all help reduce the risk of chronic inflammation over time.

Inflammation is a natural and helpful response, but when it lasts longer than it should, it can start to affect your health. Understanding how it works can help you make informed choices and support your body to stay well.

Coughs can last longer if you have asthma, allergies or another underlying condition. If it lasts for more than eight weeks, it's called a chronic cough – and it's advisable to get it checked.

### Could stress or breathing habits be making it worse?

Surprisingly, yes. Sensitive airways after illness can be affected by stress, tiredness, or shallow breathing. These can trigger more coughing, and it can even become a bit of a habit. Relaxation and simple breathing exercises can help calm it down and break the cycle.

### What can help?

- Stay hydrated – warm drinks can soothe your throat and help loosen mucus.
- A spoonful of honey may help calm irritation (not for children under one).
- Rest your voice and avoid smoky, dusty or dry environments.
- Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.
- Cough medicine may offer short-term relief but ask your pharmacist or GP first.

### When to see your doctor

If your cough lasts more than three weeks, gets worse, or comes with other symptoms like weight loss, coughing up blood, chest pain, or breathlessness – see your doctor. If breathing becomes difficult or coughing fits are intense and ongoing, seek medical help promptly.



## HEARTY SPINACH GNOCCHI BAKE

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

For the gnocchi:

- 500g potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 100g plain flour or gluten-free blend
- 1 egg
- ½ cup (tightly packed) cooked spinach, or frozen spinach thawed and squeezed dry

For the sauce:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 can (400g) crushed tomatoes
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

Topping:

- 30g grated parmesan or cheese of choice

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Boil potatoes until soft, drain, and mash while warm.
2. Mix in flour, egg, spinach, and salt to form soft dough.
3. Roll into ropes about 2cm thick, cut into 2cm long pieces, shape if desired.
4. Boil gnocchi in salted water until they float (about 2 mins), then drain.
5. Meanwhile, heat oil and garlic in a pan, add tomatoes, oregano, salt and pepper, and simmer 10 mins.
6. Combine gnocchi and sauce in a baking dish, top with cheese.
7. Bake at 180°C for 15–20 mins or until golden and bubbling.

## The three 'omegas': how they support your health

Fats often get a bad reputation, but some are essential for good health. Omega fatty acids are a type of healthy fat that support brain function, heart health, and more. While your body can make some types of fat, others must come from your diet.



There are three main omega fatty acids: omega-3, omega-6, and omega-9. They're all unsaturated fats, which are generally considered beneficial. In contrast, saturated fats — found in animal products and many processed foods — can contribute to heart disease, inflammation, and joint problems when consumed in excess.

**Omega-3** is important for brain development, and heart, bone, and joint health. It may also help maintain memory in older age and support mental well-being. As your body can't make omega-3, it must come from food — but many people don't eat enough omega-3-rich foods. It's especially important during pregnancy for a baby's brain development.

**Omega-6** must also come from food; however, it's already abundant in most Western diets, so most people don't need extra. What matters is maintaining a healthy

balance between omega-6 and omega-3, as too much omega-6 may contribute to inflammation. Omega-6 is found in many vegetable oils, meats, dairy products, eggs, cereals, and processed foods.

**Omega-9** is a healthy fat that your body can make, but it's also found in plenty of foods like olive oil, avocados, nuts, and seeds. It may support heart health by helping maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

### Best sources of omega-3

As omega-6 and -9 are common in most diets, focusing on adequate omega-3 intake is important. The best sources are oily fish like mackerel, tuna, sardines, and salmon. Plant-based options such as flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts also contain omega-3, though your body needs to convert them into a more useful form. This makes fish a more efficient source.

### What about supplements?

Omega-3 supplements may be helpful for people who don't eat fish, are pregnant, or have specific dietary needs. They should be high-quality and taken alongside a balanced diet, as whole foods provide additional nutrients that supplements can't replace.

The Australian Heart Foundation recommends eating at least 2-3 servings of oily fish per week, along with plant-sourced omega-3 each day, for example, a tablespoon of ground flaxseeds or chia seeds. This combination provides essential omega-3 fatty acids, as well as nutrients like vitamins A, B, and D, and lean protein, supporting general health and wellbeing.

## 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:		

### Hidden Word Answers:

- |                |                 |              |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Walnut      | 4. Inflammation | 7. Arthritis |
| 2. Cholesterol | 5. Mobility     | 8. Cytokines |
| 3. Cartilage   | 6. Infection    | 9. Cough     |

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.



## DIABETES, HEART DISEASE AND STROKE ARE AUSTRALIA'S FASTEST GROWING CONDITIONS

Life! is a free healthy lifestyle program that helps you improve your eating habits, increase your physical activity and manage stress.

Our experienced health professionals will help you make small changes to your lifestyle so that you can achieve your health goals and reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Life! is funded by the Victorian government and coordinated by Diabetes Victoria.

The Life! group course comprises seven sessions run across a 12 month period.

The introduction session (1 hour) is a one on-one between the participants and their Life! facilitator where participants can ask questions and learn more about the program.

Group sessions are 1.5-2 hours.

- The first four group sessions are run fortnightly
- Session five is at six months and
- The final session takes place 12 months after starting the program.

The group environment gives participants the support and motivation they need to reach their health goals.

Tania and Michelle are our Life! Facilitators here at the Korumburra medical centre. They are hoping to run another program commencing in July 2025.

You can check whether you are eligible for the Life! program by doing a simple online test at:

<https://lifeprogram.org.au/test/>

Or speak to your GP. If you are eligible, you do not need to be a patient of the clinic to attend the program.

Please contact the clinic on 56551355 if you are interested in this fantastic program.