KORUMBURRA MEDICAL CENTRE

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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
Debbie Paterson, Maddie Smith, Julie Patterson, Kerry Bennington, Lisa Pemberton, Nicole Bennett, Linda Kolic and Stacey Williamson

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

JULY 2026


KNOW YOUR FAMILY HEALTH


CHECK THAT DAILY HABIT


CHILDREN, TONSILS & SLEEP


CAN VITAMIN C PREVENT COLDS?

Compliments of your GP

Pneumonia:
More than "just a chest infection"

Pneumonia is a common infection of the lungs. Many people think it only affects older adults, but it can occur at any age. Some cases are mild, while others may become serious, especially in older adults, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain underlying health conditions.

What causes pneumonia?

Pneumonia develops when infection causes inflammation in the air sacs of the lungs, leading to fluid build-up and making it harder to breathe comfortably.

It is usually caused by viruses or bacteria. **Viral pneumonia** can develop from infections such as colds, influenza (flu), COVID-19, and RSV, and is more common in children.

Bacterial pneumonia is more commonly diagnosed in adults and may develop after a viral respiratory infection when the lungs' natural defences are weakened.

Fungal pneumonia is rare and usually occurs when people breathe in fungal spores from the environment, such as soil or dust. It most commonly affects people with weakened immune systems or certain long-term health conditions.

Smoking, vaping, an excessive alcohol intake, and certain medical conditions can increase your risk of pneumonia.

Common symptoms to watch for

Pneumonia can develop quickly or more gradually. You might notice a cough that produces yellow or green phlegm, fever and/or chills, shortness of breath, or chest discomfort that is worse when breathing deeply or coughing. Many people also feel unusually tired and weak, or have a reduced appetite.

Symptoms can look different in certain age groups. Older adults may not have a fever but may become more confused, drowsy, or unsteady. Children may breathe faster than usual, seem unusually tired, or have difficulty feeding or eating.

Treatment and recovery

Mild pneumonia may sometimes be managed at home, but treatment depends on the cause and may include medications as well as rest, fluids, and symptom relief.

Recovery can take time, and it's not unusual for tiredness and a cough to linger for a few weeks after the infection has improved.

You can help reduce your risk by staying up to date with vaccinations, washing your hands regularly, avoiding smoking, and supporting your general health with good sleep, nutrition, and regular activity.

When should you see a doctor?

It's important to seek medical advice if symptoms are not improving or are getting worse. These can include a persistent cough, fever, increasing shortness of breath, chest discomfort when breathing or coughing, or unusual tiredness or confusion.

Young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with ongoing health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or weakened immune systems should seek medical advice early.

Pneumonia is often treatable, particularly when it's identified early. If symptoms are not improving or you are concerned, it's always worth seeking medical advice.

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

What a daily drinking habit could mean for your health

For many people, a nightly glass of wine or beer feels normal, relaxing, and harmless. It can become part of life after work, while cooking dinner, or winding down before bed.

But even small amounts of alcohol consumed regularly may affect your body over time. These changes are often easy to miss because they happen gradually.

Alcohol and sleep

An often overlooked effect is sleep. Many people think that alcohol can help them fall asleep. While it can make you feel sleepy at first, it often reduces sleep quality. You may wake more often, snore more, or feel tired the next day, even after what seemed like a full night's rest.

The quiet effects on the body

Alcohol use can also affect blood pressure. Even small amounts over time may cause gradual increases, especially when drinking becomes a regular habit. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, which is why it's often called a "silent" health problem.

There are also effects that people may not associate with alcohol, such as reflux, bloating, dehydration, headaches, reduced exercise recovery, and weight gain over time. Even one drink a day can add several hundred kilojoules across a week.

Mood, stress, and routine

Alcohol temporarily increases calming brain chemicals, which is why a drink may feel relaxing after a stressful day. However, some people may begin to rely on a daily drink to unwind, which can affect stress, mood, and anxiety levels. It can create a cycle where alcohol is used to cope with stress, but may also end up contributing to it.

The bigger picture

Research shows that alcohol increases the risk of several cancers, including breast and bowel cancer. The likelihood increases with heavy drinking, but studies suggest there is no completely risk-free level of alcohol consumption.

However, health is rarely all-or-nothing, and occasional alcohol is part of social life for many people. Even so, it can be helpful to pause and notice if your drinking is habitual, gradually increasing, or moving from social occasions to drinking alone.

Some people only notice a difference after taking a short break from drinking. They may sleep better, have steadier energy, make healthier food choices, or realise they were just drinking out of habit rather than enjoyment.

It's often the small habits that matter most over time, for better or worse.

TEST YOUR HEALTH KNOW-HOW

From how the body fights germs to what affects our health, many different processes work together to keep us well. See how many you can get right by filling in the blanks!

1. _____ develops when infection causes inflammation in the lungs, making it harder to breathe.
2. _____, vaping, excess alcohol, and certain medical conditions can increase your risk of pneumonia.
3. Vitamin C helps immune cells work properly, protects cells from damage, and supports _____ healing.
4. Foods rich in vitamin C include citrus fruits, _____, berries, capsicum, tomatoes, and leafy greens.
5. Vitamin C helps your body absorb _____ from plant-based foods.
6. Tonsils, together with the _____, help your immune system recognise and fight germs.
7. _____ can feel much worse than just a sore throat. It can hurt to swallow, and the tonsils may look red and swollen.
8. Drinking _____ may make you feel sleepy at first, but it can actually disrupt your sleep.
9. Alcohol can also affect _____ _____. Even small amounts over time may lead to gradual increases.
10. _____ is a condition that can be inherited through genes. It affects how the blood clots.

Helpful hint: All the answers can be found in the articles in this edition.

Why tonsils can affect more than just the throat

Many of us remember opening our mouths wide while a doctor shone a light into our throat. But tonsils aren't simply a cause of trouble; together with the adenoids, they help your immune system recognise and respond to germs.

The tonsils sit at the back of the throat, while the adenoids are hidden behind the nose. They're only a small part of the immune system, and your body has many other ways to fight infection.

When tonsils become a problem

Tonsillitis happens when your tonsils become inflamed, usually due to infection. Children are more prone because they're frequently exposed to new infections, and their tonsils and adenoids are relatively larger in early childhood.

Tonsillitis can feel much worse than just a sore throat. It can be painful to swallow, and the tonsils may also look red and swollen.

Other symptoms are especially common in children as part of the immune response to infection. These include fever, headaches, reduced appetite, feeling generally unwell, stomach pain, or nausea.

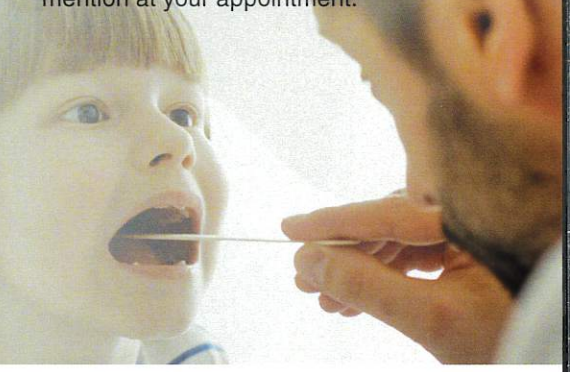
Many people recover well from occasional tonsillitis, but repeated infections can affect daily life, and lead to missed school or work, difficulty eating comfortably, and disrupted sleep.

The wider effects of sleep issues

Large tonsils or adenoids can partly block the airway, especially in young children. As air moves through a narrower space, snoring can occur. This can range from simple snoring through to obstructive sleep apnoea, where breathing is briefly interrupted during sleep.

Children may snore loudly, have pauses in breathing, breathe through their mouth, sleep in unusual positions, or wake frequently. They may also seem tired despite sleeping for many hours, and have difficulties with concentration, school performance, behaviour, or bedwetting.

Children often snore when they have a cold, however persistent or loud snoring, or ongoing concerns about tonsils are worth discussing with your doctor. Understanding how these issues can affect your child's sleep, energy, and daily life can help make sense of what's happening, and what to mention at your appointment.



Can Vitamin C really help prevent a cold?

Vitamin C is often linked with immune health, and many of us take it at the first sign of a cold or as winter approaches. But can it really help prevent illness or ease cold symptoms?

What vitamin C does in your body

Vitamin C is important in many ways. It helps immune cells work well, protects cells from damage, and supports wound healing. It's also needed to make collagen, which keeps your skin, blood vessels, and joints strong. Additionally, vitamin C helps your body absorb iron from plant-based foods.

Can vitamin C prevent infections?

For most people, getting enough vitamin C every day may slightly reduce how long a cold lasts and how severe the symptoms feel. However, research shows that it does not reliably prevent a cold or other common respiratory infections.

What about supplements?

Because your body can't store large amounts of vitamin C, it needs to be consumed regularly, leading many people to turn to supplements.

Vitamin C supplements are generally safe when taken as directed. However, very high doses can cause side effects such as stomach upset or diarrhoea and may increase the risk of kidney stones in some people.

If you are considering supplements or already taking them, mention this to your GP, especially if you have any underlying health conditions or take medication.

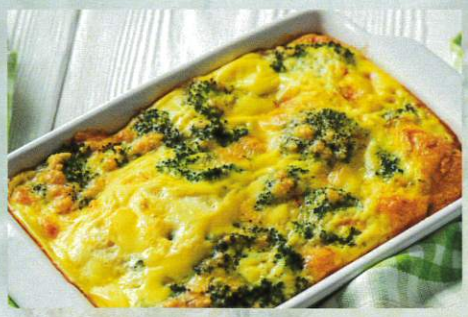
Food first is best

Most people who eat a varied, balanced diet are able to meet their vitamin C needs without supplements. Rich sources include citrus fruits, kiwifruit, berries, capsicum, tomatoes, and leafy greens. Eating a variety of these foods helps provide many nutrients that support overall health, including immune function.

Staying healthy

Vitamin C is just one small part of the nutrients we need to stay well. A varied healthy diet, quality sleep, stress management, and staying active can all help reduce your risk of infection. Avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol are also important parts of a healthy lifestyle.

SWEET POTATO, BROCCOLI & COTTAGE CHEESE BAKE



This sweet potato, cottage cheese and broccoli bake is rich in fibre, vitamins A, C and K, iron, and protein to support energy, immunity, and muscle health.

Serves: 2

INGREDIENTS

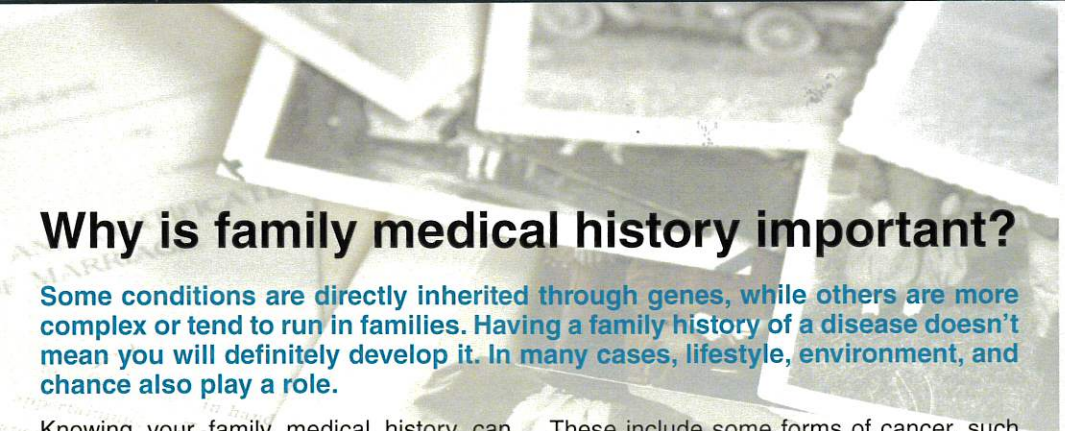
- 1½ cups mashed orange sweet potato
- ½ head broccoli, finely chopped
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup raw spinach, roughly chopped
- ½ cup chopped red pepper
- ½ cup cottage cheese
- Black pepper or chilli flakes, to taste
- Cheddar cheese (or any cheese you prefer)
- Butter or oil, for greasing the dish

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 170°C fan bake.
2. Grease a shallow glass baking dish.
3. Blanch the broccoli in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain well.
4. Beat the eggs in a bowl, then add the mashed sweet potato and mix well.
5. Stir in the spinach, red pepper, cottage cheese, broccoli, and seasoning.
6. Spoon the mixture into the prepared baking dish and spread evenly.
7. Sprinkle cheddar (or your preferred cheese).
8. Bake for about 35 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly and golden brown.

SERVING TIPS

Serve warm as a light meal or side dish.



Why is family medical history important?

Some conditions are directly inherited through genes, while others are more complex or tend to run in families. Having a family history of a disease doesn't mean you will definitely develop it. In many cases, lifestyle, environment, and chance also play a role.

Knowing your family medical history can help you understand possible health risks and make decisions about your health.

It may guide decisions about monitoring, screening, or genetic testing, and healthy lifestyle changes. It can also be useful for family planning, and provide other family members with information about their own health risks.

In some cases, screening or genetic testing may identify a higher likelihood of developing certain conditions in the future. This information can help people make informed choices about care, monitoring, and future planning if needed.

What health conditions can be inherited or run in families?

Some conditions can be directly inherited through genes. For example:

- **Cystic fibrosis (CF)** – mainly affects the lungs and digestive system. It's included in newborn bloodspot screening offered to babies in Australia.
- **Huntington's disease** – affects the brain and nervous system.
- **Haemophilia** – affects the blood's ability to clot properly.

Other conditions may not be inherited in a straightforward way but can still occur more often in some families.

These include some forms of cancer, such as breast and bowel cancer, as well as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure.

What family information is useful?

If possible, it helps to know if any close relatives have had major illnesses and the age at which they were diagnosed. It can also be useful to know whether certain conditions have affected more than one family member and whether lifestyle factors, such as smoking, may have influenced health risks.

Close relatives usually include parents, brothers, sisters, children, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Some people may not know about their biological family history because of adoption or limited family contact, but having regular health check-ups is still important.

How do I know which tests I need?

It's your choice whether to have screening or genetic testing. Talking with your GP about your family history and any health concerns is a good start. They may suggest screening, ways to reduce your risk, or refer you for more specialised advice.

Family medical history can't predict your future, but it can provide useful insight into your health risks and help guide decisions about your care.

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. Pneumonia
2. Smoking
3. Wound
4. Kiwifruit
5. Iron
6. Adenoids
7. Tonsillitis
8. Alcohol
9. Blood pressure
10. Haemophilia

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.