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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

SEPTEMBER 2025



UNLOCKING
THORACIC PAIN



POSTNATAL
DEPRESSION



RSV – RISKS
& FACTS



BOOSTING IRON
NATURALLY

Compliments of your GP

Dementia – let's talk about it

Being told you or someone you love has dementia can feel overwhelming and isolating. That's why the theme for this September's World Alzheimer's Month is "Ask about Dementia" — it's a reminder that open conversations, greater awareness, and support can make a real difference.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a term used to describe a group of brain conditions that gradually affect cognitive function — such as memory, thinking, judgment, and problem-solving. It can also lead to changes in mood, personality, and behaviour. These changes can interfere with daily life and independence.

The most common form is Alzheimer's disease, which usually starts slowly and gets worse over time — going from mild to moderate and advanced. The signs aren't exactly the same for everyone, but in the early stages, people may have trouble with memory, language, recognising people and places, mood, judgment, decision-making, and completing daily tasks.

Vascular dementia is another common type, often caused by reduced blood flow to the brain. It causes similar symptoms to Alzheimer's but can progress in a stop-start way, with stable periods in between.

Other forms include dementia linked to Parkinson's disease, alcohol-related brain damage, and rare conditions like Huntington's disease.

It's also important to know that memory problems or confusion don't always mean dementia. Some mild changes can be age-related; and stress, infections, thyroid issues, depression, or drinking too much alcohol can all affect memory.

Who's at risk?

Dementia is more common after the age of 65, but it's not a normal part of ageing. Family history and certain genes can increase the risk. There are some things we can do that may help delay dementia or slow its progression — such as eating a healthy diet, staying active, keeping mentally and socially engaged, and drinking alcohol in moderation.

Regular check-ups with your GP can also help spot other health issues that may affect brain function.

Why early conversations help

Talking about memory concerns early can lead to a quicker diagnosis and earlier support. While there's currently no cure for dementia, some treatments may help manage the symptoms. Early planning also gives families more time to make decisions together, organise care, and focus on what matters most.

Supporting someone with dementia

It's not always easy, but kindness and patience can make a big difference. Try keeping routines simple and familiar, speak clearly, and be calm and reassuring. With the right help, people with dementia can still enjoy special moments and stay connected with loved ones.

Don't forget to look after your own wellbeing too — there's support for carers as well as those with dementia.

If you're concerned about memory changes in yourself or someone else, speak to your GP. Professional help is available through clinics, community groups, and healthcare providers.

Dementia touches families, friendships and communities – but together, we can build understanding, raise awareness, and make sure no one has to face it alone.

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

When the joy feels missing: understanding postnatal depression

Becoming a parent is often described as a joyful time — but for some, the experience can feel very different. If you're feeling low, overwhelmed, or not quite yourself after having a baby, you're not alone.



In Australia, around 1 in 7 mothers and 1 in 10 fathers experience postnatal depression. It can start any time in the first year and may follow any birth, not just the first.

What causes postnatal depression?

There isn't a single cause; it's often a mix of physical, emotional, and social factors. After birth, hormone levels drop quickly, lack of sleep, physical recovery, and the demands of caring for a new baby can all affect your mood.

Emotional challenges like feeling a loss of identity, relationship stress, or lack of support can also play a role. For some, past mental health issues or a difficult pregnancy or birth may increase the risk.

What are the signs?

It's normal to feel tired and emotional in the early weeks after birth. But if you've been feeling low, anxious, or overwhelmed for more than a couple of weeks, it could be something more.

Common symptoms can include:

- feeling sad, numb or hopeless
- irritability or anger
- difficulty bonding with your baby

- constant worry or panic
- trouble sleeping (even when baby sleeps)
- withdrawing from family or friends
- thoughts of self-harm or that your baby would be better off without you.

These feelings aren't a sign of failure or weakness. They're symptoms of an illness, and they deserve care – just like any physical condition.

What can help?

PND is treatable. The first step is talking to someone — your GP, child health professional, or a friend or family member. Support might include counselling, parenting help, or medication if needed.

Your wellbeing matters too: rest when you can, eat well, and do small things that you enjoy. Don't hesitate to ask for help – staying connected and being honest about how you're feeling can make a big difference.

Regular check-ups with your GP can pick up early signs of postnatal depression and other health concerns. If something doesn't feel right, it's always OK to speak up.

Struggling after birth? Postnatal depression is common— but help is available, and you can get better.

WORD SEARCH

- ALZHEIMERS
- COGNITIVE
- DEMENTIA
- RSV
- ASTHMA
- BROCCOLI
- BRONCHIOLITI
- COUGH
- DEPRESSION
- DIAGNOSIS
- HORMONE

- IMMUNITY
- IRON
- POSTNATAL
- POSTURE
- SPINACH
- SPINE
- SYMPTOMS
- THORACIC
- VERTEBRAE
- VITAMIN
- WHEEZE

C	S	R	S	L	S	A	M	H	T	S	A	B
H	E	S	I	A	C	I	C	A	R	O	H	T
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N	S	M	O	T	P	M	Y	S	R	D	S	A
A	N	O	I	S	S	E	R	P	E	D	T	N
C	P	O	H	O	M	D	J	P	W	I	U	I
H	F	O	C	P	C	O	U	G	H	R	R	M
C	O	G	N	I	T	I	V	E	E	O	E	A
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From sniffles to serious: understanding RSV



You may not have heard of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), but it's one of the most common viruses affecting the airways and lungs – especially in young children. So, what is RSV, who's at risk, and when should you be concerned?

What is RSV – and who's most at risk?

RSV is highly contagious and causes symptoms such as a runny nose, fever, cough, wheezing and sneezing. It spreads easily through droplets from coughs and sneezes, or by touching contaminated surfaces.

For most people, RSV clears up in a week or two. But those at higher risk, such as young children and people with chronic health conditions, can develop complications such as bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lungs) or pneumonia.

Babies under 12 months are particularly vulnerable. RSV often causes wheezing, poor feeding, trouble breathing, or unusual

sleepiness. In Australia, it's one of the most common reasons babies are hospitalised during the cooler months.

Older adults – especially those over 65 or with heart or lung conditions – can also become quite unwell. RSV can worsen existing conditions like asthma, COPD, or heart failure, and may cause fatigue or breathing difficulties. People with weakened immune systems are also more likely to experience complications.

What can you do about RSV?

There's no specific cure, but most people recover with the right care at home. Staying well-hydrated and getting plenty of rest can help. If your child is sick, monitor them closely and keep their environment warm and smoke-free.

To help prevent the spread, wash your hands regularly, stay home if you're unwell, and avoid close contact with newborns or older people if you have cold-like symptoms.

When should you see a doctor?

For those at risk – especially infants – RSV can be serious. See your GP promptly if your child is breathing noisily or rapidly, not feeding well, has a high fever, or seems unusually drowsy.

These are just some of the signs to look out for. If you're ever unsure or concerned, it's best to get checked. For severe symptoms like struggling to breathe, call emergency services immediately.

Iron and vitamin C: a nutrient pair worth knowing



Iron is essential for your energy and overall health – and pairing it with vitamin C can help your body absorb it more effectively. It's a simple strategy that can make a real difference.

Why iron matters

Iron helps your body make haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen around your body. If your iron levels are low, you might feel tired, short of breath, or struggle to concentrate.

Iron also supports the immune system and brain function and growth, especially in children. During pregnancy, iron needs increase to support the growing baby and placenta.

Iron is especially important for women, young children, and vegetarians and vegans, as they're more likely to fall short. Even small shortfalls over time can reduce

your iron stores, so it's worth keeping an eye on your intake.

How vitamin C helps

Your body absorbs iron from animal foods (haem iron), more easily than from plant sources (non-haem iron). But here's the good news – vitamin C helps convert plant iron into a form your body can absorb more easily – making it a simple way to boost your iron intake.

Easy food pairings

Some foods, like broccoli, naturally contain both iron and vitamin C. Others can be combined in the same meal. Try baked beans with tomato, lentil dishes with capsicum, or a squeeze of lemon juice to cooked spinach.

For sweet pairings, add vitamin C-rich fruit or chia berry jam to porridge, wholemeal pancakes, or toast. Try our muffin recipe – a delicious way to boost iron and vitamin C in one bite.

Pairing iron-rich foods with vitamin C is a simple way to support your energy and overall wellbeing. If you're feeling low on energy or think you might not be getting enough iron, speak to your GP or a dietitian.



IRON-BOOSTING BERRY MUFFINS

Packed with goodness, these muffins are a tasty way to support your iron intake naturally.

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 12)

For the gnocchi:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup wholemeal flour
- ½ cup almond meal
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds or chia seeds
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup milk (or plant-based milk)
- 2 large eggs
- ⅓ cup olive oil or melted butter
- ¼ cup maple syrup or honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 cup mixed fresh or frozen raspberries or boysenberries

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (fan 160°C). Line or grease a 12-hole muffin tray.
2. In a large bowl, mix oats, flour, almond meal, seeds, baking powder, and cinnamon.
3. In another bowl, whisk milk, eggs, oil, syrup, vanilla, and lemon zest.
4. Pour wet ingredients into dry and stir gently to combine. Fold in berries.
5. Divide mixture into muffin tray. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until golden and firm to touch.
6. Cool slightly before serving.

These muffins store well and make a great snack or breakfast. The vitamin C from the lemon and berries helps your body absorb more iron from the oats, seeds, and wholegrains.

Why your upper back aches — and how to ease it

Does your upper back often feel stiff, sore, or painful? You're not alone; about 1 in 3 adults experience pain in the thoracic spine each year. This part of your back, between your neck and lower back, can often be a source of nagging discomfort. So what causes it — and what can help?



What causes thoracic pain?

Your thoracic spine is made up of twelve vertebrae, each connected to ribs, with discs in between. Facet joints hold the bones together, while ligaments and muscles support movement. Nerves exit at each level and travel to different parts of your body. Pain can occur when any of these structures are irritated, strained, or injured.

Some common causes include:

- **Poor posture:** slouching, looking down at phones or screens, or sitting for long periods — especially in badly set-up workspaces — can reduce mobility and strain your back. Lifting incorrectly can also lead to injury.
- **Whiplash:** sudden, uncontrolled jerking of your head, such as in a car accident or fall, can strain both the neck and upper back.

- **Joint dysfunction:** your thoracic spine has many joints, if these don't move well they can cause pain and restrict motion.
- **Osteoarthritis:** age-related wear and tear can affect the spinal joints, leading to stiffness and aching.

How to reduce your risk of thoracic pain

Good posture makes a big difference. Keep your shoulders relaxed but back, head in line with your shoulders, and gently pull your chin in — not jutting forward. When sitting, rest your feet flat on the floor and aim to keep your ankles, knees, hips, and elbows at roughly 90 degrees. Choose a chair that supports the natural curve of your spine.

Avoid sitting for long periods. If you work all day at a desk, take regular breaks to stand, stretch, and move.

A balanced diet and regular physical activity also help by supporting a healthy weight and keeping your spine in better condition. The muscles in your upper back can weaken over time, especially with inactivity — targeted exercises can build strength and ease discomfort.

Thoracic pain can range from mild to quite disruptive. If you have ongoing discomfort or stiffness, don't ignore it — early treatment can help prevent it from getting worse. Talk to your GP about your symptoms and available support.

Eating well and being active are the two most effective ways to support your overall health.

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:		

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.