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#### SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

CONSULTATIONS can be arranged by phoning. PH: 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 2021

FREE!

## This month we talk about...



**KEEPING KIDNEYS HEALTHY**



**STOMACH ULCERS**



**ELECTROLYTE ESSENTIALS**



**IN PRAISE OF PARSNIP**

## Building better bones

Strong bones are incredibly important, helping us to stay mobile and healthy our entire life.

Our bones not only provide structural support for our bodies; they help us move, protect vital organs, store and release minerals (mainly calcium), and produce blood cells. Bones are able to repair and rebuild themselves in a process called remodelling.

Bones are not all solid; they're formed by a matrix (a bit like a honeycomb) of collagen and minerals. This serves as the framework for calcium deposits which form the compact, hard exterior. Together, these layers provide both flexibility and strength. The marrow is at the core, where we make blood cells.

### WHAT CAUSES PROBLEMS WITH BONES?

Our bones lose density as we age, becoming more fragile and making us prone to fractures and problems with mobility. Some conditions that affect bones include:

**Osteoporosis:** the thinning of the bones, sometimes known as 'brittle bone disease'. Our bones naturally lose some of their density as we get older. This means that broken bones become more common as we age, just at a time when other health concerns may begin to emerge. Osteoporosis is particularly common after menopause due to hormonal changes.

**Osteomalacia:** a condition where the bones soften and weaken, mainly due to vitamin D deficiency. We need vitamin D to help us absorb and use the calcium in our diets.

**Arthritis:** this is a condition where the joints connecting our bones become inflamed, and the cartilage that allows the bones to move smoothly wears down. Our bones can be seriously damaged when we lose cartilage, actually rubbing against each other.

### LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR HEALTHY BONES

There are a few simple guidelines to follow to keep our bones as healthy as possible:

- Get lots of weight-bearing exercise, that's right, putting pressure on your bones actually makes them stronger! Weight-bearing exercise doesn't mean you have to get out the dumbbells, although if you can that's great... even working with your own weight against gravity counts, so hiking, dancing, and even just climbing stairs can help.
- Eat calcium-rich foods such as: dairy foods like cheese, yoghurt, milk or fortified alternatives; green leafy vegetables; nuts; and small fish with edible bones like sardines and anchovies.
- Get plenty of vitamin D, we need it to absorb and use calcium in our bodies. It's known as the 'sunshine vitamin', as we make it ourselves when our skin is exposed to sunlight. We can make adequate amounts of vitamin D with only a few minutes of sunshine, so follow sun safety rules. You can boost your vitamin D intake through some foods, especially oily fish, red meat, egg yolks, and fortified foods.

It's never too late to start looking after our bones; we can keep them healthy naturally with a combination of a good diet and regular exercise. If you have concerns about your bone health, discuss them with your doctor..

### DID YOU KNOW?



Around 99 percent of our body's calcium is held in our bones and teeth.

## Quick tension-relieving tip

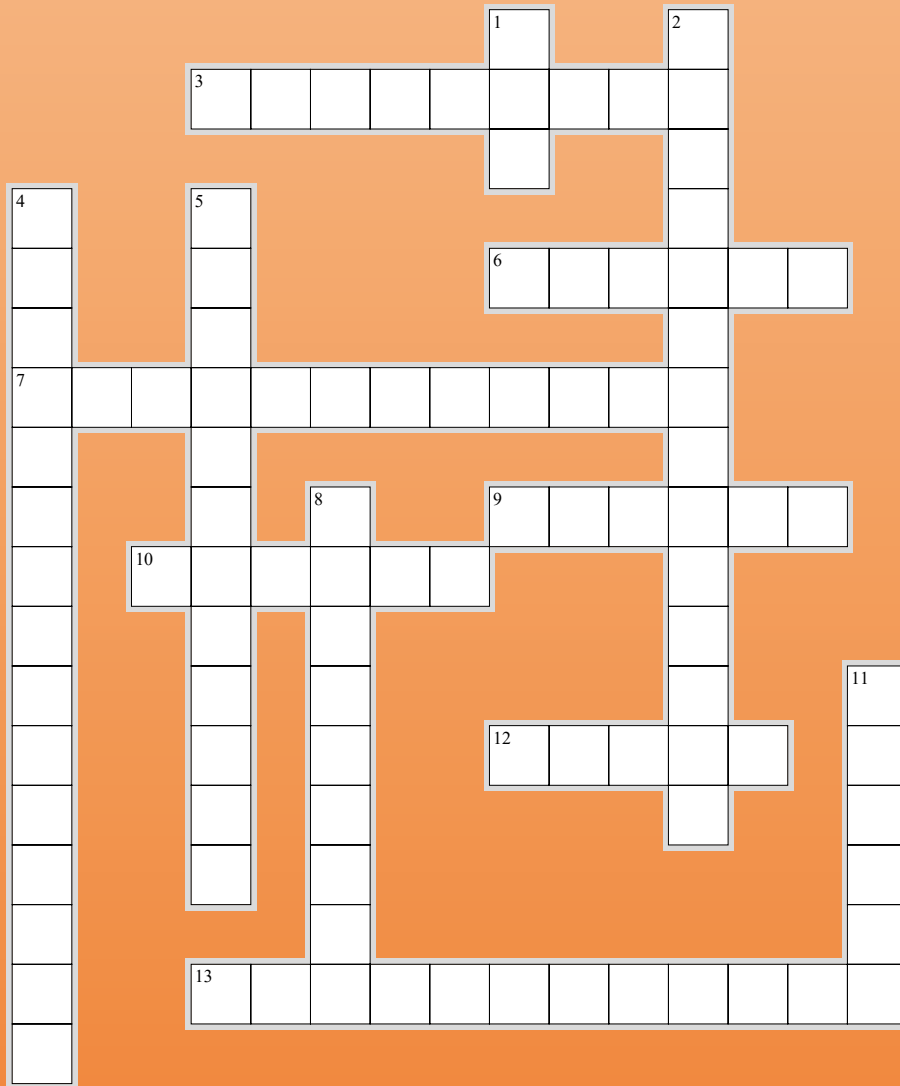
You may be carrying a lot of tension and stress in your body that you're unaware of - especially in your shoulders.

Take a moment to breathe in, hunch your shoulders up and let them relax as you breathe out. Feel better? Try this again before you go to sleep tonight.



## CROSSWORD

Answers can be found in this edition of *Your Doctor*.



### ACROSS

3. An examination of the upper digestive tract.
6. A pattern or arrangement of connected things (like a honeycomb).
7. A condition where the bones soften and weaken, mainly due to vitamin D deficiency.
9. Part of the bone where we make blood cells.
10. An essential B vitamin that the body needs for healthy cell production.
12. A poison or harmful substance.
13. The mineral salts in our blood that help regulate fluid levels in our blood.

### DOWN

1. Short for electrocardiogram.
2. A high level of sodium.
4. A low level of magnesium.
5. Thinning of the bones, sometimes known as 'brittle bone disease'.
8. The tough elastic tissue that is found at the ends of our bones.
11. Short for Non-Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs.

**Solution is on the back page**

## The essentials of electrolytes

Electrolytes are the mineral salts in our blood that regulate various body functions. They help keep the fluid levels in our blood and tissues steady and healthy, and are an important factor in the way our bodies use energy. They allow our muscles to respond to impulses and move, and even control the way our heart beats.

When your fluid levels are out of the normal range – or when the filtration systems in your body don't function normally – electrolytes no longer work as they should and imbalances occur.

### ELECTROLYTE IMBALANCES

Electrolyte imbalances happen for many different reasons – from simple dehydration to chronic diarrhoea or vomiting. It can also be due to a trauma such as severe burns, or an illness, especially one affecting the kidneys. Some medications can cause electrolyte imbalances, which might require having regular blood tests.

We're more likely to develop electrolyte imbalances – and, in general, the conditions that can cause them – as we get older, but they can happen at any age.

Electrolyte levels can be below normal range – we refer to this as 'hypo-', or above normal range, 'hyper-'.

Some of the most common electrolytes that can become imbalanced include:

### Potassium

Officially referred to as hypokalaemia or hyperkalaemia. This can cause an irregular heartbeat, dangerous heart rhythm disturbances, and even cardiac arrest. Signs of potassium imbalance can often be seen on an ECG. There may be no symptoms until problems with the heart arise; causing chest pain, shortness of breath, palpitations or other cardiac-related issues.

### Sodium

Hyponatraemia or hypernatraemia are also linked to heart rhythm disturbances. Both cause symptoms such as nausea, weakness, lack of energy and confusion. An early sign of a high sodium level is extreme thirst.

### Magnesium

Hypomagnesaemia or hypermagnesaemia are closely linked to cardiac arrest and heart rhythm disturbance.

### Calcium

Hypocalcaemia or hypercalcaemia can cause confusion, muscle weakness, and sometimes heart rhythm problems.

Usually, we can keep our electrolytes balanced just by following a normal healthy diet and staying hydrated. It's generally only when we become unwell, or have underlying risk factors, that medication and sometimes hospital treatment may be needed.



# Parsnip, walnut, and apple cake

You won't notice this tasty light cake has parsnips in it, but they add a nutty flavour and sweetness which means you can use less sugar than in a standard cake.

## INGREDIENTS

150g parsnips, peeled  
120g apples, peeled  
Juice and zest ¼ orange  
3 large eggs, separated  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
65g light brown sugar  
100g buttermilk (or yoghurt)

100g walnuts, lightly toasted  
100g plain flour  
1½ tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp nutmeg  
¾ tsp baking powder  
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

## Icing

100g cream cheese  
50g butter (softened)

½ cup icing sugar  
1 tsp orange juice

## METHOD

Grease and line two 16cm sandwich tins. Heat the oven to 180C. Finely grate the parsnip and apple into a large bowl, add the orange juice and zest.

Beat the egg yolks with vanilla extract and sugar until pale and creamy, stir in the buttermilk and add to the parsnip and apple mixture.

Process the walnuts until fine. Sift the spices, baking powder, bicarb of soda and flour into a bowl, mix in the ground walnuts. Fold into the parsnip mixture.

Whisk the egg whites in a bowl until stiff peaks form and then carefully fold into the parsnip mixture until just combined.

Divide the mixture between the tins and bake for 20-25 minutes. Leave to cool before removing from tins.

## Icing

Beat the butter and cream cheese together with an electric beater, add icing sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Mix orange juice in well. Spread half of the icing over the top of one sponge, set the other sponge on top and press lightly to hold in place. Spread the rest over the top of the cake. Decorate with nuts and/or orange zest.

## Keeping kidneys healthy

The kidneys are a pair of organs that look a bit like fist-sized kidney beans. They're found on either side of the spine, just under the rib cage.

They work by filtering the blood, clearing toxins and fluid and sending them to the bladder to be passed as urine. They help regulate blood pressure, red blood cells, and the amount of certain nutrients in the body.

### WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO THE KIDNEYS?

When the kidneys aren't working well, waste products that are usually filtered by the kidneys may build up. This can cause the electrolytes in the blood to go out of normal range. The electrolytes are the salts in the blood that are responsible for healthy heart and cell function.

Kidney stones occur when salts in the urine form a solid crystal. Small ones can transit and be passed in your urine; however if they don't move they can block the flow of urine and cause infection, and also affect kidney function. Severe pain and blood in the urine should be assessed by a doctor urgently.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is the name for long-term reduced kidney function or damage. We're more likely to develop this condition as we get older, and it's closely

linked to high blood pressure – both as a cause and effect of CKD. Repeated or untreated kidney infections, certain medications, poorly controlled diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases are some of the risk factors. One in three Australian adults is at high risk of developing kidney disease.

Acute kidney injury (AKI) is a sudden reduction in kidney function, usually due to a serious illness. AKI, and its underlying cause usually needs hospital treatment. Some of the symptoms include lethargy, confusion, feeling generally unwell, and a reduction in the amount of urine passed (compared to the amount of water drunk).



## In praise of parsnip

The parsnip is a long, carrot-like root vegetable. They're usually a whitish colour, with a sweet, slightly woody flavour. They were popular in the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome, and used as a sweetener before cane sugar.

The water content of parsnips is high – around 80% by weight, but the remaining 20% is packed with essential nutrients. At only 300 kilojoules per 100g and almost fat-free, they're ideal to include in a balanced diet.

Parsnips are a good source of:

- **Fibre** – parsnips contain around 5% fibre – considering they're 80% water, that's a good amount! Fibre is essential for a healthy digestive system.
- **Vitamin C** – parsnips are a good wintertime source of vitamin C. A valuable antioxidant that helps protect our bodies from damage; vitamin C is also important for supporting our immune system – perfect for keeping those winter coughs and colds at bay.
- **Vitamin K** – best known for maintaining normal blood clotting abilities.
- **Folate** – an essential B vitamin that the body needs for healthy cell production. It can also help development of healthy babies during pregnancy.
- **Vitamin E** – they're a reasonable source of this vitamin, essential for healthy blood, skin, vision and reproduction.
- **Minerals** – they also contain a range of minerals, such as magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium and zinc.

Parsnips can be eaten raw, but are probably best known for their delicious flavour and texture when baked. Roasted, sautéed in strips, blended into a spicy soup, or even baked in a cake – parsnips are an excellent addition to a healthy diet.

### HOW TO KEEP YOUR KIDNEYS HEALTHY

There are some simple steps we can take to give ourselves the best chance of healthy kidneys:

**Stay hydrated** - not only is this one of the best but is also very easy to do. Drinking plenty of water helps the kidneys to flush out toxins and maintain a good balance of fluid and electrolytes in the blood.

**Stop smoking** – smokers are three times more likely to develop kidney problems.

**Reduce alcohol** – drinking to excess can lead to high blood pressure, which increases the risk of kidney disease. Get your blood pressure checked regularly, and talk to your doctor about how you can keep it at a safe level.

Eating a nutritious balanced diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and getting plenty of regular exercise are great for our kidneys – and the rest of our body!

# Stomach ulcers

Stomach ulcers, also referred to as gastric ulcers or peptic ulcers, are open sores caused by damage to our stomach lining.

Symptoms of stomach ulcers include a burning pain in the upper abdomen, indigestion, bloating, low appetite, nausea and vomiting. Some things can make symptoms worse, such as fatty or spicy foods and alcohol.

Serious symptoms of stomach ulcers can include blood in your stools or black stools, vomiting blood, and signs of acute anaemia like shortness of breath and chest pain. These signs can indicate bleeding and complications from an ulcer and you need to get medical help immediately.

## WHAT CAUSES STOMACH ULCERS?

The main cause of stomach ulcers is an infection with a type of bacteria called helicobacter pylori (H. pylori). Some medications; especially Non-Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) such as Aspirin and Ibuprofen, can cause damage to the stomach lining, leading to ulcers.

Smoking is linked to stomach ulcers – smokers are more susceptible to H. pylori,

and treatment doesn't work as well as it does for non-smokers.

We can't always prevent stomach ulcers, but we can reduce our risk. The best things we can do are to stop smoking, reduce alcohol, and avoid foods that irritate your stomach.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU SEE YOUR DOCTOR?

As the majority of stomach ulcers are caused by H. pylori infection which is treated by prescribed medications, it's important to see your doctor for diagnosis. Some symptoms of stomach ulcers could indicate other conditions, so they need to be properly assessed.

If symptoms are severe, or persist despite treatment, an examination may be made by endoscopy. This is when a tiny camera on a fine tube is passed through the mouth into the stomach to allow doctors to see any ulcers and inflammation. This can help guide treatment.

If you're worried about medicines that may be linked to stomach ulcers, talk to your GP, and keep taking any prescribed medications unless they tell you to stop.

## Discuss your concerns with the doctor

It can be helpful to make a note of what you'd like to discuss with your doctor before your visit. After you make an appointment, take a minute to write down the doctor's name and appointment details and use this form to make a list to take with you..

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME

1.

2.

3.

NOTES:

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

**DOWN**  
1. ECG 2. HYPERNATRAEMIA 4. HYPOMAGNEAEMIA 5. OSTEOPOROSIS 8. CARTILAGE 11. NSAIDS  
**ACROSS**  
3. ENDOSCOPY 6. MATRIX 7. OSTEOMALACIA 9. MARROW 10. FOLATE 12. TOXIN 13. ELECTROLYTES

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified health care professional in all matters pertaining to your physical, emotional and mental health.

## SHINGLES VACCINE – ZOSTAVAX Catch up program for ages 71-79 years is ending 31st October 2021.

Shingles is caused by the varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella).

Shingles is also called Herpes-zoster. It is a disease caused by a reactivation of the chickenpox virus. It causes a painful blistering rash.

Shingles is a serious disease because it can cause severe and chronic nerve pain that can last for months, called post-herpetic neuralgia. It can also lead to: serious eye problems, including blindness, pneumonia, hearing problems, swelling of the brain and potentially death.

Shingles symptoms include: a tingling, burning sensation in the area. This is where a painful blistering rash will appear, headache, tiredness and a discomfort when looking at bright lights.

Symptoms can occur for several days before the rash appears. The rash can last about 10 to 15 days. It often makes a stripe or belt-like pattern on one side of the face or body. The rash forms small blisters, which fill with liquid and burst before the skin crusts over and heals.

Anyone who has had chickenpox is at risk of getting shingles later in life. Shingles can occur at any age, but it is most common in people over the age of 50 years. The older you are if you get shingles, the higher your risk of getting serious disease.

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect against shingles in most people. However you should firstly make an appointment with your doctor to have a discussion about the vaccine, as there are certain conditions that may prevent you from being able to have the vaccination.

Zostavax is FREE (government funded) for all adults aged over 70 years through the National Immunisation Program (NIP). **But the single catch-up dose for adults 71-79 years of age is coming to an end at 31st October 2021.**

Although not funded it is also available on private script for those adults aged 60 years and over. On private script it is approximately \$200.

Please contact the Korumburra Medical Centre on 56551355 and make an appointment with your doctor to discuss your eligibility.

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[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

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