

#### PRACTICE STAFF

Lissa Bain (Practice Manager)  
Cheryl Nicholas (Office Manager)  
Tania Findlay (Nurse Team Leader)

#### PRACTICE NURSES

Jenny Edwards, Tania Findlay,  
Laura Nicholas, Sharon Goad,  
Michelle Bensley, Marie Tremblay

#### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Debbie Paterson, Maddie Dixon,  
Marina Paterson, Julie Patterson,  
Cheryl Nicholas, Kerry Bennington,  
Lisa Pemberton

#### 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

JANUARY 2025

*Our New Year edition contains essential tips to kick start your wellbeing journey!*



**MANAGING  
STRESS**



**BONE &  
JOINT HEALTH**



**MOVE FOR  
HEALTH**



**ALIGN  
AND REST**

*Compliments of your GP*

## Water: the foundation of good health

As summer heats up, drinking water becomes even more essential. Find out why it's vital for your health, the signs of dehydration, how much water you should drink, and practical tips on staying hydrated.

### Why we need water

Water is a key element of nearly every part of your body - essential for smooth functioning. While the body's water content can vary, it averages around 60 percent. The brain and kidneys have the highest amount at around 80-85 percent.

Water is vital for aiding digestion, transporting nutrients to cells, bladder health, and regulating blood pressure. It also lubricates joints, protects organs and tissues, maintains electrolyte balance, and helps control body temperature.

### What is dehydration?

Dehydration occurs when your body loses more fluids than it takes in. This can happen quite easily, especially with increased sweating from exercising or heat. Elderly people, babies, and children are more susceptible to dehydration and can become ill rapidly.

Your body tells you when it needs fluids. Feeling thirsty is a strong signal! Some other early signs are dry mouth, headache, and darker urine than usual. As dehydration worsens, you can experience dizziness, fatigue, and find that you're urinating less – a sign that your body is trying to conserve water.

Get medical help right away if you experience confusion, fainting, rapid heartbeat or breathing, or can't produce urine.

Over time, constant dehydration can impact kidney function and health, and may increase

the likelihood of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Therefore, it's important to keep hydrated every day.

### How much water should you drink?

The general recommendation is around 8 glasses a day, but this varies depending on your age, activity level, body size and balance of muscle and fat. Remember, in addition to water, non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages help hydration needs. Certain fruits and vegetables, including watermelon, cucumbers, and oranges, are also excellent for staying hydrated.

You may need to drink more water if you live in a hot, humid environment, are physically active, pregnant or breastfeeding, or have certain health conditions. Consult your healthcare provider for advice based on your health needs.

### Tips to drink more water

- Keep water handy: carry a reusable water bottle with you everywhere and ensure all the family has one at hand.
- Add flavour: slices of lemon, cucumber, or some berries can make your water more appealing.
- Reminders: use an app or set hourly reminders on your phone to drink water.
- Pair with routine activities: drink a glass of water with meals, coffee or watching TV.

With a little planning and awareness, you can keep your body hydrated and healthy for life.



**Drink a glass of water first  
thing in the morning for an  
early energy boost!**

*Our newsletter is free! Please take a copy with you.*

# Simple steps for healthy bones and joints

Bones and joints are at the core of what keeps us moving and upright. We can take them for granted - until something goes wrong. But knowing the basics of bone health and taking steps to protect your joints can make a big difference as you age.

## Bone structure

Bones do more than just provide our body's "scaffolding." They support muscles, protect organs, and store essential minerals like calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium.

Bones are living tissue consisting of three main layers. The hard outer layer, mostly calcium, provides strength and protection. A middle layer forms a matrix, or honeycomb structure, of collagen and minerals that adds flexibility. The soft core is called bone marrow, where blood cells are produced.

## Common bone and joint problems

Unfortunately, bones and joints can face issues over time. Osteoporosis is a condition where bones can become weak and brittle, leading to an increased risk of fractures. Arthritis, which affects joints, can cause pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility.

## How to build healthy bones and joints

- **Dietary choices\***  
Nutrients like calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, and vitamins D, K, and A, are key to building strong, resilient bones.
- **Boost collagen intake**  
Collagen is a protein essential for providing flexibility to bones and strengthening joint cartilage. While collagen-rich foods like bone broth,

lean meats, and fish can help, vitamin C (found in citrus fruits, berries, and leafy greens) is needed for collagen production.

- **Bone building exercise**  
Weight-bearing activities like walking, jogging, dancing, ball sports and resistance training help build bone density and improve joint stability. Regular exercise strengthens muscles around joints, offering support and protection. Staying mobile and stretching regularly helps keep joints flexible and less prone to stiffness.
- **Lifestyle choices**  
Avoid smoking and limit alcohol, they interfere with nutrient absorption and can weaken bones and damage joint tissue.
- **Maintain a healthy weight**  
Being overweight places strain on joints, particularly knees, hips, and lower back, contributing to joint wear and tear, and conditions like osteoarthritis.

Bones are constantly renewing, so lifelong healthy habits are essential to maintain their strength and resilience over time. Your bones and joints are with you for life - let's keep them healthy!

## \*GOOD NUTRIENT SOURCES INCLUDE:

### Calcium

Dairy, leafy greens, white beans, seeds, almonds, fortified plant-based milks, sardines (with bones).

### Magnesium

Legumes, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, whole grains, tofu, dark chocolate, fortified cereals. It's also in fish, poultry, and beef.

### Phosphorus

Seeds, beans, lentils, whole grains, soy, dairy, poultry, seafood.

### Zinc

Nuts, seeds, legumes, shellfish, meat, fortified cereals, whole grains, dairy.

### Vitamin D

Mainly from sunlight exposure. Fatty fish, eggs, mushrooms, fortified foods like plant-based milks and cereals.

### Vitamin A

Fatty fish, eggs, cheese, orange/yellow vegetables.

### Vitamin K

Leafy greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, soybeans, prunes, kiwifruit.

## WORD SEARCH

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| COLLAGEN    | HYDRATE    |
| CORTISOL    | JOINTS     |
| MOBILITY    | MAGNESIUM  |
| ACTIVITY    | NUTRITION  |
| BONES       | PHOSPHORUS |
| CAFFEINE    | SLEEP      |
| CALCIUM     | STRESS     |
| DIGESTION   | ULCERS     |
| ELECTROLYTE | WATER      |
| EXERCISE    | ZINC       |

U S O T D S L E E P I E J E  
C O L L A G E N H H H D A H  
S E L E C T R O L Y T E L C  
E M A G N E S I U M O S R A  
X E W S T P E T A R D Y H F  
C A J A H I U S E N O B R F  
O O W O E Y O E I A U Y E E  
D A R G I S T G R C I N T I  
T U E T S N O I T I R T U N  
S T N E I D T D V O E E A E  
L B R O N S D S Z I N C X R  
Y T I L I B O M P I T I P E  
S L S S R E C L U Q I C T G  
H N Y U F V M M U I C L A C

# Make the move towards better health!

Being inactive is a big risk for your health. Sitting for long periods can lead to serious health problems and even an increased risk of an early death. Alarmingly, physical inactivity is linked to around five million preventable deaths worldwide each year!



Despite the well-known importance of being active, many people still don't reach the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. This includes structured exercise like jogging or cycling, well as everyday movements like housework, walking or standing.

Research shows that even small amounts of moderate exercise can help reduce the risk of early death, with even greater benefits as activity levels increase.

Regular physical activity supports healthy weight management and, combined with good nutrition, can help prevent and manage common health conditions like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

## The good news?

### Any type of movement counts!

Getting an hour of movement each day - even doing simple activities like standing and stretching - can help reduce the risks linked to prolonged sitting. If you've been inactive for long periods - whether on the couch, behind the wheel, or in front of a screen - start moving now. It won't take long to notice a positive difference in your health!

## Still not feeling enthused?

### Try these tips to help you move more.

- **Take short walks:** aim for 10-15 minute walks during breaks or after meals.
- **Choose active transport:** walk or bike instead of driving short distances.
- **Include movement in your routine:** use stairs instead of lifts and move around while on the phone.
- **Set a timer:** every hour, take a few minutes to stretch or walk around.
- **Find enjoyable activities:** do activities you love, like dancing, gardening, or sports.
- **Get a buddy or join a group:** exercise with others to stay motivated and make it more enjoyable.



## Garden fresh wellbeing salad

Make this healthy, vibrant salad a staple for those sunny summer picnics or BBQ gatherings. Packed with nutritious ingredients, it's both refreshing and satisfying.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups mixed leafy greens (e.g., baby spinach, kale, and lettuce leaves)
- 1 large orange, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- ½ cup cooked chickpeas
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)
- ¼ cup dried cranberries (or chopped dried dates)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a large bowl, combine the leafy greens, parsley, quinoa, chickpeas, and orange segments.
2. Add seeds, cranberries or dates, and feta (if using).
3. Toss gently to mix and pack in a portable sealed container.
4. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, or your favourite dressing, just before eating to keep the greens crisp.

### OPTIONS:

Toss in some baby tomatoes, and chopped avocado if desired, just before serving.

## Top tips for better sleep and spinal health

Good sleep is essential for overall health, including the health of your spine. Try these five tips to help you sleep well and protect your spine.

Good sleep is essential for overall health, including the health of your spine. Try these five tips to help you sleep well and protect your spine.

### Mattress and pillow

A good-quality, medium-firm mattress is often recommended. The ideal choice should support your spine's natural curves, offering both comfort and pain relief.

Pillow choice is just as important. For back sleepers, a thinner pillow helps maintain spinal alignment. Side sleepers benefit from a cervical pillow that supports the neck's natural curve. If you sleep on your stomach, use the thinnest pillow possible – or none at all.

### Sleeping positions

Your sleeping position also affects spinal health; it's best to lie on your back or side. For back sleepers, a pillow under the knees helps reduce spine pressure. For side sleepers, a firm pillow between the knees can ease strain on the lower back and hips. Avoid sleeping on your stomach, as this can force your spine and neck into awkward angles.

### Stay active and stretch

- **Regular exercise:** aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily.
- **Strength training:** strong core and back muscles support the spine and reduce discomfort.
- **Stretching:** perform stretches that target your neck, back, and legs.

### The sleep environment

Create a peaceful environment that encourages rest and comfort. Use soft, natural, breathable bed linens. Keep your bedroom clean, uncluttered, slightly cool, dark, and quiet.

### Creating a sleep routine

A consistent sleep schedule helps regulate your body's internal clock, leading to better sleep quality. Choose set bed and wake times, and aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

Create a calming bedtime routine by avoiding screens, caffeine, and heavy meals before bed. Try relaxing activities such as reading and meditating. Gentle stretching before bed can help relax muscles and improve flexibility, making it easier to find a comfortable sleeping position.



Try these simple tips to improve your spinal health, sleep, and vitality. Small changes can make a big difference!

# Understanding and easing stress

Stress is a term we hear often, but it can be more serious than we realise. To manage stress, it helps to first understand what it is and when it becomes harmful.

## What causes stress?

Our lives today can be filled with stressors such as financial worries, relationship problems, work issues, loneliness and health concerns. Major events, such as the death of a loved one, can combine a number of stressors as well as grief.

Even positive events such as moving house or a new baby can be stressful.

## When is stress a problem?

Stress becomes a concern when it disrupts daily life, feels unmanageable, or prevents you from enjoying activities you usually enjoy. While short-term stress is normal, ongoing stress combined with poor coping habits can harm your health.

Stress often causes physical symptoms. When overwhelmed, your heart rate can increase, muscles tense, and breathing becomes shallow. These natural survival responses are meant to be temporary.

Chronic stress, however, keeps these responses active, releasing hormones like cortisol that strain the body over time. Elevated cortisol can raise blood pressure and increase the risk of heart disease.

Stress can also upset digestion, causing issues like ulcers or irritable bowel syndrome. It can weaken the immune system, making you more susceptible to infections. This creates a vicious cycle of stress and illness.

## Dealing with stress

Identifying causes and taking simple, positive actions to address them help. We can't always avoid or remove stressors, but we can learn to manage how we react.

There are many ways to relieve stress. Practical activities, like listening to music, reading, exercising, or hobbies, can help. Techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, and breathing exercises can improve mood and reduce stress.

Some coping strategies, like smoking, drinking alcohol, drug use, or overeating, can actually worsen stress in the long term and harm your health.

If stress, anxiety, or feelings of being overwhelmed persist, seek your doctor.



### Here's a simple exercise you can do right now:

- » Breathe in slowly, using your diaphragm so your belly expands.
- » Hold for three counts; exhale slowly until your belly deflates.
- » Repeat up to three times, then breathe normally.
- » Repeat as needed, but stop if you feel faint or dizzy.

## INFLUENZA IN 2024

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.

Flu vaccine will be available from late April, 2024.

## Questions to ask at your next doctor's visit

Asking questions is key to good communication with your doctor. To make the most of your visit, write down what you want to know in the area below. Bring this list to your next appointment so you 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.