KORUMBURRA MEDICAL CENTRE

50 Radovick Street
Korumburra 3950
P: 5655 1355
F: 5655 1537

Dr Peter Lewis
MBBS Dip.RACOG

Dr Mark Bensley
MBBS Dip.RACOG FRACGP

Dr Clare Stainsby
MBBS Dip.RACOG FRACGP FACRRM

Dr DaMing Chi
MBBS FRACGP

Dr David Selvanayagam
MBBS FRACGP

Dr Boriana Grozev
MBBS FRACGP

Dr Yan Lu
MBBS FRACGP

Dr Paul Cotton
MBBS FRACGP EM(ACEM)

Dr Rachel Sim
MBBS

Dr Kautilya Jaiswal
MBBS

Dr Kate Maxfield
MBBS

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

NOVEMBER 2024

BLOOD TESTS FOR LOW IRON

REVOLUTIONISING HEART CARE

BREAK FREE FROM PTSD

HEALTHY KNEES = ACTIVE LIFE

Compliments of your GP

What is Movember and why does it matter?

Movember is an annual event where men grow moustaches in November to raise awareness for men's health, focusing on mental health, suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer. Started in Australia in 2003, it has become a global movement promoting awareness, conversations and actions to save lives.

Cancer

Prostate cancer is a significant concern, as it's the most common cancer among men over around 45. In its early stages there may not be any noticeable symptoms, making regular screenings essential. Early detection can be life-saving because the cancer is more treatable when caught early.

While testicular cancer is less common than prostate cancer, it's the most frequently diagnosed cancer among younger men. Regular self-examination is crucial; symptoms may include a swollen testicle, a lump, mild discomfort, or even just an unusual feeling in your testicles. It's important to know the signs and act quickly, as testicular cancer has a high survival rate when detected early.

It's also important to understand the risk factors, although this doesn't mean that you will develop cancer. Some risk factors are modifiable, such as lifestyle; while others can't be changed, such as a family history of cancer.

Remember no symptom is too minor to be checked!

Mental health

In Australia, suicide rates are higher among men compared to women, with men accounting for over three-quarters of suicide deaths. On average, six men take their own lives each day. Despite these alarming statistics, men are often less likely to seek professional help for their health issues.

Promoting health awareness

Movember encourages us to talk openly about our health, including mvvental health, which is just as important as physical health. By growing a moustache, you can spark conversations that that make a difference – it's not just about facial hair.

Movember also promotes taking preventive action, such as checking in with your mates and getting regular health check-ups, including seeing your GP for any concerns.

Whether you're growing a mo or supporting someone who is, remember that Movember is about saving lives and improving overall well-being. These issues impact everyone, so let's engage in these crucial conversations and take action! By raising awareness and promoting early detection, we can help protect our loved ones and ensure they're here for many more Movembers!

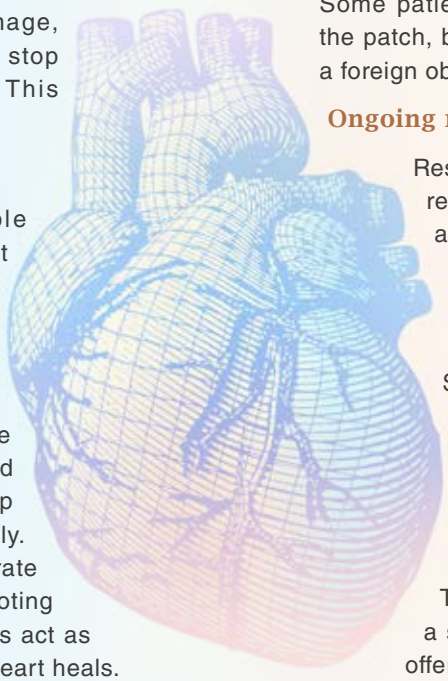
Our newsletter is free! Please take a copy with you.

Cardiac patches: a new hope for heart health

Heart disease is one of the biggest health challenges in Australia and around the world. Fortunately, scientists have developed an innovative treatment for heart conditions: cardiac patches. These patches offer a promising new way to repair the heart and restore its function.

When someone has a heart attack or other heart injury, the heart muscle cells (cardiomyocytes) become damaged. Unfortunately, the heart has limited ability to regenerate these cells, replacing them with scar tissue that can't contract like healthy muscle. This weakens the heart and can lead to heart failure.

While current treatments can help restore blood flow and prevent further damage, they don't heal the heart tissue or stop the disease from getting worse. This is where cardiac patches come in.



How do cardiac patches work?

Cardiac patches are thin, flexible materials made from lab-grown heart cells or biomaterials. They are applied to damaged heart tissue to support healing and potentially improve heart function.

They work by mimicking the structure and function of the heart tissue, and contain cells that can contract and help the heart pump blood more effectively. Some patches are designed to integrate with the heart's existing tissue, promoting the growth of new, healthy cells. Others act as scaffolds, providing support while the heart heals.

Cardiac patches would be typically applied during surgery, however researchers are also exploring less invasive methods to make these patches more accessible to all patients in the future.

Potential side effects

As with any medical treatment, there are potential side effects. Some patients may experience inflammation or rejection of the patch, because the body's immune system might see it as a foreign object. Infections are also a possibility after surgery.

Ongoing research and future possibilities

Researchers are continually improving cardiac patches, refining materials to better match the patient's body and reduce risks. A key focus is making patches more efficient, such as those that release healing substances to promote tissue regeneration and heart recovery.

Stem cells are another promising area, using them in patches could create a closer match to the patient's own cells, potentially lowering the risk of rejection. Scientists are also working on patches that adapt to the heart's movements, and developing methods to monitor healing, aiming for better outcomes.

Though not yet widely available, cardiac patches are a significant step forward in heart disease treatment, offering future hope for those with heart failure.

WORD SEARCH

ANAEMIA
BALANCE
CANCER
CARDIAC
CARTILAGE
CELLS
DISEASE
FERRITIN
HAEMOGLOBIN
HEART
INFLAMMATION
IRON
KNEECAP
LIFESTYLE
LIGAMENTS
MENISCUS
MOUSTACHE
MOVEMBER
PROTEIN
PTSD
SHIN
SUICIDE
TESTICLES
THIGH
TRANSFERRIN
TRAUMA

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

Care for your knees and keep active with ease

Australians are passionate about sports and outdoor activities like hiking, walking, and cycling, making knee health important. Understanding how knees work and what types of injuries can occur is essential for everyone, not just athletes.

Your knees are complex, supporting much of your weight and providing mobility, strength, and stability. Each knee joint consists of the thigh and shin bones, and kneecap. Cartilage lines the bones to ensure smooth movement, while the meniscus acts as a cushion, absorbing shock and protecting the joint.

Ligaments stabilise your knee. Two collateral ligaments on the sides prevent sideways movement, while two cruciate ligaments inside hold the thigh and shin bones in place. One of these, the ACL, prevents your shin from moving too far forward and is often injured in sports like football and netball.

Excessive force to your knee can damage bones, cartilage, or ligaments. This may result in bruised or broken bones, stretched or torn cartilage, or a torn meniscus. Such damage can occur from trauma, like a fall or collision, or from sudden changes in direction.

Injuries can often be felt immediately and may be accompanied by a popping sound. You may experience swelling, heat, pain, and difficulty moving your knee. Unfortunately, long-term knee injuries can increase the risk of osteoarthritis, so prompt assessment of any new injury is advisable.

Injury prevention programs are important for everyone. Neuromuscular exercises strengthen the muscles around the knee and improve coordination, while proprioceptive exercises enhance balance and body position awareness. Together, these help improve joint control, stability, and overall knee health.

If you're at higher risk of knee injuries, it's advisable to seek professional help on injury prevention. If you already have knee problems, ensure you get treatment early.

What Is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can develop after experiencing or witnessing a distressing or frightening event, or a series of such events. It's as if your brain gets stuck in 'survival mode' – even when the danger has passed, your mind and body may still react as though the threat is present.

PTSD can show up in different ways

You might have trouble sleeping, concentrating, feel frightened and constantly on edge, like you're waiting for something bad to happen. Reliving the trauma through flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive thoughts is also common. Some people may avoid people, or situations that remind them of the trauma, while others might feel emotionally numb, distrustful and disconnected. These symptoms can interfere with daily life, making it difficult to function normally.

What causes PTSD?

PTSD can result from a variety of traumatic experiences such as an accident, sexual assault, abuse, natural disasters, or violent attacks. Any situation where you felt your life or safety was at risk, or witnessing harm to others, can trigger PTSD. Even hearing about traumatic events can be a cause.

Sometimes, PTSD isn't caused by a single event but by ongoing trauma, such as childhood abuse, neglect, bullying, or being in an abusive relationship.

PTSD can also develop after an experience such as childbirth, surgery, or any other medical emergency. If you've gone through a difficult birth or a challenging medical procedure, it's normal to feel overwhelmed. You might find yourself constantly thinking about the experience, feeling anxious, or worrying about how it has affected you or your loved ones.

How can you get help?

Reaching out to your GP is a crucial first step. They can help you understand your feelings, provide referrals, and offer tools to manage your symptoms. Support groups are also valuable, providing connection with others who have been through similar experiences.

PTSD is not something you can simply "get over." It's a response to overwhelming experiences. This article is just a starting point - if you think you might have PTSD, seek help. With the right support, recovery is possible, and you can regain a sense of balance in your life.

PTSD is not a sign of weakness, and you don't have to face it alone.

Chocolate chip & peanut butter chickpea blondies

These delicious chickpea blondies are not only rich and fudgy but also contain some nutritional benefits, including iron from the chickpeas. Just remember they're high in kilojoules, so eat in moderation!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 can (400g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ⅓ cup chunky peanut butter
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- Good pinch of salt
- ½ cup dark chocolate, chopped into small chunks

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a 20cm x 20cm baking tin with baking paper.
2. In a food processor, combine all the ingredients except for the chocolate. Blend until smooth.
3. Stir in the chopped chocolate.
4. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking tin and smooth the top evenly.
5. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until the edges are golden and the centre is just set.
6. Allow to cool and firm up before cutting into squares.

NOTE:

You can swap part of the dark chocolate for chopped white chocolate.

Understanding blood tests for low iron

If you've been feeling unusually tired or fatigued, low iron could be the cause. To find out, your doctor may order a blood test that measures several different factors. The terminology can be confusing, so this guide offers a brief overview of the common tests.

Why is iron important?

Iron is essential for producing haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells responsible for carrying oxygen throughout your body. Iron also plays a vital role in muscle metabolism and maintaining healthy connective tissue.

Low iron can result in iron deficiency anaemia, a condition where your body has too few red blood cells or insufficient haemoglobin. This can lead to symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, pale skin, dizziness, and shortness of breath as your heart works harder to deliver enough oxygen to your muscles and organs.

To determine if you're low in iron, or anaemic, and why, your doctor may order several tests, each revealing different aspects of your iron status.

Full Blood Count

A full blood count (FBC) provides an overview of your blood health and is a common test used to diagnose, screen, and monitor health conditions.

Serum Iron

An iron blood test measures the iron levels in your blood at that moment. Iron levels can fluctuate due to factors like diet and inflammation, so while this test provides insight, it doesn't show your full iron stores.

Ferritin stores

Ferritin is a protein that stores iron, so a ferritin test reveals how much iron is in reserve. Low ferritin suggests depleted iron stores and high ferritin might indicate other health issues, such as inflammation.

Transferrin

This test measures the amount of transferrin in your blood. Transferrin is a protein that binds to and carries iron from your digestive system and iron stores to various tissues, including bone marrow.

Total iron binding capacity (TIBC)

TIBC assesses your blood's capacity to bind iron with transferrin. High TIBC levels may indicate low iron, as your body produces more transferrin in an attempt to increase iron absorption.

Iron saturation

This test measures the percentage of transferrin that is bound to iron, calculated using your iron levels and TIBC, and provides a more direct assessment of iron availability in your blood.

Low iron can stem from various causes, including diet and other underlying factors, and doesn't always result in anaemia. Blood tests provide valuable insight, helping your doctor piece together a complete picture of your iron levels and overall health. If anything is unclear, don't hesitate to ask your doctor for clarification on your results.

QUICK GUIDE TO IRON TESTS

Serum iron - measures iron levels in blood

Ferritin - measures stored iron

Transferrin - measures the amount of transferrin

TIBC - measures the total capacity to bind and transport iron

Iron saturation - measures iron availability

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:

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.