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**CLINIC STAFF**

**Nursing:** Sinead, Roz, Halina, Anna and Anne

**Reception:** Janet, Virginia, Kirsten, Sue, Julie, Lisa, Stephanie, Zoe

**Practice Manager:** Maria

**SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES**

Consultations are by appointment.

**Monday to Thursday**

8.00am-1pm 2.00pm-6.00pm

**Friday**

8.00am-1.00pm 2.00pm-5.00pm

**Saturday**

8.30am-11.30am

**Christmas / New Year Surgery Hours**

Saturday 24 December CLOSED

Monday 26 December CLOSED

Tuesday 27 December CLOSED

Wednesday 28 December 8am to 6pm

Thursday 29 December 8am to 6pm

Friday 30 December 8am to 5pm

Saturday 31 December 8.30 - 11.30am

Monday 2 January 2023 CLOSED

Tuesday 3 January 2023 8am to 6pm

**GP After Hours – Mount Lawley**

Ph 9370 4200

Monday to Friday 7.00pm–11.00pm

Saturday 2.00pm–10.00pm

Sunday and Pub Hols 10.00am–10.00pm

For all emergencies please present to St John of God Midland Public Hospital, 1 Clayton St, Midland Ph 9462 4000.

Urgent medical problems are always seen on the same day.

For Home Visits, please telephone the surgery as early as possible after 8.15am.

For After Hours emergency medical problems Monday–Saturday, please call 9298 8555 up until 11pm for the practice duty doctor.

# YOUR DOCTOR

DECEMBER 2022



ARE YOU GETTING A 'SWEET' SLEEP?



HAND, FOOT & MOUTH



PREVENTING DISEASE



BLACKCURRANTS ARE SMART

*Compliments of your GP*

## Understanding and overcoming loneliness

This can be a lonely time of year for some people as many people gather for Christmas festivities. You can be reminded of your losses, or lack of friends and family. So what is loneliness and what can you do about it?

### What is loneliness?

Loneliness is an emotional state of sadness focused around being, or feeling, alone. It can include feelings of grief, fear and even distress. Humans evolved as social animals, after all.

Loneliness is not the same as being alone, it's possible to feel lonely in a crowd, or even amongst loved ones. The things that trigger loneliness are complicated; being alone can be part of it, but it can also be related to feeling different, or not feeling understood by those around us. Sometimes there's no clear reason.

### Can being lonely affect your health?

Persistent loneliness is linked to ill health. It can lead to a decrease in physical activity, affect your sleep, increase stress, and weaken your immune system. These factors can result in a higher risk of health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease and stroke.

Lonely people can experience mental health issues such as anxiety, substance abuse problems, and depression. Loneliness can also be a consequence of mental illness.

If loneliness is affecting your health, get help from support groups or your doctor. If you feel that you're reaching a crisis point, ask for help straight away.

### What to do if you're feeling lonely

It takes an effort to make changes, but it is worth it.

#### CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK

Firstly, think about why you're feeling lonely so that you know what steps to take. Think about what you can do rather than what you can't do; thinking positively can help you feel better.

#### IMPROVE YOUR GENERAL HEALTH

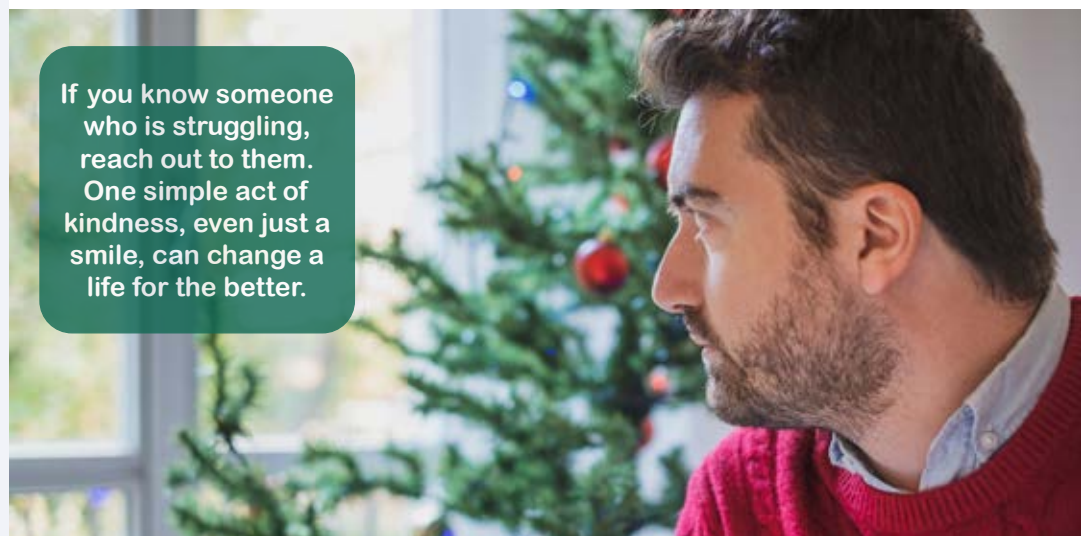
Good health will give you more energy and confidence to deal with your loneliness. Even if you don't feel like it, start small. Exercise regularly – even just a 20 minute daily walk can benefit your health, and you can build the time up gradually. Make simple changes to your diet; start by replacing one unhealthy food with a nutritious one. Try mindfulness techniques such as meditation to deal with stress and anxiety.

#### BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Connecting with others is important to your quality of life. If the thought of this is overwhelming, start with little acts, and remember that you are not alone – lots of people feel the same way. It might be easiest at first to make contact by calling or texting a friend, neighbour or family member.

Think about what you like doing and contact people or groups with similar interests. It can be easier to meet other people when you have a sense of purpose and enjoyable activities you can do together. Being social is one of the main reasons people get involved in groups, new hobbies, or volunteering.

**If you know someone who is struggling, reach out to them. One simple act of kindness, even just a smile, can change a life for the better.**



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

# Smoking – the largest preventable cause of disease

It's universally accepted that smoking cigarettes is bad for you, but did you know it's actually thought to be the largest preventable cause of disease? So what are the effects of smoking and how do you quit?

## How does smoking affect your body?

Breathing in tobacco smoke draws harmful chemicals into your lungs, mouth and throat. Many of these chemicals end up in your bloodstream, travelling to every part of you and causing damage to your body's cells and structures.

Smoking increases your blood pressure and your heart rate and puts extra strain on your heart and lungs. Smokers are at increased risk of many serious diseases including: heart disease, stroke, and various forms of cancer.

## Is second-hand smoke harmful?

When you have a cigarette, hundreds of toxic chemicals in the smoke are released in the air around you. This means that if you're smoking, the other people near you

are smoking too; non-smoking adults can get exactly the same illnesses as smokers.

It's particularly harmful to babies and children – being exposed to tobacco smoke for just a moment can increase their risk of serious health problems, such as bronchitis and pneumonia and asthma.

## Why is it so hard to stop smoking?

It is hard to stop smoking and you shouldn't feel bad about struggling. Nicotine is an addictive chemical, and it makes your brain release happy chemicals which give you a burst of pleasure and energy. It can be something you do to deal with uncomfortable feelings.

Smoking is also a habit – you might associate it with having a break, social situations, or even just when you're bored!

## How to quit

There are lots of products designed to help people stop smoking, and some of them have proven that they do make it easier.

Your health will benefit as soon as you stop smoking



For further tips and support, go to [www.health.gov.au/health-topics/smoking-and-tobacco/how-to-quit-smoking](http://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/smoking-and-tobacco/how-to-quit-smoking)

# WORD SEARCH

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

- |               |            |            |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| ANTIOXIDANTS  | HABITS     | MENINGITIS |
| ASTHMA        | HEALING    | NICOTINE   |
| BLACKCURRANTS | HEART      | RASH       |
| BLISTERS      | HORMONES   | SMILE      |
| CARBOHYDRATES | HYGIENE    | SMOKING    |
| CELLS         | ILLNESS    | SUGAR      |
| DOCTOR        | IMMUNITY   | SUPPORT    |
| ENERGY        | LONELINESS | TOXIC      |
| FEVER         | LUNGS      | VIRUS      |
| GLUCOSE       | MEDITATION | VITAMINS   |

Nicotine Replacement Therapy is designed to still give you a little nicotine – the chemically addictive part of smoking tobacco – to help ease withdrawal symptoms and cravings as you quit. Figure out what works for you.

## TRY THESE PRACTICAL TIPS

- Set a goal to go a certain amount of time without a cigarette and then increase the length of time between each smoke gradually.
- Save the money you spend on cigarettes and treat yourself to something special.
- Instead of 'cigarette breaks', replace the cigarette with something healthier. Normalise non-smoking breaks at work!
- Could any of your daily habits trigger an urge to smoke? Keep a 'quit' diary to identify when and what makes you want to smoke.

People who are trying to stop smoking generally do better with support, and there are lots of services available to help if you're struggling. Ask us for more information.



## Blackcurrants – a smart little berry!

For centuries blackcurrants have been thought to have medicinal benefits, but recent scientific research has confirmed the powerful healing and protective properties of this remarkable fruit.



Blackcurrants have been found to have significant health benefits; particularly in the areas of age-related diseases, brain function and exercise. They contain very high levels of Vitamin C, responsible for maintaining our immune system, healthy skin and hair, and other essential processes. They also have high levels of antioxidants which are known to help protect against many diseases.

### Antioxidants and aging

One area in which blackcurrants excel is in their polyphenol content – these are antioxidants, which are known to help protect against many diseases. The types of antioxidant in blackcurrants surpass those in most other fruits; they're anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, anticancer, and help protect against heart disease and the diseases related to ageing. Plant polyphenols can also help protect your skin, meaning that eating more blackcurrants along with a healthy diet could make you look and feel healthier for longer!

### Brain benefits

A new scientific discovery by Associate Professor Dr Jian Guan of the University of Auckland, has found that New Zealand blackcurrants have high levels of a chemical known as cyclic Glycine-Proline (cGP). This is an important brain nutrient, essential for your overall body health and particularly for keeping brain function healthy and normal as you age.

### Exercise booster

Scientists have found that drinking juice from New Zealand blackcurrants before exercising could increase your motivation to exercise and to stick to regular exercise practices. Blackcurrant extract has also been found to help heart function and lower blood pressure during exercise such as brisk walking.

Blackcurrants can easily become a part of your diet; they can be eaten raw or cooked and are widely available frozen, freeze dried, or as a powder. This concentrates the nutritional benefits of the berry without adding more sugar.

## Children's health: hand, foot and mouth disease

Hand foot and mouth disease (HFMD) is a common condition, particularly among young children in school or pre-school where it can spread easily. It appears more often in warm weather – usually in summer or early autumn.

### Symptoms

The most noticeable sign of HFMD is the rash – your child may develop small red blisters around and inside their mouth and on the palms of their hands, fingers, and soles of their feet. Patches of rash can also occur on their elbows, knees, and groin. The rash can be painful, and your child may also feel generally unwell with flu-like symptoms like tiredness or a fever.

Hand foot and mouth disease is not related to 'foot and mouth disease' which affects farm animals

### Preventing HFMD

HFMD is very easily passed on. If you suspect your child has HFMD you should keep them at home to avoid further spread at school or day care – although these are very often the places they caught it! The symptoms usually show up between three and seven days after exposure to someone

else with the virus. Once you have it, you're likely to be able to infect other people at least until any rash has scabbed over and has fully dried.

HFMD can be passed on through fluid from the rash, from coughs and sneezes, and is even present in faeces. Hand hygiene is very important and even sharing things like toys, towels and cutlery, can pass on the infection.

### Managing HFMD

HFMD is caused by a virus and a mild infection can be managed with lots of fluids and rest. Mild fever and discomfort can be helped with simple painkillers – make sure they're the right type and dose for your child. Antibiotics won't help as they don't work for viral infections.

Keeping your child clean, dry and cool, and wearing loose clothes made from natural fibres can help. To prevent further infection, try to stop them from rubbing at the rash, and don't pop the blisters.

If the symptoms don't clear up, the rash appears infected, or if you're worried about your child feeling unwell, you should contact your doctor. As with any rash and illness in children, it's important to know the signs of meningitis and get help urgently if you're concerned.

## Festive berry ice 'cream'

This berry dessert not only looks stunning, but it's healthier than traditional ice cream and very easy to make.

Serves: 8

### INGREDIENTS

250g raspberries, partially frozen

300g plain Greek yoghurt

2 tablespoons maple syrup

½ cup freeze-dried blackcurrants, lightly crushed

½ cup walnuts or pistachios, chopped (optional)

### TOPPINGS

25g dark chocolate, grated, flaked, or in chocolate curls

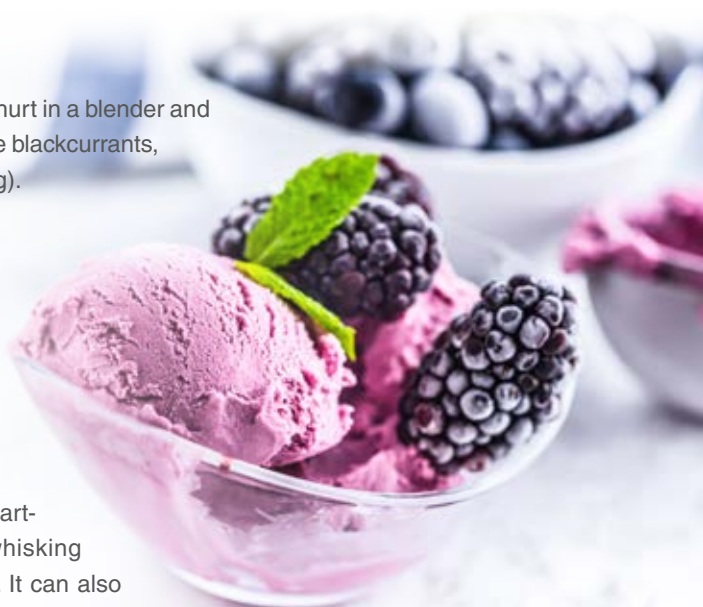
Fresh or frozen blackberries and mint sprigs

### INSTRUCTIONS

Place the raspberries and yoghurt in a blender and process until smooth. Stir in the blackcurrants, maple syrup, and nuts (if using).

Spoon the mixture into a loaf tin or round tin and freeze until set (about 3 hours). Remove from the freezer for 10 minutes before serving. Decorate with your choice of toppings.

**Tip:** For a creamier texture try part-freezing the mixture, then whisking and returning it to the freezer. It can also be made in an ice cream maker.



# Are you getting a 'sweet' sleep?

There's lots of information around about how bad sugar is for you, but you may not know that it can also affect your sleep, and poor sleep can increase health problems.

You have a certain amount of sugar (glucose) in your blood. It supplies energy to your cells, and is essential for life. Your body is very good at converting the carbohydrates from food into the kind that you can use for energy, or storing it for later need. You shouldn't need to add sugar to your diet, as long as you have a healthy amount of natural sugars like those found in fruit and vegetables.

Your blood sugar levels change naturally according to your needs, diet, and your circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm is your body's natural pattern of energy, and is closely linked to your activity and the light levels – humans are designed to feel sleepy at night and alert through the day.

Eating simple sugars, the kind found in cakes and sweet snacks or drinks can cause blood sugar levels to change quickly. Your body finds this hard to regulate – you didn't evolve eating processed sugars!

Eating sweet foods within a few hours of sleep can cause highs and lows in your sugar levels that can affect your sleep patterns. A high sugar intake can make it harder for you to fall asleep, stay asleep, and can affect the quality of sleep you do get.

High sugar diets can also make you more likely to become overweight, and having more body fat affects the way your hormones work. Some of the natural hormones that follow your circadian rhythm tell you when to be alert or sleepy, and also when to eat. In short, too much sugar is bad for your health and your sleep, and it simply isn't necessary.

## SOME TIPS TO CUT DOWN ON SUGAR

- Read labels! It won't come as a surprise that cakes, biscuits and sweets have high sugar content, but you might be shocked at how much sugar is added to processed foods, even savoury products.
- Switch out sweet drinks – sugar-free versions of most drinks are available, but it's better to have more natural drinks.
- Swap your cereal – wholegrain, sugar-free cereals are healthier.



If you need help with sleep issues, or changing your diet, ask us for support.

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

Asking questions is key to good communication with your doctor. To get the most out of your next visit, use the area below to note what you'd like to know and take this list with you to your next appointment so you don't forget what it was 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.

## REPEAT SCRIPTS

Repeat prescriptions will not be issued without a prior consultation. Patients seeking repeat prescriptions must see their doctor. This is to ensure proper management.

## REFERRALS

A re-referral may be requested by phone. New referrals require that the patient be seen by the doctor. Referrals cannot be back-dated. Referrals are current for 12 months, please check with your specialist to see if your referral is still current.

## ETHICS

This practice abides by the AMA Code of Ethics at all times. A copy of the code is available on request.

## LONG CONSULTATIONS

Long consultations are available on request for all Doctors if required. **Dr F Kotai** requires 60 mins for an Aviation medical. All Health Assessments require 30 mins. Failure to attend appointments will attract a fee of \$30.00 for a standard consultation or \$50.00 for a long consultation.

## ONLINE APPOINTMENTS

Online appointments can be made any time of the day at [www.gfmc.com.au](http://www.gfmc.com.au) click on "Make a booking".

## BILLING

**We are a private practice and payment is made on the day.** A discount of \$5.00 is given for payment on the day. We can claim your rebate immediately from Medicare using Easyclaim onto your cheque or savings card or Online Claiming where Medicare deposits direct to your bank account within 48 hrs. Questions related to fees can be dealt with by the receptionist. If you have difficulty paying your account, please feel free to discuss this matter with your doctor.

## FEEDBACK

We would like to know of any concerns you may have about the care you receive. Please feel free to talk to the doctor or our Practice Manager. However, if you feel there is a matter you wish to take up outside, you can contact the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO): GPO Box B61, Perth WA 6838. Tel: 9323 0600.

## PHONE CALLS

Doctors in this practice may be contacted by phone during surgery hours. A message will be taken if the doctor is with another patient.

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

If you miss an appointment and fail to advise us at least 2 hours beforehand, you will be charged a Failure to Attend Fee. This fee applies to everyone and cannot be claimed back at Medicare.

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of this practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised members of staff.

*Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.*