

# GLEN FORREST MEDICAL CENTRE

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**Dr Erin O'Donnell-Taylor**  
MB BS (WA)

## CLINIC STAFF

**Nursing:** Sinead, Karen, Cheryl, Fiona and Roz

**Reception:** Ellen, Janet, Virginia, Kirsten, Sue, Julie and Michele.

**Practice Manager:** Maria

## SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

Consultations are by appointment.

### Monday

8.30am-1pm 2pm-6pm

### Tuesday to Thursday

8.00am-1pm 2pm-6pm

### Friday

8.00am-1pm 2pm-5pm

### Saturday

8.30am-12.00 noon

GP After Hours Clinic – Midland available at St John of God Midland Public Hospital Ph 1300 706 922

Monday to Friday 6pm–10pm

Saturdays noon–10pm

Sundays and Pub Hols 10am–10pm

GP After Hours – Mount Lawley

Ph 9370 4200

Monday to Friday 7pm–11pm

Saturdays 2pm–10pm

Sundays and Pub Hols 10am–10pm

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 11.00pm for the practice duty doctor.

# YOUR DOCTOR

FREE!!  
TAKE ME HOME



## JANUARY 2018

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN: VITAMIN D

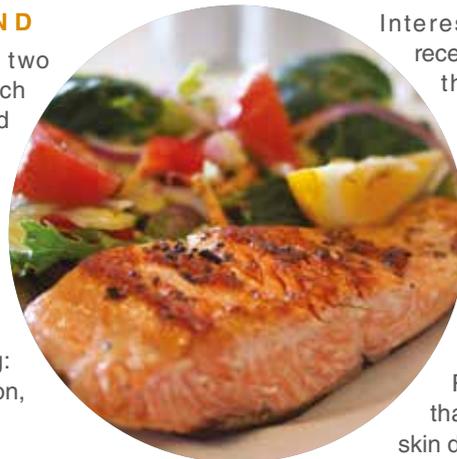
We all love a bright, sunny day to cheer us up. However, the sunlight is just as important for our health.

Since ancient times, the sun has been worshipped by numerous cultures as both a God of light as well as a healer of disease. Fast forward a few centuries, and science has determined exactly how that sunlight impacts our health.

Vitamin D is known as the 'sunshine vitamin' as it is produced when the skin is exposed to sunlight. This vitamin is only present in very small quantities in our foods, and as such sunlight is our major source.

### SOURCES OF VITAMIN D

Vitamin D occurs in two forms: vitamin D2, which is made by plants and present in some foods; and vitamin D3, which is produced by the skin when exposed to ultraviolet (UV) B rays from the sun. Vitamin D3 can also be found in certain foods including: fatty fish such as salmon, cheese and egg yolks.



### VITAMIN D AND CALCIUM ABSORPTION

Vitamin D3 – whether synthesised by the skin or consumed in our food – is still not biologically active and cannot be utilised by the body. First it must be processed by the liver and then further by the kidney to become active. This active form then promotes absorption of two very important minerals from our food via the gut, namely calcium and phosphorous. A deficiency of

vitamin D can reduce calcium absorption to levels as low as 10-15% of our usual absorption levels. Phosphorous intake is also reduced to about 60%. This can lead to weak and porous bones in children, otherwise known as rickets, and osteoporosis in adults.

### VITAMIN D AND SUNBURN

It's important to keep in mind that we only need small amounts of exposure to sunlight to get adequate vitamin D. Although it might feel great to lie under the sun and soak up the summer heat, overexposure to UV rays also cause severe skin damage, including sunburn.

Interestingly, a study was recently conducted to identify the effects of vitamin D supplements on sunburn, and it found that participants who were given high doses of vitamin D showed considerably lower skin inflammation and redness than those receiving lower doses. Researchers proposed that vitamin D helped with skin damage by increasing the activity of genes involved in the repair process.

It is important to note that this was only a preliminary study, and the dose given to the participants was much higher than those taken by the average patient. Current recommendations for people low in vitamin D suggest increasing intake of vitamin D-rich foods, ensuring the minimum exposure to sunlight, and taking supplements when prescribed by a doctor.

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!

# New Year = New You

The coming in of another year also tends to bring a time when we look back on the past, but more importantly, forward to the new year ahead. It's a time to consider the changes we want (or need) to make and resolve to follow through on those changes. Here are some suggestions for healthy changes you might like to make in 2018.

## EXERCISE

Getting a blend regularly of cardiovascular training (for the heart and lungs), strength training (for the muscles and bones) and flexibility (for the tendons and joints) will keep your body young, minimise the risk of many lifestyle diseases, boost your self-esteem and pump your body full of energy. Exercise doesn't have to be a formal activity, you just have to move!

## EAT 'HEALTHY'

Avoid fad diets and foods labelled as "fat free" or "low fat." Instead, enjoy foods that are whole, clean and full of nutrients. In addition, ensure you are drinking enough water as every system in your body depends on water.

## REST

You might feel "fine" on five hours of sleep, but your body probably disagrees! If you want to be truly healthy, allowing your body to repair after a long day of breaking down,

you need some shut eye. Adequate sleep is a key part of a healthy lifestyle, and can benefit your heart, weight, mind, and more.

## THINK POSITIVE

Laughter really is great medicine, especially when it comes to managing stress. Laughter decreases the release of stress hormones,

while increasing the release of 'feel-good' endorphins. Laughter has also been shown to increase our body's natural killer cells and antibodies that act as a line of defence against foreign substances that might otherwise impact our immune system.

## MAINTAIN BRAIN HEALTH

When it comes to keeping healthy and fit, living a mentally active life is as important as regular physical exercise. Just as your muscles grow stronger with use, mental exercise keeps your mental skills and memory in tone. Stimulate your brain with board games, cards and puzzles. Read a book, magazine or newspaper. Sing a song, play an instrument or learn a new language. These brain-challenging activities increase blood flow to establish more connections between brain cells which stimulates brain cell growth.

## CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Everyone needs to feel loved and supported. Talking, sharing, being in touch with others who have active and involved lives gives us a feeling of purpose. Sharing with friends helps enhance happiness and lessen sorrows. Helping others is a simple, human requirement that fulfils many basic emotional needs for both the helper and the helped.

Now is the time – happy New Year and happy new you!



# Clever CROSSWORD

Answers to clues can be found in this edition of Your doctor.

Solution is on the back page.

## Across

- Two and a half hours a week of what type of activity can decrease the risk of chronic diseases?
- Laughter increases the release of this 'feel good' hormone.
- In a recent study, video gamers showed increased activity in which region of the brain?
- The only sport to be recommended in 80% of medical cases.
- Breastfeeding a baby helps in the prevention of this.
- Video games could potentially improve what function in elderly patients?

## Down

- Once in the body Vitamin D3 must first be processed by this.
- What type of behavioural therapy can help with chronic back pain?
- Vitamin D is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ vitamin
- It's important to not only be physically fit but to also be \_\_\_\_\_ fit.
- A food that is high in Vitamin D3.
- \_\_\_\_\_ in ten of us will experience back pain at some point in our lives.

# Breastfeeding reduces the chance of breast cancer

Amongst the myriad of advice given to new mothers, the benefits of breastfeeding are often emphasised.

There is no doubt that breastfeeding can be difficult (often emotionally and physically), time-consuming and not for everyone. However, with appropriate support and advice, many mothers can achieve successful breastfeeding. The benefits of this to the baby are extremely well documented and range from preventing obesity and diabetes to reducing infections and improved bonding. The benefits for the mother are often less talked about. Breastfeeding may well make losing 'baby weight' easier, but beyond the initial period, few advantages are well known.

A recent review has highlighted the possibility of a significant long-term benefit to mothers. The American Institute for Cancer Research has looked at the effect

breastfeeding has on the risk of developing breast cancer in later life.

The report brought together all the available research, and found that breastfeeding is very likely to reduce the chances of breast cancer. The data gathered suggested that for every 12 months a woman had breastfed, her risk of breast cancer was reduced by 4%.

The reasons for this effect aren't entirely clear. It is possible that breastfeeding delays the return to normal menstruation and regular fluctuations in hormone levels, and that this delay has a protective function. Another theory is that as the breast sheds tissue at the end of breastfeeding, it is also able to shed damaged tissue, which might have – in time – become cancerous.

Whatever the benefit, this report suggests that the benefits of breastfeeding may not be limited to the baby but also extend to long-term benefits for the mother as well.



## MEXICAN STYLE SUSHI BITES

### INGREDIENTS

- 400g can four-bean mix
- ½ teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1 large avocado, mashed
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 large cucumber, cut into long strips
- 1 capsicum – red or yellow, cut into strips
- 4 spring onions, roots removed
- 4 wholegrain tortillas (or wraps or other thin bread)
- 4 large lettuce leaves

### METHOD

1. Blend beans with paprika. Set aside
2. Mix avocado and oregano. Spread onto each tortilla.
3. Cover with a lettuce leaf, then bean mixture.
4. Arrange cucumber, capsicum and spring onion along the full width of the tortilla.
5. Roll up tightly, refrigerate for a couple of hours then cut into 2cm pieces.



## A New Approach to Chronic Back Pain

The statistics about back pain are truly staggering. Around eight in ten of us will experience back pain at some point in our lives.

It is the leading cause of disability worldwide; and the second most common cause of missed days at work. In America, somewhere around 25 million people are suffering with back pain at any one time, and they spend at least \$50 billion each year on the problem.

Regular exercise, keeping weight under control and thinking about our posture at work are some of the key things we can do to ward off problems. When back pain strikes, physiotherapy and painkillers can often help. However, for some, back pain becomes a chronic problem which can result in changes in activity levels, depression, or even difficulty in holding down a job. Treating chronic back pain can be extremely challenging, with many patients finding that nothing really improves their symptoms. Trying to avoid becoming hooked on regular painkillers often becomes a priority.

Any new approach to this difficult problem should be welcomed. A recent study from King's College in London has taken an innovative direction. They asked a group of patients attending their chronic pain clinic with back pain to undertake a specialised form of cognitive behavioural therapy. This psychological

treatment avoids the use of drugs or medicines, instead focusing on how the patient perceives their pain and deals with it on a day-to-day basis. Following treatment, they found that most patients reported less pain, and – crucially – improved functioning; meaning they were better able to go about their normal lives. Even more impressively, the improvements were still observed nine months after the end of treatment.

Avoiding back pain in the first place is obviously the best possible situation. When it strikes, conventional approaches to pain relief and identifying causes will continue to be the mainstay of treatment. However, for those unfortunate patients for whom chronic back pain becomes a day-to-day reality, perhaps this new approach might offer some relief.



# Video games can improve learning



Just mentioning the words 'video games' can put parents on high alert, having been warned of the negative impacts of children playing on their consoles for hours on end.

We've all heard that video games can cause anything from vision problems to missed opportunities for physical activity, and parents are encouraged to avoid letting children play with smart phones unless they are interacting with a learning app. However, although we're accustomed to seeing gaming in a negative light, neuropsychologists have a different spin on gaming and its impact on learning.

A recent study conducted by the Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany compared the learning ability and brain activity of gamers and non-gamers. A cohort of 17 participants who played action-based video

games for more than 15 hours a week was recruited. In addition, a further 17 people who did not regularly play video games were allocated to a control group. Both groups were then tested to measure their learning ability, and record their brain activity while taking the tests.

Results revealed that gamers were better at analysing a situation quickly compared to non-gamers. Gamers also showed an increased activity in the brain region that is linked to learning and memory. These exciting results are not only important for children, but suggest that video games could potentially be used to improve brain function in elderly patients who face deteriorating memory and learning ability.

So next time you see your children playing video games, don't scold them – join in!

## Benefits of Swimming

According to Health Direct, more than 80% of Australians live near the coast, and swimming in the ocean has become part of the national identity of Australians.

If you're not a swimmer and you're looking for a low-impact activity that has an array of health benefits, you should consider taking up swimming.

Swimming is the only sport to be recommended in 80% of medical cases, according to a 2014 study published in *Procedia - Social And Behavioral Sciences*. This may be due to the fact that swimming is accessible to all individuals, regardless of age.

The main advantage that swimming has over other physical activities is that movement in the water requires little effort from your body, including your bones, ligaments, and tendons, due to the lack of gravity in water. The water takes away 70% of your body weight and allows you to enjoy this activity, even if you have an injury or condition that doesn't allow you to participate in traditional types of exercise. Swimming also allows you to exercise for longer periods of time without increased effort or joint and muscle pain.

Swimming provides an extremely good cardiovascular workout and research has found that as little as two and a half hours of cardiovascular activity per week can decrease the risk of chronic diseases, and improve the health of people living with diabetes and heart disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), swimmers have about half the risk of death compared to individuals that are inactive.

Swimming also provides a full body workout – especially for your back, arms, shoulders, chest, and legs allowing you to tone your muscles and build strength. While the physical benefits of swimming may be obvious, there is a hidden benefit of swimming – it's good for your mental health too. Swimming helps to improve mental health by improving mood, and reducing mental tension and anxiety.

If you're looking to try a new sport and reap the health benefits that swimming has to offer, remember to practice safe swimming behaviours – read safety signs, speak to lifeguards for safety tips, swim with a partner, and try to stay calm and attract attention to yourself if you're in need of help.

## 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. We recommend the following, **Dr C McGrath** requires 30 mins for a "Well Woman's Check." **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.

## 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.

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**  
DOWN  
ACROSS: 1. LIVER 2. COGNITIVE 4. SUNSHINE 6. MENTALLY 7. SWIMMING 9. OBESITY 10. BRAIN 3. CARDIOVASCULAR 5. ENDORPHINS 6. MEMORY 7. SALMON 8. EIGHT

Take me home and give our healthy RECIPE a try!