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**Dr Siobhain Brennan**

BSc (Hon), PhD, MBBS, DCH, FRACGP

**Dr Erin O'Donnell-Taylor**

MBBS (WA)

(on maternity leave until June 2019)

**CLINIC STAFF**

**Nursing:** Sinead, Karen, Cheryl, Fiona, Roz and Ann-Marie.

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

**Practice Manager:** Maria

**SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES**

Consultations are by appointment.

**Monday to Thursday**

8.00am-1pm 2pm-6pm

**Friday**

8.00am-1pm 2pm-5pm

**Saturday**

8.30am-11.30am

**GP After Hours – Mount Lawley**

Ph 9370 4200

Monday to Friday 7pm-11pm

Saturday 2pm-10pm

Sunday 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 11pm for the practice duty doctor.

**CHRISTMAS SURGERY HOURS**

Christmas Day (Tuesday) – CLOSED

Boxing Day (Wednesday) – CLOSED

Thursday, 27 December 2018 – OPEN

Friday, 28 December 2018 – OPEN

Saturday, 29 December 2018 – OPEN

Monday, 31 December 2018 – OPEN

Tuesday, 1 January 2019 – CLOSED

Wednesday, 2 January 2019 – OPEN

## Shedding light on shingles

Shingles is a blistering, painful skin rash affecting seven people in every 1,000 in Australia. Who's at risk and what can be done?

With up to 150,000 new cases of Herpes Zoster (shingles) every year, it's clear to see that not everyone understands or is aware of the cause, the vaccination options available, or how to reduce the risk of contracting it.

As a localised rash, it occurs more often in older adults, those who are immunocompromised with conditions such as HIV, and those who developed chickenpox early in life. Not only is it uncomfortable and painful, but it can last for up to 15 days while causing headaches, nausea, and photophobia (sensitivity to light), as well as long-term pain.

What's more, it can cause other severe complications such as pneumonia, meningitis, bacterial infections and scarring. For those who have compromised immune systems, shingles can be exceptionally dangerous.

### Shingles diagnosis

Your doctor will take a skin lesion sample before testing it for the condition. Sometimes, they can also take a viral culture, but this can typically take longer than a more preferred nucleic acid detection test. Skin-to-skin contact by touching infected skin lesions is a leading cause for transmission, often leading to chickenpox in those who haven't had them or have not had the chicken pox vaccine.

### Treatment methods

Treatment methods for shingles aren't a cure so much as a way to reduce pain and complications and speed up the healing process. Antiviral therapy and analgesics are both valid forms of treatment if started within three days of symptoms, but there is no substantial evidence to conclude they help with postherpetic neuralgia (PHN) - persistent pain.

### Vaccination

If you have had the varicella-zoster virus (VZV) before, such as chicken pox, then you may be at risk of shingles as you age. Most shingles cases occur in those over 50 which makes it crucial to be aware of your vaccination options.

According to the Australian Immunisation Handbook, a Zoster vaccine is recommended if you are 60 or older and you have not received a vaccination before, or if you are in contact with someone with shingles or an immune deficiency. All vaccinations are on a case-by-case basis.

If you are between 70 and 79, your vaccination is free through the National Immunisation Program, but there is a small cost involved for those between 60 and 69. Vaccinations for those aged 80 and over are not common, as the efficacy of the vaccine is lower.

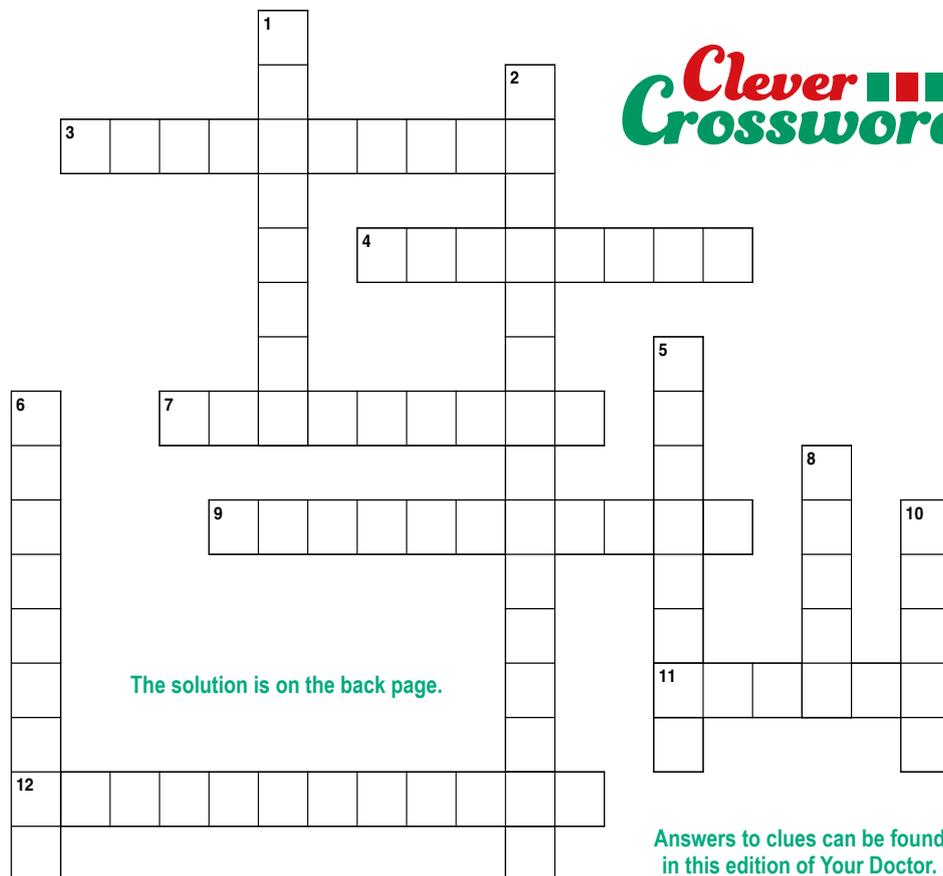
*If you have not yet received a vaccine for the varicella-zoster virus, or you believe you may have shingles, see your GP as soon as possible.*

## ACROSS

- Bugs in your gut, lungs and skin. (10)
- Heat rash is caused by heat and high \_\_\_\_\_ (8)
- Sun rash is caused by this. (9)
- A small dose of inactive microbes. (11)
- Inflammatory lung disease. (6)
- Vitamin C is crucial to this - to help heal wounds quickly. (6,6)

## DOWN

- The type of examination a male over 50 should have as part of a health check. (8)
- The virus that causes shingles. (9,6)
- Lookout for this type of mole as part of your health check. (8)
- A severe complication of shingles. (9)
- Vitamin A helps with bone and \_\_\_\_\_ growth. (5)
- Vaccinations can protect you from potentially \_\_\_\_\_



## Vaccination before vacation

When you're going on a much-needed overseas holiday, it can be easy to focus more on what you're going to do when you get there, as opposed to what you should do before you go. However, alongside planning your itinerary, you should also schedule a doctor's visit for vaccinations.

Six to eight weeks before you leave the country, book a doctor's appointment for vaccinations, booster shots, or general advice. Vaccinations can protect you from potentially fatal diseases and are necessary for those who are vulnerable such as pregnant women, babies, children, the immune-weakened, and the elderly.

### What is a vaccination?

A vaccination is a small dose of inactive microbes that form part of the disease from which you are seeking protection. By exposing your body to low doses of it, your immune system becomes strong enough to fight off the illness should you expose it to the real thing.

### Do I have to get one?

Some preventable diseases can be fatal. It's in your best interests to protect yourself if the option is available. What's more, some countries do not provide entry if you have not had certain vaccinations. Even if you have had vaccinations for the likes of measles or polio in the

past, you may need a booster shot. Make your doctor appointment at least six weeks before travel to allow time for the vaccination to take effect, or for multiple shots of one vaccine.

### What vaccinations do I need?

The vaccinations you need can depend on where you're going as well as your background. When you see your doctor, they will consider your destination, vaccination history, age, health, and origin.

Depending on your destination, you can then receive vaccinations for diseases such as rabies, measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), tetanus, cholera, hepatitis A and B, yellow fever, typhoid, and tuberculosis. These are just a few of the several common vaccinations, but seek advice from your doctor to find out what else you may require.

### Is getting a vaccination safe?

In Australia, all vaccinations are put through strict testing to be labelled as 'safe' by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. There is minimal risk of you coming to harm through vaccinations, but your doctor will advise of any side effects or potential complications.

Most side effects consist of muscle and joint pain, headaches, nausea, tiredness, fever, and pain and tenderness around the needle site. More rarely, people develop allergic reactions known as anaphylaxis. Your doctor is trained to handle such a situation, but if you have been allergic to vaccinations in the past, inform them before your appointment.

If you intend on heading overseas in the foreseeable future, find out what your vaccination requirements are. Make a doctor's appointment at least 6-8 weeks before you travel and let the adventure begin!

# Vitamin berry bonanza

Blackberries and blueberries are popular summer fruits, playing leading roles in smoothies, salads, and snacks. Aside from being delicious, however, berries offer a range of benefits you may not have known.

The most standout feature that puts blackberries and blueberries centre-stage is how jam-packed full of vitamins they are. Blackberries offer vitamin C, K, and A, while blueberries feature vitamin C, K, and B6. All of these can provide many benefits for the body, alongside being a healthy alternative to other sweet treats.

## Vitamin C – immunity, heart health, and skin health

Vitamin C features heavily in both blackberries and blueberries – much to the delight of your body. A 100-gram serving of blackberries can offer 35 percent of your recommended vitamin C intake, while one cup of blueberries provides 24 percent.

The vitamin C content in both berries also proves crucial for your immune system,



helping to heal wounds quickly. You can also rely on the vitamin C with fibre, potassium, and folate to support heart health and protect your cells from free radicals.

If you'd like to have glowing skin, then including blackberries and blueberries in your diet could be the answer. Vitamin C may help to improve how effectively your collagen irons out your wrinkles and supports your skin's texture.

## Vitamin K – bone health and blood clotting

Studies show that vitamin K from blueberries and blackberries can be beneficial for bone health and wound healing, as well as blood clotting. However, if you are on blood thinners for any medical reasons, it is best to consult your GP to see whether increasing your vitamin K is the best decision.

## Vitamin A – immunity, and health of your eyes, bones, teeth, and skin

Vitamin A serves several purposes, which is why getting your fill of blackberries is an excellent idea as the weather warms up. Vitamin A can help with your immune system, sight, bone and teeth growth and maintenance, skin health, and even infections and illness.

If you want to include more blackberries in your diet for these reasons, try adding them to Greek yoghurt, in your morning cereal, desserts, or smoothies.

The key to a healthy lifestyle, and getting enough vitamins, minerals, and nutrients, is by eating a balanced diet with everything in moderation. If you are unsure whether adding blackberries or blueberries into your diet is the right decision for you, consult your GP.



## Berry Chocolate Nut Smoothie

*A healthy dose of antioxidants to start or finish your day.*

- 1 cup frozen berries
- ½ cup frozen sliced bananas
- 1 cup plain unsweetened yoghurt (use coconut yoghurt for dairy-free)
- 2T almond butter
- 2t cacao powder
- ¼ C water or coconut water

Blend all ingredients together. Adjust the amount of water to achieve your desired consistency.

## Asthma: It's not the luck of the draw

Some people believe getting a diagnosis of asthma as a child is just bad luck, but studies show it's not luck, but rather a combination of many factors.

Asthma is an inflammatory lung disease that's five times more prevalent in Western civilization than anywhere else in the world. Typically, it's diagnosed in childhood and involves obstruction of the airway, so the sufferer struggles to breathe. Knowing what causes it, who gets it, and what treats it has been of considerable interest to researchers for many years. Now, they are finally getting to grips with what's involved.

There are a number of risk factors for asthma. A poor diet consisting of high sugar and low fibre can be a contributing factor, as can a Caesarean birth, feeding your baby formula, living in an urban environment, and even having a small family. What's more, if your child suffered from respiratory viral infections as a baby or young child, asthma can often

be an outcome. Such infections can also cause attacks in those who already have asthma.

Inroads are being made into asthma treatment methods all the time, with options to treat both the dominant form of asthma, eosinophilic asthma, and subtypes. Therapies with neutralising antibodies to reduce airway inflammation are effective for many asthma sufferers, and learning more about the body's microbiota may be of assistance in the future.

Microbiota, which are bugs in your gut, lungs, and skin, may help researchers to understand how to build up respiratory protection to prevent asthma – eventually being able to control whether you get it or not.

While studies are already underway to understand how microbiota plays a part in immunity, there may still be a long wait until medical professionals can control the prevalence of asthma.

## Health Facts

### Every day in Australia:

- 850 babies are born
- 440 people die
- 380 people are diagnosed with cancer
- 170 people have a heart attack
- 100 people have a stroke
- 14 people are newly diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease
- 1,300 people are hospitalised due to an injury
- 8 women and 2 men are hospitalised due to assault by a spouse or domestic partner

*Note: The 'average day' value is the year total divided by 365.*

# Summer and your skin

For most people, sunburn is the extent of their skin problems during summer. For many, however, skin rashes make an all-too-common appearance.

In summer, those who choose to venture outside can suffer from a range of skin conditions and rashes. Heat rash, sun rash, bites and stings, skin conditions and allergies can all make your summer holidays less enjoyable than they could be. Here are a few of the many common summer skin rashes.

## Heat and sun rash

When you finally say goodbye to the wintry weather, you then have to welcome heat and sun rashes with open arms. Heat rash causes red spots, an irritating itch, and even redness and swelling. It's caused by high humidity and heat resulting in inflamed and blocked sweat ducts. Sun rash, on the other hand, is not only a result of sun but chemicals and even antibiotics. Usually, it

clears up after a few days, but consult a medical professional if symptoms persist.

## Allergies and chronic conditions

Some people already have skin conditions that summer conditions worsen, while other times, the weather can cause breakouts to appear out of nowhere. Allergies usually consist of hives caused by heat, eczema further exacerbated by sweat and heat, and rashes from plant life. Chronic skin conditions such as tinea, dermatitis, keratosis and skin cancer may also be worse in summer. Take precautions and see your doctor if necessary.

Being outdoors in warmer weather can also put you more at risk of bites and stings, as well as heat stroke and exhaustion. Call emergency services or your doctor immediately if you are ever worried about a painful rash, an allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis, or a dangerous condition such as heat stroke from too much time in the sun. Spend time outdoors responsibly.

# Be a man about it!

Men, when was the last time you had a health check of any kind? You don't need to be sick to go to the doctor, and you should see them more frequently than you probably do now.

Doctors can't fix what they don't know about, and they can find it harder to fix what has already been developing for a long time. You might think seeing a doctor is only necessary when you're not feeling well, but you should be visiting them before you get to that point.

Health checks for men are crucial and can incorporate a range of categories including dental, bone, skin, mental and general health too. The goal is to pick up warning signs, help your doctor to understand what is "normal" for you and what isn't, and identify any problems. Here's what you need to know.

## Self-checks

You can't only rely on your doctor to notice any problems – you also need to be aware of them yourself. Always check for abnormal moles and freckles, brush and floss your teeth regularly to keep your teeth and gums healthy, and check your testicles for anything unusual. All of these things take minimal effort but can end up being lifesavers.



## Your heart

Heart disease is a global killer, and the worst thing you can do is think it won't happen to you. As part of your regular health checks, ask for a blood pressure check, blood tests, obesity tests, diabetes checks, electrocardiograms, and update your doctor on family history. If, for example, your family all have high blood pressure, then you may need to check yours more often.

## Cancer

No-one is free of the risk of cancer, which makes it all the more important to see your doctor regularly to discuss any risks and lifestyle changes. Talk through the tests involved with your doctor, and if you're over 50 and have not had a faecal occult blood test or prostate examination, book in for a consultation.

If you are worried about any facet of your health – be it any of these points covered or something else, then book in with your GP. Your health is the most important thing you have – with a minimal cost to maintain it but a substantial cost to lose it.

See your doctor to discuss your options and find out what tests are available for you.

## 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.

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**  
DOWN  
1. PROSTATE 2. VARICELLA ZOSTER 5. ABNORMAL  
ACROSS  
3. MICROBIOTA 4. HUMIDITY 7. CHEMICALS 9. VACCINATION  
11. ASTHMA 12. IMMUNE SYSTEM  
6. PNEUMONIA 8. TEETH 10. FATAL

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!