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(on maternity leave until June 2019)

**Dr Sarah Colby**  
MBBS

#### 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 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.

# YOUR DOCTOR

**FREE!!  
TAKE ME HOME**



**FEBRUARY 2019**

## Be wise and immunise

To protect you and your children from serious contagious diseases, immunisation has been proven as an effective and safe choice.

In the era before vaccines, thousands of children died from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. Today in Australia, it is extremely rare to die from these diseases.

The important concept is that vaccinating people protects not only them, but others in the community. If I'm protected, I can protect others.

*"Immunisation protects more than you and your child from serious diseases."*

This type of protection is known as "community immunity" or "herd immunity." When enough of the community is immunised against a contagious disease, most other members are protected from infection because there's little opportunity for the disease to spread.

Newborns, pregnant women or people whose immune systems are weakened may be unable to receive certain vaccines. Yet even they will get some protection because the spread of contagious disease is contained.

A disease can die out altogether if enough people are immunised and the infection cannot spread. For example, in 1980 smallpox was eradicated and in 2014 measles was eliminated in Australia. Unfortunately, measles can still be brought into the country by international travellers, so it is important we maintain high levels of vaccination against this contagious disease.

Most people can be immunised, however there are certain circumstances where this is not possible. Ask your doctor if there is any reason why you or your child shouldn't be vaccinated.

You become vulnerable to different diseases at different stages in life, and therefore vaccinations will differ depending on your age. In addition,

there are also lifestyle choices, health conditions and some high-risk occupations that need to be taken into consideration when assessing an individual's vaccination requirements.

*"Vaccination rates of 5-year olds in Australia are over 93%, but this needs to be higher."*

The National Immunisation Program (NIP) offers free vaccines against 17 diseases for everyone who is eligible, and some states and territories also offer additional vaccinations for free. It is hoped that by making the vaccines accessible, it will increase national immunisation rates and as a result reduce the risk of contracting a preventable disease for all Australians.

Strict safety testing is completed before a vaccination is registered for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). Even after approval is given, monitoring the safety and effectiveness of a vaccine in the community continues.

Conditions and diseases that can be prevented by vaccine include chickenpox (varicella), diphtheria, flu (influenza), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b), HPV (Human papillomavirus), measles, meningococcal disease, mumps, pneumococcal disease, polio (poliomyelitis), rotavirus, rubella (German measles), shingles (herpes zoster), tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis).

Speak to one of our staff about booking an appointment to receive a vaccination. You may experience a mild reaction to a particular vaccine, but we will tell you what to look out for and what to do if you're worried about it and make sure you sign up to receive a reminder when your vaccinations are due.

When we choose to immunise, we're helping more than just ourselves. Make sure your child's immunisations are up to date and talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about vaccine safety.

# Go bananas!

People consume more bananas worldwide than most other fruit, but what can they do for your body and why do so many health experts recommend them?

Bananas are rich in potassium and fibre and feature a range of vitamins and minerals such as folate, iron, and protein. They don't have salt, fat or cholesterol, and only contain 110 calories. There's more to the humble banana than meets the eye. Below are some of the more prominent health benefits, however, not all are proven with high-quality research.

## HEART AND DIGESTIVE HEALTH

Vitamin C, potassium, fibre, and vitamin B6 are all present in bananas, and funnily enough, all support heart health. If you suffer from digestive health



problems such as diarrhoea, bananas form part of the recommended BRAT diet of bananas, rice, apple sauce, and toast. Bananas are also beneficial for helping to promote regularity and for replenishing lost nutrients.

## CANCER

Bananas are an excellent source of vitamin C which helps to combat cancer-causing free radicals. What's more, bananas alongside oranges and orange juice may all help to reduce the risk of childhood leukaemia.

## ASTHMA

The Imperial College of London conducted a study about the benefits of bananas relating to asthma. The study found that in children who consumed one banana daily, the risk of developing asthma was 34 percent less than those who didn't.

## BLOOD PRESSURE

If you suffer from high blood pressure, eat a banana! While

lowering salt consumption can aid in regulating your blood pressure, increasing your potassium levels may help too.

But before going for those bananas, be sure to consult your doctor if you are on any medication, such as beta-blockers, where increasing your potassium intake can be of concern. If you suffer from migraines, consume no more than half a banana per day, and refrain from eating them if you notice wheezing, swelling, hives, itching, or similar allergic reactions.

## Banana Ice cream

*A healthy one-ingredient ice cream to make at home!*

### Ingredients

2 ripe bananas

### Other flavours to try:

**Berry** – 1 c blueberries (fresh or frozen)

**Tropical** – 1 mango (canned or fresh) and a dash of coconut cream

**Chocolate** – 1/2 avocado and a dessertspoon of cacao or cocoa powder

### Method

1. Peel and cut bananas into small pieces.
2. Place in a freezer-safe container or bag. Freeze until solid. (At least 2 hours, but ideally overnight).
3. Add banana pieces to food processor. Pulse, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides. Blend until smooth - approximately 3 minutes.
4. Scoop into a bowl and enjoy immediately as soft serve! For firmer ice cream, place into an airtight freezer-safe container and freeze for at least an hour.

Try adding different flavours to your banana ice cream after you've blended it in the food processor. We've given some healthy ideas above, but for a special treat you could also add a spoonful of peanut butter or a dollop of Nutella.



## Early detection key to survival

The road to digestion begins with you consuming food and ends with a trip to the bathroom. However, the hard parts happen in the middle.

After eating food, your body breaks it down, absorbing the nutrients for repairs, energy, and growth. With a 30-foot gastrointestinal tract in your body, taking care of your digestive health is a complicated yet necessary process that requires care and attention.

Even though the majority of Australians consider themselves to be in good health, and the country as a whole has a high life expectancy, there is still the elephant in the room: digestive tract cancers and detecting them early enough for a better chance of survival.

Out of all cancer diagnoses in Australia, two in ten will relate to the digestive tract such as colorectal and pancreatic. Digestive tract cancer then accounts for three in ten cancer deaths. Men are also 1.6 times more likely to die from a digestive tract cancer than women, and almost half of new cases in 2018 will result in death from it – close to 14,000 out of nearly 29,000 new cases.

The statistics are concerning, especially given the survival rate goes up with earlier detection, giving you a better chance of a long and prosperous life. If you have stage I bowel cancer, your five-year survival rate is 99 percent, compared with only 13 percent if you have stage IV – detected later on. As a result, it's clear to see that early diagnosis is paramount to combating the disease and living your life.

In an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report released in 2018, the links between cancer screening programs and survival rates were favourable. Earlier stage cancers could be diagnosed quickly, and treatment could take place sooner rather than later for a better chance of success.

Cancer affects many Australians every year, but it's clear to see that screening programmes and regular GP visits can work in your favour. If you have not yet taken part in a screening programme you are eligible for, or you have any health concerns, make an appointment with a medical professional. Remember, early detection is the key to survival.

## March through menopause – what you need to know

Menopause is a natural part of a woman's life, but it's not always smooth-sailing. Misinformation and lack of knowledge can make it far harder than it needs to be.

Menopause is not something that sneaks up and catches you by surprise. In fact, it's not unexpected at all. Every woman will, at some point, run out of eggs – marking the end of their natural childbearing years. In an ideal world, your ovaries would cease to produce eggs, and that would be that. Unfortunately, however, the process can be uncomfortable and lengthy and involves both the discomfort of perimenopause symptoms in the lead-up, then menopause itself.

In Australia, the average age for the start of menopause is 51. However, 10 percent of women can get it earlier at around 45, or, with ovary removal surgery and chemotherapy treatment, even earlier than that. After about two years of symptoms and unpredictable hormones, your body no longer produces sex hormones for reproduction, and both progesterone and oestrogen levels are at an all-time low. However, with age, these levels lower naturally over time up to that point.

Perimenopause symptoms, which can be present for up to two years, are the first real signs that your body is changing. Your breasts may feel swollen and sore and you may have heavier and more frequent periods. Some suffer the side effects of lower



oestrogen levels such as night sweats, hot flushes, irregular periods, and mood and sleep changes, yet some women experience none of these symptoms at all.

Then, during the height of menopause, mood changes, increased urination, lowered libido, vaginal dryness, sexual dysfunction and bone loss are all common symptoms.

While it might sound like menopause is horrific, it doesn't have to be. There are many treatment options to suit your unique situation so you can march through menopause. For example, menopausal hormone therapy is recognised internationally as an acceptable treatment method for women under 60. However, if used long-term, it can put you at risk of certain cancers.

If you would prefer non-hormonal treatment, there is medication available to combat night sweats and hot flushes – the most common symptoms. Anti-depressants, anti-epilepsy drugs, and even neuropathic pain medication are common options. However, none are deemed as effective as hormone therapy. If you'd prefer a more natural approach, both cognitive behaviour therapy and hypnosis have shown some promising effect for flushes and sweats.

For some, menopause can produce some debilitating side effects. If you are struggling with your body's changes, speak to your doctor about treatment options that may be suitable for you.

## Clever Crossword

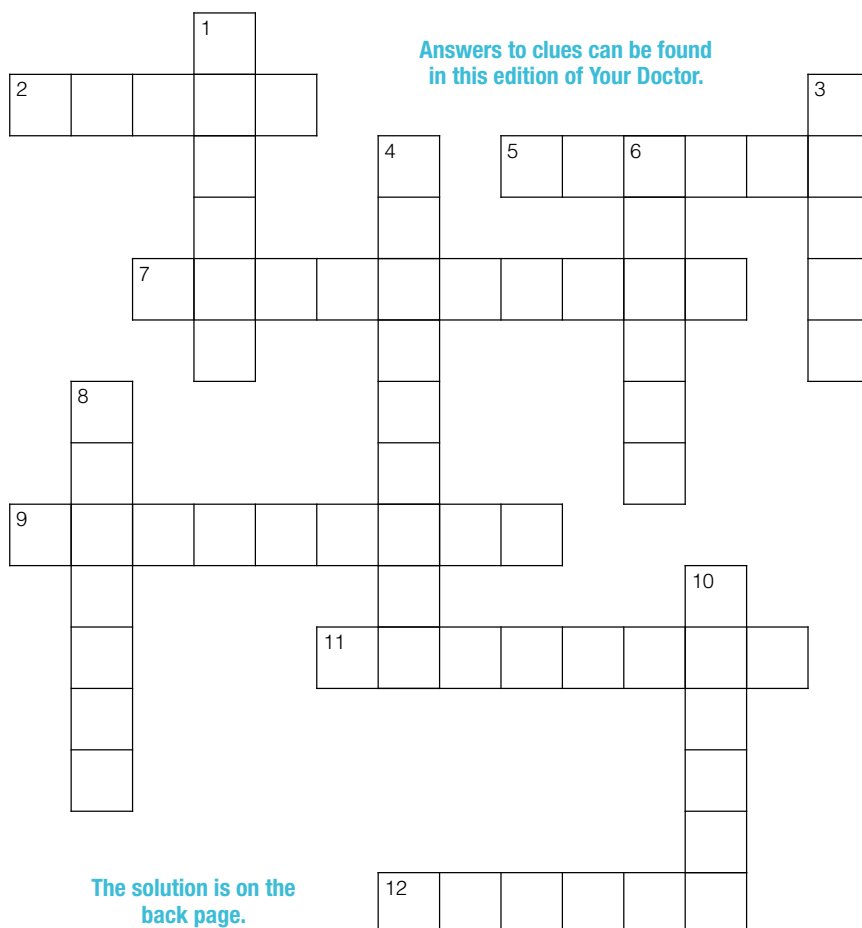
Answers to clues can be found in this edition of *Your Doctor*.

### ACROSS

2. One in 13 Australians will receive a diagnosis of this type of cancer in their lifetime. (5)
5. Consuming a banana a day reduces the risk of developing this disease. (6)
7. A disease that can be prevented by vaccine. (9)
9. Increased \_\_\_\_\_ is a symptom of menopause. (9)
11. Disease that was eradicated in 1980. (8)
12. Exercises for your pelvic floor. (6)

### DOWN

1. Pregnancy can cause weakened \_\_\_\_\_ floor muscles. (6)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ detection is the key to surviving digestive tract cancers. (5)
4. A mineral that bananas are rich in. (9)
6. Length (in feet) of the gastrointestinal tract of a human. (6)
8. A type of therapy recommended for women in menopause. (7)
10. Bowel cancer often begins with these. (6)



The solution is on the back page.

# Are you doing enough kegel?

Kegel exercises, or kegels for short, help to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. Are you doing enough of them?

It doesn't matter whether you're a man or a woman, pregnant or not; you can still benefit from kegel exercises. Developed in the 1940s by Dr. Arnold H. Kegel, they became known for helping women in particular to prevent urine leakage.

A kegel exercise involves strengthening the muscles that you would use to stop the flow of urine or passing wind. Squeeze them together while lifting your pelvic floor, holding them for five seconds. You can then relax before repeating the five-second hold up to ten times. The goal is to strengthen your pelvic floor enough to offer your organs support for controlling wind, urine, and faeces. They can also help to reduce pelvic pain and even make sex more pleasurable.

Kegel muscles can weaken for many reasons, including from pregnancy, childbirth,

constipation, and even aging. If you have had bladder or bowel surgery, or you're overweight, you are also more at risk. The same goes if you have a constant cough through asthma, bronchitis, or a similar condition.

For many women, pregnancy and childbirth can often be to blame for weakened pelvic floor muscles. Hormonal changes, downward pressure, and a growing baby can all contribute to bladder and bowel leakage, pelvic pain or prolapses, and even abdominal separation. However, by carrying out kegel exercises on a regular basis, you have an 84 percent success rate with being able to prevent leakage going forward.

If you believe your pelvic floor muscles are not at their best, then it might be time to try kegel exercises. If you are unsure if they are right for you, or for advice talk to your GP or health professional.

## 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.

## One of Australia's biggest killers

**Bowel cancer treatment has a ninety percent success rate with early intervention, but it's still one of Australia's biggest killers.**

One in thirteen Australians will receive a bowel cancer diagnosis in their lifetime, with it more prevalent in Australia than anywhere else in the world. It can affect men, women, the young and the old, as well as those with and without a hereditary or family connection. In fact, seventy percent of those who develop bowel cancer have no family history of it, so it's clear to see that bowel cancer has no preference.

That's why it's so important to take action and be aware of the signs. Reading your body, looking out for changes, and taking advantage of screening programmes may be the difference between life and death.

Bowel cancer can also affect any part of your colon or rectum and is often referred to as colorectal cancer. The colon is a section of the large bowel

used for water absorption, while the rectum and anal canal hold waste material. Bowel cancer often begins as benign polyps which form on your bowel's lining. If left undetected, they can become cancerous tumours that may spread to other areas of your body.

Your risk of getting bowel cancer increases with age, with a diagnosis more common for those aged 50 years or more. However, it's also becoming more common in Australians under 50 as well. Therefore, act promptly if you notice rectal bleeding or bloody stools, a change in bowel movements, abdominal pain or swelling, rectum or anus lumps or pain, symptoms of anaemia, or the feeling that you are not finished on the toilet.

You should also see your GP if you have a family history of bowel cancer, want peace of mind, or would like to take part in screening programmes. Bowel cancer may be one of Australia's biggest killers, but it doesn't have to be.



ACROSS 2. BOWEL 5. ASTHMA 7. DIPHTHERIA 9. URINATION  
DOWN 1. PELVIC 3. EARLY 4. POTASSIUM 6. THIRTY 8. HORMONE  
10. POLYPS  
11. SMALLPOX 12. KEGELS

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

**Disclaimer:** All text and images published in this newsletter are for general information and educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional advice. Always consult a registered health professional regarding any health-related diagnosis or treatment options.

Read the newsletter and test your knowledge - complete the PUZZLE!