



# GLEN FORREST MEDICAL CENTRE

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MBBS (WA)

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MBBS(Hons), DRANZCOG

(on maternity leave until July 2020)

## Dr Rodney Peh

MBBS

## CLINIC STAFF

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

**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 APRIL 2020



## Measles and your immunity

**Cases of measles continue to be seen across the country, and everyone should know the basic facts of this serious disease.**

Measles is a virus which can cause severe illness or even death. The virus spreads from an infected person on microscopic droplets created by coughs and sneezes, and is so contagious that about 9 in 10 people who have contact with the virus will catch it if they are not immunised.

Since the development of an effective vaccine in the 1970's, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended that everybody be vaccinated in early childhood. These days, all countries that have vaccination programmes include the measles vaccine. Sadly, outbreaks of measles cases still surge worldwide, in 2018 more than 140,000 died – most were children under the age of five.

### Who is at risk?

Unvaccinated people are all at risk, but the effects of measles can be more serious for the very young or very old, those with weakened immune systems, and during pregnancy. Effective vaccination programmes can all but eradicate the disease for a treated population, but it only takes a few unvaccinated individuals and the virus has a way in which to spread.

### Symptoms

Measles usually begins with cold or flu-like symptoms, high fever and sore, light-sensitive eyes. Classic characteristics include a white spotty rash inside the mouth and a widespread reddish mottled rash on the skin. Symptoms usually go away in around seven to ten days.

### Managing measles

If you, or your child, have symptoms of measles, contact your doctor. Most mild to moderate measles infections can be managed at home, and staying home is

the best way to avoid spreading the virus. Treatment is the same as for any common viral infection – stay hydrated, rest, and take over-the-counter medications to manage fever and pain.

If symptoms become severe or unusual, it is essential to consult a doctor immediately. Complications can include pneumonia, inflammation of the brain, blindness or hearing loss, and long-term damage to the immune system.

### How measles affects your immune system

When someone is exposed to germs, their immune system learns to fight those specific bugs, and that's how we develop immunity. It seems measles causes the immune system to forget what it's learnt – scientists are calling it 'immune amnesia' – meaning we become susceptible to infection because our bodies can't remember how to fight the germs. This 'immune amnesia' can last for years and even after recovering from measles, it may mean you are more likely to pick up bugs and get sicker, for longer, as well as needing to re-do any vaccinations you may have had in the past.

Like with any illness, prevention is the best medicine; speak to your doctor to find out what you can do to improve immunity for you, your family and essentially your community.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- Can our diet help our moods?
- Nut milks
- An embarrassing itch
- Homemade almond milk
- Crossword corner
- How to build self-esteem in your child

**Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!**

# Nut milks

More and more people are choosing plant-based alternatives to traditional meat and dairy products. Whether you're considering switching from dairy for animal rights, health, environmental reasons, or if you just prefer the taste, the options are increasing all the time.

Plant milks have been made and used for hundreds of years, but until recently, the only common dairy alternative available was soymilk – although a good option it's not to everyone's taste. Choices now include rice, oat, hemp, or coconut milk, as well as a variety of nut milks. Nut milks are naturally gluten, lactose, and soy-free.

If you are looking for environmentally-friendly alternatives, almond milk comes under criticism for consuming a large amount of water during farming and production. It's still less than dairy milk, but certainly not ideal. Greenhouse gas emissions and land use for the production of plant-based milks are lower than for dairy milk.

The nutrition content depends upon the plant source and the processing. Typically, nut based milks are highly diluted; therefore don't contain high quantities of nutrients. For this reason, many are fortified with vitamins and minerals. They can also have sugar and other additives, so it's worth checking the packaging for a full run-down of the ingredients.

Nut milks have less protein and calcium than cows' milk and therefore they are not recommended as a complete milk replacement for children, teens or pregnant women. On the other hand, people who need to limit their calories or saturated fat intake may benefit from some plant-based milks.

## COMMON NUT MILKS

- Almond milk is a popular choice as it's widely available, and its neutral flavour makes it versatile.
- Hazelnut milk has a creamier colour and a stronger nutty flavour, making for a 'love or hate' relationship.
- Cashew milk has a mild flavour and creamy feel, and is becoming more widely available.
- Coconut milk is not from a true nut, but is a good alternative for those with nut allergies. Lovers of the taste will find it makes a delicious hot chocolate, but it has the highest fat content of the non-dairy milks.

With a huge range of nut milks and other dairy alternatives, have fun finding your personal favourite or making your own!



# An embarrassing itch

Feeling itchy around your bottom can be embarrassing, and intensely uncomfortable. Rectal or anal itch is a condition that we may not like to talk about, but which is incredibly common. Usually there's no serious underlying cause and it can be remedied with simple measures.

## CAUSES OF ANAL ITCH

Many things can cause occasional rectal or perianal (around the anus) itch; the most common include:

- irritants such as perfumes and dyes in washing powder, toilet paper, and personal hygiene products
- eczema, psoriasis or other itchy skin conditions which affect the genitals and anus
- hygiene issues, such as not cleaning well after a bowel movement, or not washing often enough
- short-term skin damage, for example, very vigorous scrubbing or scratching of sensitive areas can leave them raw and itchy
- anal disorders such as haemorrhoids, skin tags and fissures
- some fungal and bacterial infections
- parasites, such as pinworms (threadworms) and scabies

## SIMPLE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

If you can work out what's causing it, prevention is better than cure.

Check irritants – are you using a different washing powder or laundry soap? Stick to natural and gentle cleansers, and low irritant toilet paper.

Make sure you're clean and dry after using the loo. Some people find moist wipes can help, but make sure you get products designed for sensitive skin.

Stop scratching! This is easier said than done, but the more you scratch, the more the skin will become raw, sore and even itchier. This is called the itch-scratch cycle, and once you stop scratching, your skin can start to heal.

If it doesn't settle down after trying self-care treatment, or if you really just can't stop scratching, see your doctor for treatment and to make sure there are no associated medical problems. Anal itch is very common so there's no need to be embarrassed. Being a doctor means we've seen it all before.

## MAKE YOUR OWN ALMOND MILK

Making your own almond milk is easy and tastes better than store bought.

This recipe makes one litre – add less water if you would like it to be creamier.

- 1 cup raw almonds, soaked
- 2 dates (pitted)
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 4 cups of filtered water

Cover the almonds with water and soak for 12 hours. Drain and discard the water.

Place the almonds, dates, essence and filtered water in your blender or food processor and blend until the almonds are finely ground.

Place a fine cotton cloth over a bowl. To strain, pour the almond mixture into the cloth. Squeeze to extract all the almond milk.

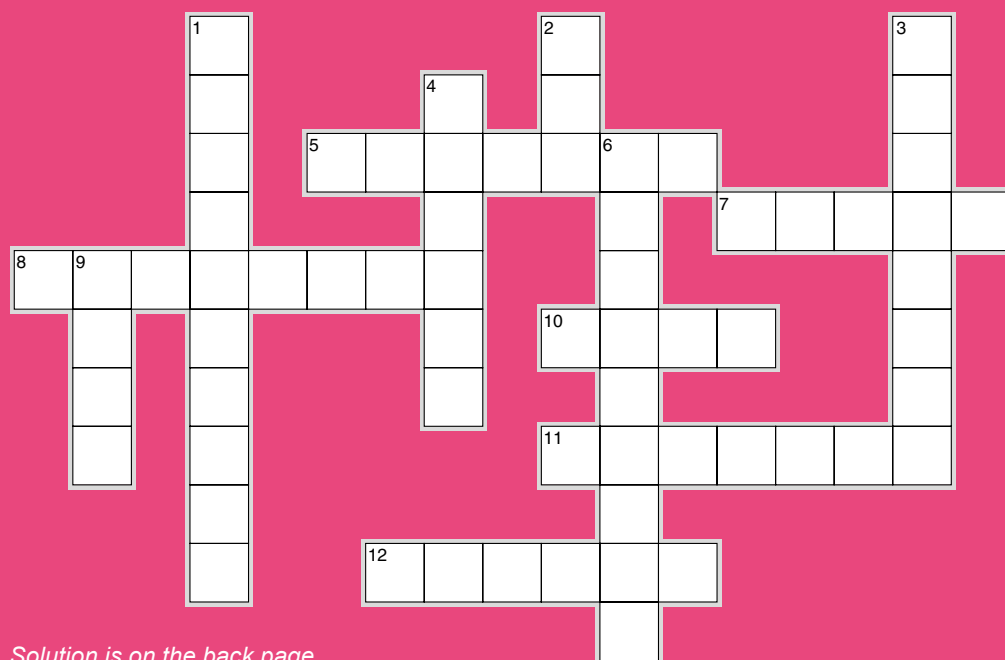
Store in a glass jar in the fridge for up to three days.

Tip: Once you have strained the milk from the mixture you are left with almond pulp – this can be put in porridge, smoothies, or baking for added protein and fibre.



# Crossword Corner

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



Solution is on the back page.

## ACROSS

5. The sugar found in milk
7. A disease or infection
8. A pinworm is one of these
10. A food made from soya bean
11. Add ingredients to food or drink to enhance taste or nutrients
12. Another name for a B vitamin

## DOWN

1. Easily spread from one person to another
2. Abbreviation for a global health organisation
3. Protection
4. An itchy skin condition
6. Chemical made by the body-thought to help mood
9. External opening of the rectum

## How to build self-esteem in your child

Self-esteem means how you feel about yourself. Do you see yourself in a positive light, or do you focus on mistakes and negative thoughts?

Some of our thought patterns are considered to be established early in life, so instilling self-esteem in our children is essential. Enabling children to recognise their individual worth in society, and have appropriate responses to their own behaviour is incredibly important.

Parenting can be difficult and frustrating, and it's easy to snap at rowdy youngsters or moody teens. However, building self-esteem in your children has immediate benefits for everyone. When children understand that their contribution to the family is valued, they are almost guaranteed to rise to the challenge. Having a role in your family and community is important for everyone, and children are no exception.

Here are five steps to help build self-esteem in your child.

### 1 GIVE THEM HOUSEHOLD TASKS

It's a win-win situation! Knowing that their practical input in the home is appreciated and important will sink in, even despite short-term complaints about chores.

### 2 TAKE A STEP BACK

Encouraging an appropriate level of independence for your child's age and ability is incredibly important. Exploring

their environment and knowing that you trust them to behave sensibly can help children grow into confident, self-sufficient adults.

### 3 PRAISE THEM

For genuine achievements. Over-praising children can diminish the value of true appreciation and remove the need for them to try hard.

### 4 ALLOW THEM TO MAKE MISTAKES

Children have to be allowed to try new things, even if you know they may make a mistake. The first step towards healthy independence might be preparing a bowl of cereal for themselves, even if that means some spilt milk. In addition, learning to clean up after those mistakes is an important life lesson, and gives children the confidence to try new things and respond to problems.

### 5 SET APPROPRIATE GOALS

A good part of self-esteem comes from independence, and that can be developed by setting goals – like stepping up a level at a time when learning to read. The feeling of success can help children reach for the sky.

Alongside all this is, it's important to know that it's okay when things don't go to plan, and that's as true for parents as children. Nobody's perfect, and obstacles are all part of life – the way we deal with these is what counts.



# Can our diet help our moods?



Serotonin is a chemical made by the body, and has many important functions. It's been the subject of interest in recent years because of its effect on mood, behaviour, and sleep patterns. The relationship between mental health and serotonin levels is complex, but low levels of serotonin are closely linked with depression and low mood.

Less well known is that serotonin is produced mainly in the gut; and plays a role in the communication between your gut and brain, as well as keeping your gut functioning well. Recent studies have shown that certain gut microbes can influence the production and uptake of serotonin into our cells. This research hasn't yet resulted in any health recommendations for humans, but may change the way we think about our gut bacteria in future. Mental and physical health are always inseparable!

Some researchers believe that healthy levels can be maintained by eating foods rich in tryptophan. Your body uses tryptophan and turns it into a B vitamin called niacin, which plays a key role in making serotonin. It's important to note that some studies have shown little link between dietary tryptophan and brain serotonin levels. So the jury is out, but fortunately, foods that contain the most tryptophan are also rich in many other essential nutrients.

Tryptophan is commonly found in most protein-based foods. The following are some good sources that are also a valuable addition to your diet.

**Egg yolks** – egg whites are extremely high in protein, but the yolk is where the bulk

of the complex micronutrients are found. One of the best natural dietary sources of tryptophan, egg yolks also contain essential nutrients such as vitamins A, B2, B12, D, phosphorus, iodine and selenium.

**Soy** – tofu and other soy products are excellent sources of tryptophan, and one of the best ways to get more in a plant-based or vegan diet.

**Nuts and seeds** – while different types of nuts and seeds vary in their nutritional values, adding nuts and seeds to your diet is a great way to increase your tryptophan intake. They also have good fats, protein, fibre, and a range of other essential nutrients.

**Milk, cheese, and other dairy products** – like babies who fall asleep at the breast, we're influenced by the natural chemicals in the milk we drink. Dairy products contain tryptophan and have links to regular sleeping patterns.

**Salmon** – rich in B vitamins and vitamin D, protein, and healthy fats including Omega 3 and 6, salmon is full of goodness.

So if you're feeling down and find yourself reaching for the ice-cream or chocolate biscuits, try eating some of these healthy alternatives instead. They're not only better for your body, but can also be good for your state-of-mind.

Remember the process of creating serotonin in our bodies is more complex than simply eating foods that contain tryptophan. So before changing your diet to improve your mood or sleep patterns, consult your doctor. We can rule out any contributing health issues and offer advice on how to get maximum benefit from your diet.

## 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.

ACROSS 5. LACTOSE 7. VIRUS 8. PARASITE 10. TOFU  
DOWN 1. CONTAGIOUS 2. WHO 3. IMMUNITY 4. ECZEMA  
11. FORTIFY 12. NIACIN  
6. SEROTONIN 9. ANUS

CROSSWORD  
SOLUTION

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified health care professional in all matters pertaining to your physical, emotional and mental health.

To try the latest **RECIPE** take me home...