



**Dr Frank Kotai**

MBBS (WA) DA

**Dr Guido Hanly**

MBBS (WA) FRACGP

**Dr Toni Law**

MBBS (WA) FRACGP MPH&TM DCH DRANZCOG

**Dr Juliette Buchanan**

MBBS FRACGP FARGP DCH Grad Dip FM

**Dr Alina Harriss**

MBBS FRACGP

**Dr Mark Daykin**

MB ChB (UK) MRCGP (UK) FRACGP

**Dr Siobhain Brennan**

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

**Dr Sarah Colby (on maternity leave)**

MBBS(Hons), DRANZCOG

**Dr Kris Scully**

MBBChBAO(Hons), FRACGP, DCH

**CLINIC STAFF**

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

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

**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

**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

**CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR HOURS:**

Friday, 24 Dec 2021 **Open 8am –3pm**

Christmas Day **Closed**

Monday, 27 Dec 2021 **Closed**

Tuesday, 28 Dec 2021 **Closed**

Wednesday, 29 Dec 2021 **Open 8am–6pm**

Thursday, 30 Dec 2021 **Open 8am–6pm**

Friday, 31 Dec 2021 **Open 8am–3pm**

New Year's Day **Closed**

Monday, 3 Jan 2022 **Closed**

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

compliments of your GP

DECEMBER 2021



**LEARNING  
THROUGH PLAY**



**WHAT CAUSES  
BLOATING**



**COVID-19  
FAQS**



**THE A-Z ON  
AVOCADOS**

## Why do we need water & what is dehydration?

We often hear about how much water we should be drinking – but why is it important, and how do we know when we're not drinking enough?

**Why do we need fluid?**

Our bodies need a certain amount of fluid each day to stay healthy and function well – almost every part of us contains water, including: our blood, muscles, kidneys, brain, heart, skin, and even bones.

Water keeps our body temperature regulated, aids digestion, helps our blood circulate, lubricates our joints; and protects the foetus, eyes, brain and spinal cord. Water is essential for our kidneys to filter the fluids that pass through our body in order to remove certain chemicals and retain others. The fluids and essential salts and minerals in our bodies need to stay properly balanced to keep us well, and lack of fluid can cause serious electrolyte imbalances.

**What is dehydration?**

Dehydration can occur quite easily – it happens when you're losing more fluid than you're taking in. The main ways you lose fluid are when you go to the toilet, sweat, or if you have diarrhoea and/or vomiting. It's particularly important to stay hydrated during an acute illness.

**How to know if you're dehydrated**

Your body has a way of telling you it needs fluids. Feeling thirsty is a good sign that you need to hydrate! Some of the other early signs are dry mouth, headache, and urine that's darker in colour than usual.

As dehydration gets more severe, you can begin to experience dizziness, irritability and fatigue, and find that you're urinating very little – and that the urine you do pass looks very dark.

### SYMPTOMS OF DEHYDRATION



DIZZINESS



DRY MOUTH



DARK URINE



HEADACHE



THIRST



FATIGUE



**Who's at risk?**

Certain groups of people are more at-risk of serious problems from dehydration; these include frail, elderly people, and anyone with kidney disease and some other chronic illnesses. Babies and children can become critically ill quickly.

However, keep in mind that dehydration can become a problem for anyone; it's more likely in hot weather, if you're exercising, sweating, or if you simply haven't had enough fluids.

**Humans can last weeks without food, but only days without water.**

**Preventing dehydration**

There's no hard-and-fast rule about how much water you need to drink every day. Eight glasses or around two litres is sometimes given as a guide for the average person; however body size is a factor – medics calculate a person's fluid requirements per kilo of body weight. You also need more fluids during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

It's a good idea to drink regularly throughout the day; water is best, although food also counts towards your fluid intake. Be mindful of external factors – like your activity level and environment – that might increase your needs, and remember that alcohol and caffeine can make you lose water.

If you have questions about how much fluid you should drinking, or if you have any medical conditions that might affect your fluid requirements, talk to your doctor.

# AVOCADOS

Love them or hate them, you've probably heard many claims made about them. So here are some FAQs and facts about the humble avocado.

## Are avocados fattening?

Avocados are high in healthy fats – the unsaturated essential fatty acids and oils that allow us to absorb and use essential vitamins and minerals in our bodies. However, there's no reason avocados should be avoided when losing weight, in fact the fats in avocados may help by keeping you fuller and decreasing appetite.

Even when a food is rich in only the healthy kinds of fats; if your kilojoule intake is higher than your output, you will put on weight.

## Are they high in cholesterol?

Avocados don't contain any cholesterol – only animals make cholesterol, so any purely plant-based food will be free of cholesterol. Humans make their own, so even if your diet is very low in cholesterol, you could still find your levels higher than they should be.



## Are avocados good for you?

Let's take a look at some of the nutrients in 100g of avocado – that's about half a medium-sized fruit.

- 100g contains around 13g of fat, almost all of which is the healthier kind – these fats help improve cholesterol levels which can lower your risk of heart disease.



*With their soft, creamy texture and impressive nutrients, avocados are an ideal first food for babies.*



- The same serving contains nearly 7.5g of fibre – important for digestive health.
- This amount provides a good quantity of vitamin B6 and folate, and is a source of niacin and vitamin C, all of which help to fight fatigue and boost immunity.
- Potassium is also found in good amounts, it helps our nerves, muscles and heart to function properly.

## What does 'nutrient dense' mean?

We talk about foods being 'nutrient dense' when they have a lot of goodness packed into a small space! We might sometimes refer to particularly nutritious foods as 'superfoods', which just means that they're really good for us.

Avocados are a great addition to a healthy diet, and they're so versatile – squished onto toast, blended into a smoothie, or mashed and stirred into a pasta dish, these tasty, creamy fruits pack a nutrient-rich punch.

## Why am I so bloated?

Bloating is very common – it's the feeling of being uncomfortably full, with a swollen belly and too much gas, or solids and liquids trapped in the digestive system.

### What causes bloating?

Common causes of bloating include:

- Swallowed gas - from fizzy drinks or swallowing air while you talk or eat. Feelings of trapped wind high in the tummy can feel like bloating and be very uncomfortable. Just having a good burp might help with gas in your stomach!
- Gas created within the gut – the natural microbes that live in our stomach help to keep us healthy, but they create gas as they process food within the bowel. Some foods are particular culprits – especially starchy vegetable foods like beans and other legumes.
- Eating too much at once! Very large meals, where you feel uncomfortably full, are harder for the body to digest.

Food intolerance, constipation, and conditions like Crohn's disease or irritable bowel syndrome can also cause bloating.

### What can I do about it?

It's easier to prevent bloating if you can pinpoint a cause. Try keeping a food diary to see if your symptoms happen with certain sorts of foods. If bloating accompanies constipation, just adding more fibre to your diet – especially fresh fruit and vegetables – can be enough to improve it.

Sticking to small portions and avoiding carb-heavy meals and fizzy drinks can help. Take your time when eating; ensure every mouthful is chewed well, and that you don't swallow air with your food.

When you're feeling bloated, it may take a little time for your digestive system to work. A little gentle exercise might help, or simply sitting on the toilet and allowing your stomach to relax a little. Staying fit and healthy with good food and regular exercise can reduce bloating, and is great for your all-round health.

See your GP if you have bloating that's hard to manage, or you have unexplained changes in your bowel habits.

## Chocolate Avocado Mousse - the healthier version

*(see if anyone realises it's made with avocado)*

### INGREDIENTS

2 avocados - flesh removed and chopped

200g good quality dark eating chocolate, chopped

1/3 cup milk (cow, almond, coconut - depending on your preference)

1-2 tablespoons liquid honey or pure maple syrup (optional)

### METHOD

1. Melt chocolate gently in a double boiler over simmering water. Don't let water or steam get into the chocolate, or it will seize. Another option is to melt it in a microwave on a low setting, in short bursts.
2. Place avocado and melted chocolate in a food processor and blend together until smooth. Pour in the honey or maple syrup (if using) and milk whilst blending until the mousse is very smooth and creamy.
3. Spoon into serving glasses and chill for 15 mins. Garnish with berries if desired.



# Getting children active! Encouraging learning through play

Children of all ages learn through play and activity. Getting outside for fun, play, and exploration is incredibly important for children's physical and mental health. Encourage your kids to get outside and discover their environment, and they'll also benefit from fresh air and exercise!

## Simple ideas for learning outdoors

Your pre-schooler can hand you pegs as you hang out the washing – it's a great opportunity to learn counting and colours!

Let older children build an obstacle course, it'll encourage problem-solving and creative thinking.

Make a 'treasure' hunt – like finding different types of leaves, flowers, or stones – older children can find different plants by name.

Every child's level of ability and independence is different. The littlest ones need supervision and guidance to ensure their safety. Babies love the freedom of being outside and investigating the different textures and sensations, and toddlers and pre-schoolers enjoy exploring the exciting world of bugs, plants, and dirt!

As children get older their world grows and they want to be more independent. Encourage this in stages, and through gentle guidance, while allowing them to explore safely. Having a degree of self-sufficiency is part-and-parcel with exploration, discovery and learning.

### How can I get my kids to go outside more?

Getting older children to play outdoors seems to be harder than ever - the pull of phones, TVs and tablets is very strong. It seems to take a lot of effort to drag some kids away from their screens, but if you have reluctant walkers there's still hope!

Why not try these ideas:

- Get out as a family: try creating a regular habit of taking a daily walk around the block or to your nearest park, or even just exploring your town. If the kids

are dragging their heels you could get competitive; points for the first person to spot a yellow car, fluffy dog, and so on.

- Meet up with friends: interacting with other people and children is an important part of learning and development – most of us haven't had enough of this over the last 18 months or so, making it even more important.
- Encourage self-sufficiency. After developing independence in their home environment, let them venture further, like taking a trip to the park or the local shop by themselves.
- Give children jobs: being given a useful task helps develop a sense of self-worth and an understanding of their important place in the family, and it's a great way to get them outside. Even small children can be given a sponge and bucket of water and asked to clean doors or gates, and older ones can make a genuine impact on your workload.

Simply fostering a family culture of interacting with the environment, and chatting, questioning and discussing everything, can help to encourage bright, curious minds.

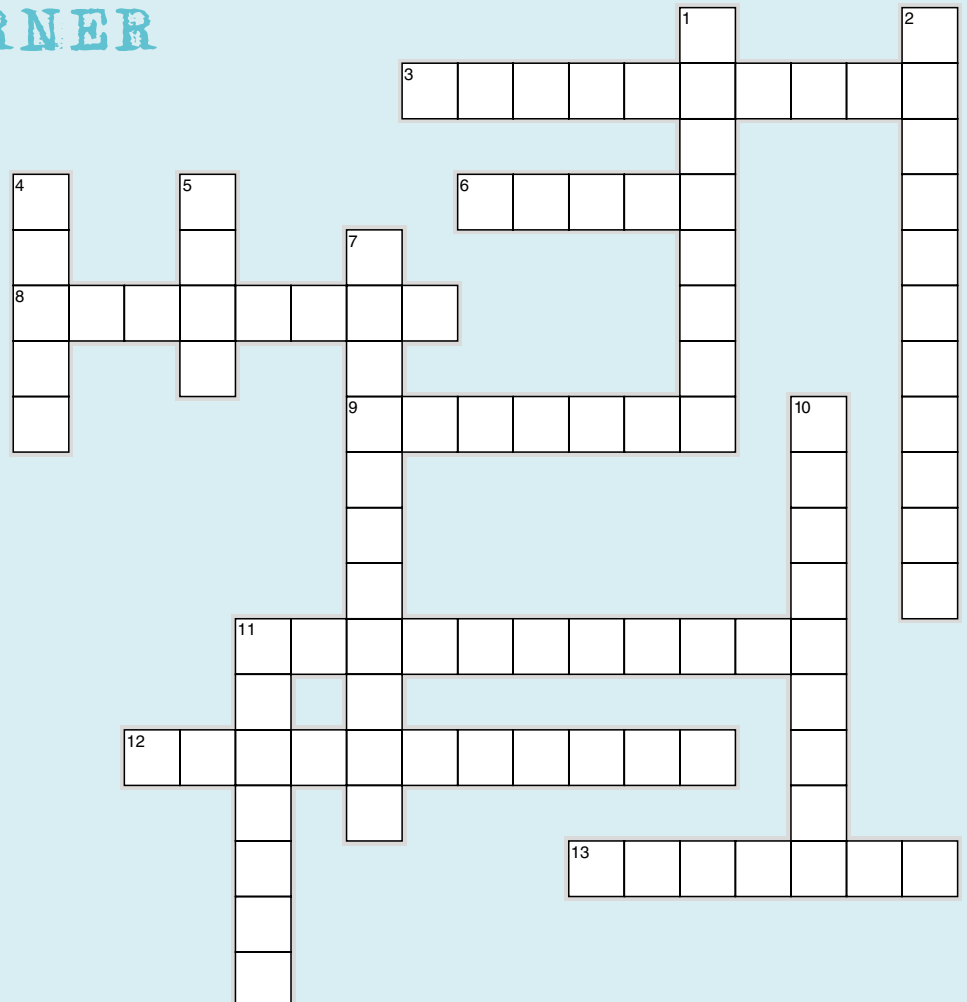
## CROSSWORD CORNER

### A CROSS

- The ability to recover quickly from setbacks
- A body temperature that is unusually high
- This can happen if gas is trapped in your digestive system
- Worried or afraid
- A serious reaction that causes breathing difficulties
- Any purely plant-based food will be free of .....
- Vegetables like peas and beans

### DOWN

- These live in our stomach and help to keep us healthy
- This happens when your body doesn't have enough fluids
- Avocados contain this nutrient which helps our digestion
- This is important for children's physical and mental health
- A healthier type of fat
- This is found in avocados, and helps our nerves, muscles and heart to function properly
- A green fruit which is high in essential fatty acids



# COVID-19 FAQs

We've been living in a COVID world for more than 20 months now and you're probably swamped, and may be confused about all the information out there about coronavirus. So, we've put together some basic facts to answer some of the most common questions you ask us.

## How does COVID spread?

COVID-19 is transmitted by droplets produced through coughing and sneezing. It can spread from close contact with an infected person; when it's breathed in, or enters your body through your eyes, mouth or nose. Infection can also occur from touching a contaminated surface.

## What are the symptoms?

Everyone will experience COVID-19 differently. The most common symptoms reported are: cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath.

Other symptoms can include runny or blocked nose, headache, muscle or joint pains, nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of sense of smell, altered sense of taste, loss of appetite, and fatigue. These usually occur with one or more of the common symptoms.

## How sick could I get?

Many factors affect your response to the virus. It's not possible to predict how sick you will get, but the risks should not be

underestimated, no matter what your age or current state of health is.

You may recover within 1-2 weeks from the virus, but if you have severe symptoms, it may take months to recover fully. The long-term effects of COVID are not known, but we do know it can damage your lungs, heart and brain. This can happen even in mild cases, and increases the risk of lasting health problems.

## Why get vaccinated?

Immunisation uses your body's natural immune response to build resistance to infectious diseases. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19, doesn't contain any viruses, and doesn't affect your DNA.

Being fully vaccinated reduces your risk of getting infected, plus if you do get COVID-19, it means you could have much fewer, milder symptoms and recover faster.

## When should I get a test?

If you feel unwell or are concerned about any symptoms you are experiencing, even mild ones, you should get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible and stay at home until you get the results.

If you're not sure whether or not to believe the information you've heard or read, your doctor can help you sort fact from fiction.

Please note that this is an evolving situation - this information is based on the evidence at the time of publishing. For the most up-to-date advice on the COVID-19 situation in Australia, ask your doctor or visit [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au).

## 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.

## 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:

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

DOWN  
 1. MICROBES 2. DEHYDRATION 4. FIBRE 5. PLAY  
 7. UNSATURATED 10. POTASSIUM 11. AVOCADO  
 ACROSS  
 3. RESILIENCE 6. FEVER 8. BLOATING 9. ANXIOUS  
 11. ANAPHYLAXIS 12. CHOLESTEROL 13. LEGUMES

**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.

Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.