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Dr Emily Frost

CLINIC STAFF

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

Reception: Janet, Virginia, Kirsten, Sue, Julie, Lisa, Stephanie, Zoe

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

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

FEBRUARY 2022



**VITAMIN
SUPPLEMENTS**



**EATING FISH
SAFELY**



**SLEEP & PAIN
CONNECTION**



**CARBO-
HYDRATES**

Breaking a drinking habit

Alcohol has long been recognised as a problem – a high alcohol intake is associated with liver disease, cardiovascular disease and other serious health problems. As well as the physical changes that drinking too much alcohol can make, there are the secondary effects – making poor life or health choices.

Research from the National University of Australia found that around twenty percent of people reported drinking more during and since lockdown. The pressures of loss of income and purpose, of being stuck in the house, or of simply having little else to do, may be the reasons more people than ever are drinking a little too much.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

The Australian guidelines for alcohol intake recommend that everyone – men and women alike – doesn't exceed four standard drinks on a single day, and no more than ten per week. Exactly how much a 'standard' drink is depends on the strength of what you're drinking – so look at the alcohol content and measure carefully. If you're making your own drinks, it's tempting to pour a little more generously than a bar or restaurant would.

BREAKING THE HABIT

Drinking too much alcohol – and 'too much' may be less than you think – can start for lots of reasons, and quickly become a problem. In 2020 the Drug and Alcohol Foundation launched a campaign called 'Break the Habit', for Australians who want to change their drinking habits. Here's a few of the simple and practical tips they suggest:

Ask yourself why

If you know why you're drinking – boredom, social interaction, or to de-stress – you might be able to manage the underlying cause.

Set goals

Whatever works for you. You might want to aim for a certain limit on your daily intake, or to have some alcohol-free days every week – or both. You can do one little thing at a time to help build healthier habits.

Switch it up

Sometimes it helps to swap one habit for an alternative, healthier activity. This might mean swapping one kind of drink for another, doing a hobby, a walk, or some relaxing reading.

Plan for urges

A practical approach is to accept that you may get urges to pick up those old habits, and plan a way to distract or remind yourself why you're doing this.

Get support

A friend or family member could help you stick to your goals, but if you're trying to overcome serious problem drinking, ask for professional advice. We can help, and there are a number of alcohol support services available for everybody.

Be kind to yourself

This is crucial. Sometimes we slip up, and sometimes we need to take it slow. Breaking a bad habit can be hard, and it's essential to ease up on the self-criticism – congratulate yourself on a job well done, and use challenges to learn and develop.

Visit www.littlehabit.com.au/about/break-the-habit-campaign for more information.



Ovarian Cancer Awareness

February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness month. Each year in Australia around 1,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and in most cases the cancer is already at an advanced stage and very difficult to treat.

Find out about ovarian cancer and its early symptoms.

Visit www.ovariancancer.net.au

Our newsletter is free! You can take a copy with you.

Is fish safe to eat?

Fish is an incredibly healthy part of a balanced diet, high in good fats, Omega 3 fatty acids, lean protein and a range of vitamins and minerals. However, some types of fish can contain high levels of mercury which could be harmful to young children and during pregnancy.

Mercury is naturally present in the environment, and fish get mercury through their diet which can accumulate in their tissues. When we eat fish, we also eat mercury that's built up within their bodies. Mercury in our food isn't significantly reduced by food preparation or cooking methods, so it's important to be aware of the potential mercury content of our food, and the risks that may pose.

Why is mercury in the diet a problem?

Most people can handle small amounts of mercury without any problems. During pregnancy, however, some mercury can pass through the placenta and affect the developing foetus. High levels of mercury in the diet can affect foetal brain development throughout pregnancy, but particularly in the third and fourth month.

Mercury intake should also be monitored for babies and young children up to six years

of age, as their brains are also growing and developing rapidly.

Eating fish – safely

Fish has many proven health benefits, so it's an important addition to everyone's diet. The healthiest approach during pregnancy, breastfeeding, and for those planning to become pregnant, is to eat 1-3 servings a week of fish containing low levels of mercury. However, it's important to be aware of serving sizes and the levels of mercury in different fish. It's best to totally avoid fish with high mercury content during pregnancy.

Some types of fish are more prone to accumulating mercury than others, so choosing fish known to have lower levels is a good way to ensure that your mercury intake is low. You can check the website from Food Standards Australia New Zealand for guidance - www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/chemicals/mercury.

If you do avoid fish entirely, take care to maintain a healthy intake of omega 3 fatty acids through seeds and nuts, supplements, and fortified foods. If you're in any doubt about what's safe for you to eat, ask us for advice.



How does sleep affect pain?

The relationship between pain and sleep may seem obvious; pain makes it harder to sleep and lack of sleep makes everything harder to cope with. However, there's some evidence that it's more complex than that; sleep problems can actually make pain worse. A vicious cycle indeed.

Pain affects sleep

Pain can make it very difficult to sleep, or even to get any kind of comfortable rest. It's that simple: it's hard to sleep when you're in pain.

Sleep affects pain

The way sleep affects pain is only partly understood, but early research has found that lack of sleep or poor sleep may actually increase pain sensitivity. On the positive side, many studies have also found that good quality sleep may improve chronic pain.

Some of the nerve and chemical pathways in the body that are linked to sleep are also

linked to pain. In particular, a hormone called melatonin is an important part of our patterns of wakefulness and sleep, and also plays a part in our experience of pain.

Tiredness in itself may make it harder to make the healthy lifestyle choices that help us manage pain. Lack of exercise, weight gain, and a poor diet can all contribute to chronic pain, and are classic side-effects of sleep deprivation.

When to get help

Chronic pain can be physically and emotionally draining, and very difficult to live with. Sleep problems, even without the additional impact of pain, can also have a serious effect on your life. If chronic pain, whether it's medically treated or managed with alternative therapies, is difficult to manage, we can help or refer you to a specialist pain team for complex management. Unexplained new constant or severe pain should always be assessed by a medical professional.

Peach and 'cream' ice blocks

These homemade ice blocks are not only tasty and easy to make, but healthy too! They're perfect for dessert or a cool treat after school.

Makes 8 100ml ice blocks



Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh chopped peeled peaches
- 2 Tbsp runny honey or maple syrup
- ¾ cup of unsweetened yoghurt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ cup milk (cow, almond, soy, coconut)

Instructions

- Place peaches and 1 tablespoon of honey or maple syrup into a blender or food processor and blend until puréed. Place one third of mixture into a small jug and the remainder into a large bowl.
- Place remaining ingredients into the blender and process until combined. Add to the peach mixture in the large bowl and swirl together gently.
- *To make the first layer, pour the peach mixture from the small jug evenly into 8 ice block moulds and freeze until semi-solid (about 30 minutes).
- Top up the moulds with the yoghurt and peach mixture and freeze until semi-solid, add ice block sticks and freeze for 8-10 hours.

*If you're short on time just skip the layering step and pour both mixtures in together.

Experiment with different fruit combinations including berries, mango, pineapple, plums, nectarines, cherries.

If you have ongoing sleep problems that haven't responded to simple home management, it's okay to ask us for advice or treatment. If sleeplessness is affecting your life or making it difficult to cope with pain or other difficulties, it's important to get help early.

Why carbohydrates are important – and which ones are best for us

Carbohydrates provide us with energy and other health benefits and are found in an array of foods.

There's often confusion over whether they're good or bad for us, but it's the quality that counts – some types of carbohydrate-rich foods are more nutritious than others.

Complex carbohydrates

Complex carbohydrates include wholegrains and unrefined starchy foods like potatoes and brown rice. Most vegetables contain complex carbohydrates and dietary fibre, making them good, healthy sources of energy and nutrients. Beans, legumes (like chickpeas and lentils); nuts and grains are also great sources. Foods with complex carbohydrates are very good for our all-round health.

Refined carbohydrates

Those products that have been heavily processed are known as refined carbs; they include products made from white flour and white rice. These are digested relatively quickly and usually lack the nutrient and fibre value of less processed carbs. Where possible, choosing the wholegrain alternative to white processed carbohydrates is a healthier option.

Simple carbohydrates

Simple sugars like the glucose and sucrose found in sweets, fizzy drinks, and in sugar, have very low nutrients and are just a high calorie way to give your body a sudden sugar rush without any long-term health benefits. The typical Western-style diet can

be very high in simple carbs; try to keep them to an absolute minimum in your diet.

Fruit also contains simple sugars – mostly fructose – but the high nutrient and fibre content means that these simple sugars provide a much healthier sweet treat.

Low carb diets – fad or fact?

Different low carbohydrate diets claiming fast weight loss have been around for years; promoting almost every other macronutrient instead of any carbohydrate. Unfortunately low carb diets are often high in fat, with high protein content but very little fibre or healthy slow-release energy sources. Any weight loss is unlikely to be maintained long term.

Why are 'slow release' foods good?

Slow release simply means foods that digest slowly, releasing energy steadily and making you feel full for longer, which can help with weight loss. The nutrients you get from natural complex carbohydrates provide slow-release energy.

Simple carbohydrates are digested and absorbed into your blood quickly, causing glucose (sugar) levels in your blood to rise or spike. Long term, high blood sugar levels can cause health complications.

In short, carbohydrates are generally considered an important part of your diet, and cutting them out can leave you at risk of missing out on essential nutrients. The right carbs – choosing whole foods rather than heavily refined processed and simple sugars – are an important part of a balanced diet.

How to eat for long-lasting energy

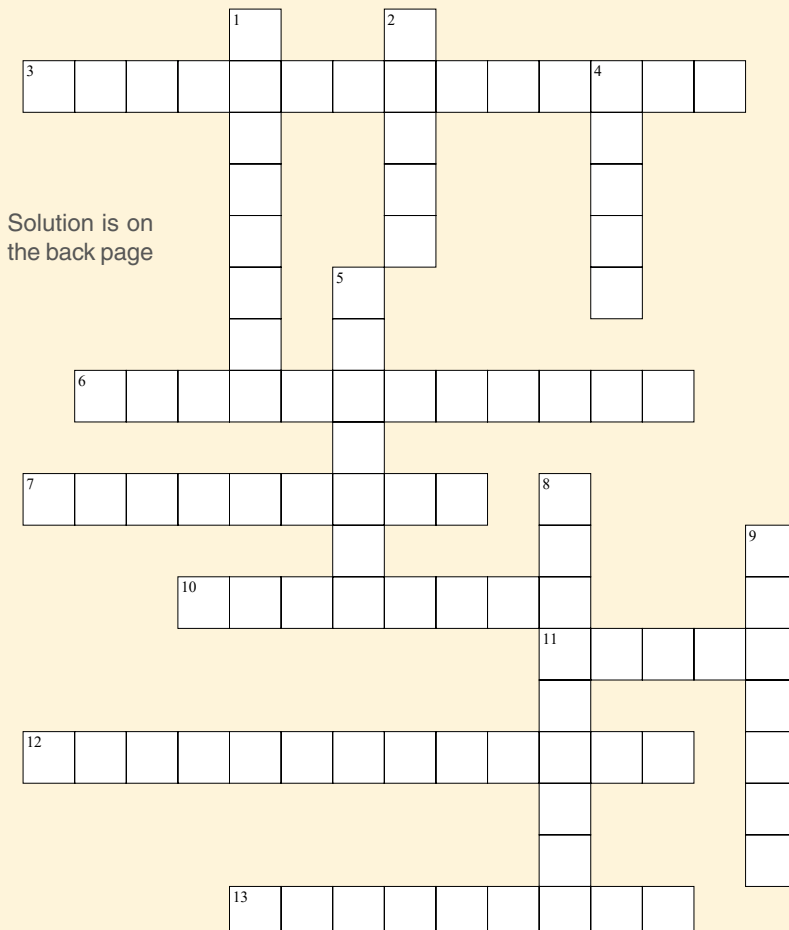
Include complex carbohydrate foods at every meal



Choose wholegrain and wholemeal breads and cereals



Eat at least 5 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit every day



Solution is on the back page

CROSSWORD

Answers can be found in this edition of Your Doctor.

ACROSS

3. Relating to the heart and blood vessels
6. Medication prescribed by a doctor or other qualified practitioner
7. A hormone that's important for our sleep patterns
10. Fruit contains this type of sugar
11. Poisonous
12. Complex provide us with slow-release energy
13. Compounds in food that keep us healthy and help us to grow

DOWN

1. Micronutrients that are essential for our health
2. Behaviour that is repeated so often that it becomes a
4. A high alcohol intake is associated with disease
5. Long-lasting
8. Specialist in the study of food and nutrition
9. Type of sugar found in soft drinks

Vitamin supplements – do we really need them?



Vitamins are chemical compounds that are essential for a healthy, functional body and mind. Without the right blend of vitamins in our bodies, we can become very unwell. However, we only need very small amounts of most of them. They're referred to as some of the 'micronutrients' – we only need a little bit, and sometimes too much can actually be harmful.

The kind of multivitamins and other vitamin supplements found on a typical supermarket or pharmacy shelf are very carefully blended; they always say exactly how much of each vitamin they contain, and how that relates to the average person's recommended daily intake. If you're going to take vitamins, it's important to follow the instructions – if it says to take one a day, taking more than that won't make you healthier, and could actually be toxic.

Some people may need to take extra care to ensure they're getting all the right nutrients; people following restrictive diets may need to consider supplements. Those who have underlying health conditions that affect their absorption of nutrients may need to have supplements carefully prescribed and monitored by their doctor.

If you have pre-existing health conditions or take any other medications, check with us whether a particular supplement is right for you, as some vitamin and mineral blends may interact with some medications.

Most people don't need to take supplements as our nutritional requirements can usually be met by following a healthy, balanced and varied diet. Eating food is much better than taking supplements as it contains many other nutrients that work together with vitamin and minerals for our health.

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. VITAMINS 2. HABIT 4. LIVER 5. CHRONIC
 8. DIETITIAN 9. SUCROSE

ACROSS
 3. CARDIOVASCULAR 6. PRESCRIPTION 7. MELATONIN 10. FRUCTOSE
 11. TOXIC 12. CARBOHYDRATES 13. NUTRIENTS

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.

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 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.

Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.