



FEBRUARY - MARCH 2024 EDITION

FREE TO TAKE HOME!



Healthy food choices



Melanomas



Atrial Fibrillation



Cataracts

PRACTICE DOCTORS

Dr Robert Palmer

MBChB, DRANZCOG Advanced FACRRM

Special Interests: Women's Health, Obstetrics, Family Practice, Sports medicine, Minor Skin Surgery, Menopause Management

Dr Herman Kruger

PRACTICE MANAGER

Jodie

PRACTICE NURSES

Caroline RN, Donna EEN, Jess EEN & Ash RN

RECEPTION STAFF

Deb, Debbie & Emily

SURGERY HOURS

Monday to Thursday
8.00am - 5.00pm (Closed for lunch 1pm-2pm)

Phones are operational from 9.00am-12.00pm and 2pm-4.00pm on these days

Friday - Sunday.....Closed

AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY

Outside of surgery hours medical Care is available by phoning Inverell District Hospital on **02 67219500** where nursing staff will attend to your call.

For all medical emergencies telephone **000** and ask for an ambulance.

BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

We offer a discount to Pensioners who bring a current entitlement card.

We are a private billing practice. Information about our fees and services are available at reception. Payment at the time of consultation is required.

Payment can be made by cash, credit card or EFTPOS. DVA patients are fully Bulk Billed.

HOTDOC AVAILABLE

We are now using Hotdoc for bookings. Download the app now.

SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Telephoning Your Doctor. Although most problems are best dealt with in consultation, a doctor will always be available during normal surgery hours for emergency advice. Our staff are experienced in helping you decide whether the matter requires an appointment, a return phone call from the practice, or urgent advice.

St Elmo Medical Practice has an email available. Patients are able to make contact via this method of communication. We aim to provide prompt attention to your requests.

Patient Details. Please advise us of any changes to your mobile or phone number and your address. We must have an emergency contact registered for each patient.

Management of Your Personal Health Information. 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. Patients can obtain access to their own personal Health Record via eHealth registration.

Suggestions & Complaints. If you are unhappy with any aspect of the care you receive from this practice, we are keen to know about it. Feel free to talk to the doctor or manager about any problems you have with your service. We believe that problems are best dealt with, within the practice. However, if you feel there is a problem you wish to take up outside, you may prefer to contact the Health Complaints Commission. Locked Bag 18, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012. Free call: 1800 043 159

Patient Privacy. This practice protects your personal health information to ensure it is only available to authorised staff members for the intended purposes and to comply with the Privacy Act. To obtain a copy of our Privacy Statement or your medical records, please ask.

Reminder system. Because our practice is committed to preventive care, we may send you an occasional reminder regarding health services appropriate to your care. If you wish to opt out of this, please let us know.

Test Results. Results are reviewed by the doctors and acted on in a timely manner, with your health in mind. We will contact you if necessary.

APPOINTMENTS

Consultation is by appointment. Urgent cases are seen on the day.

Home Visits. If you require a home visit for special reasons, please request this first thing in the morning.

Booking a long appointment is important for more complex problems – insurance medical, health review, counselling, a second opinion, etc. This may involve a longer wait. Please bring all relevant information.

Please notify us if you are unable to attend an appointment, well in advance.

If more than one person from your family wishes to see the doctor at the same time, please ensure a separate appointment is made for each family member.

Time is valuable to all of us. If you fail to attend appointments without adequate explanation, we cannot guarantee your future booked appointments.

OTHER SERVICES

- * On-Site Coagulation Testing
- * Telehealth conferencing with specialists
- * Travel Vaccination/Q fever vaccination
- * Preventative Health Program
- * Exercise Physiologist / Physiotherapist
- * Laverty Pathology Collection Centre
- * Hot Doc Reminder Service
- * Dr Anthony Leslie - Vascular Surgeon

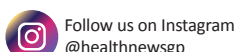
- * Cryotherapy
- * Pelvic Floor Chair
- * Yellow Fever Vaccination
- * Minor Surgery
- * Family Planning
- * Obstetrics
- * ECG/Spirometry

YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT:

ENJOY THIS FREE NEWSLETTER

Please remember that decisions about medical care should be made in consultation with your health care provider so discuss with your doctor before acting on any of the information.

www.healthnews.net.au





Healthy food choices for school-aged children

One in four Australian children are overweight or obese. There are two main drivers of this. Firstly, is the tendency for children to snack on high-calorie foods and drinks. Second is the replacement of physical activity with time on the computer or other electronic devices. We can't turn back time, but it is not all bad news. There is much you can do as a parent or guardian to help a child who is **battling with weight issues**.

Back to school means thinking about lunchboxes. It is fine to have a sweet treat in the lunchbox some days, but there are many healthy snack options too. Sticks of carrot or celery can be a snack. Fruit in season is a great snack. Even with snack bars, you can select those with natural ingredients, whole grains and less sugar by reading the labels. Read the labels on cracker biscuits, too. Some are high in fats and sugar, whilst others (like rice crackers) are not. A mix of seeds, nuts (watch for allergies), and dried fruit is another simple snack, as are cheese sticks or popcorn. Substitute sweet drinks with water. Eliminating liquid calories can cut down calorie intake without leaving a child hungry. Have soft drinks only on special occasions or no more than once a week. Rather than fruit juice, give your child a piece of fruit and a glass of water. This provides them with more fibre and fewer calories.



Avoid Listeria in pregnancy

Listeria is an infection caused by a common bacterium. It occurs in the soil and water. Thus, plants and marine life can be infected with the bacteria, as well as animals that eat plants. There are around 65 cases in Australia each year, and 10% of these are in pregnant women who are at greatest risk in the third trimester.

Listeriosis increases the risk of stillbirth, low birth weight and premature labour. Symptoms can be mild or severe, with fever, headaches, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

Whilst uncommon, it is important to take steps to avoid potential exposure to Listeria. Fortunately, this is not difficult and involves not eating "high-risk" foods whilst pregnant. Foods to avoid are processed deli poultry meats (e.g. sliced chicken), soft cheeses (brie camembert), raw seafood (e.g. oysters) pre-made sushi, unpasteurised juices and soft serve ice creams.

You can continue to enjoy plenty of foods whilst pregnant, including hard cheeses, smoked seafood, hard frozen ice cream or gelato, freshly prepared sushi, pasteurised juices and hot deli meats (cooked at over 75°C).

Maintaining a balanced diet is important when pregnant, and you may need certain supplements. Talk to your GP about any concerns you have and also about both diet and the need (if any) for supplements.

Avoiding Listeria is not difficult, and there is no need to stress over every mouthful of food you eat.



More info »



Melanomas

Australia continues to have the highest rates of melanoma in the world. That does not mean every spot on the skin is cancerous or potentially cancerous, though. Melanomas are the least common form of skin cancer but the most life-threatening. The Melanoma Institute estimated 15,229 cases in 2019 and some 1726 deaths.

There are specific characteristics which point to a spot on the skin being a melanoma, but none are absolute. An asymmetrical lesion with an uneven border and multiple colours would be a textbook melanoma. Another pointer changes over a short period, like a few weeks.

On the flip side, a spot of any colour that has been present for five years without changing at all will be relatively harmless.

With digital technology, it is possible for moles to be photographed and comparisons made after a few months to see if there is a change. When there

is enough suspicion, the mole may be biopsied and analysed in the lab for an exact diagnosis. Once again, only some spots will need this.

An annual skin check with your doctor is a good idea, as well as checking for any new or changing spots of concern. New does not always equal cancer though, which is a good thing.

The best way to avoid getting skin cancer is to take care in the sun. The message of slip, slop, slap is not new but remains valid. Over summer, there is no reason not to enjoy an outdoor lifestyle, but remember to look after your skin.



Atrial Fibrillation

Our hearts beat over 100,000 times per day, and most do this in a regular fashion. The pacemaker sends an electric signal for the heart muscles to contract, pumping blood out to the body.

Arrhythmias are conditions where the heart beats irregularly. In atrial fibrillation (AF), the top two heart chambers can beat very fast, and the muscles contract in an uncoordinated way. This distorts the electrical message to the rest of the heart. In turn, the contractions of the heart become less efficient.

Typical symptoms include palpitations, shortness of breath, fluttering of the heart, dizziness and sometimes fainting. The heart beats in a fast and irregular pattern. Around 2% of people overall and 10% of those over 75 may be affected. Risk factors include high blood pressure, established heart disease, trauma to the chest and use of certain drugs, including caffeine and alcohol.

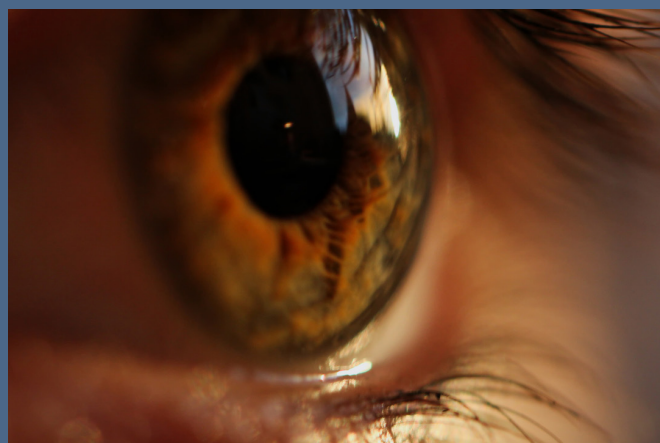
Your doctor will take a history and perform a physical examination. Diagnosis can be made with plain ECG testing, but you may be referred for a Holter monitor (a 24-hour ECG) as AF can be intermittent.

Treatment may include medication to slow the heart rate and make the heart beat regularly. You may be prescribed blood thinners too as AF increases the risk of stroke. Cardioversion (electric shock therapy) can jolt the heart out of AF and back to normal. In severe cases, surgery (ablation) is an option.

Lifestyle changes like quitting smoking, reducing alcohol and caffeine, attaining a healthy weight and regular exercise all help to prevent and manage AF.



More info



Cataracts

This is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss worldwide. Cataracts occur when the lens of the eye goes cloudy or opaque. Around 10% of Australians have cataracts, increasing from 4% of 50-59-year-olds to over 60% of 90-year-olds.

Advancing age is the most typical reason, but trauma, radiation exposure, some drugs (like steroids), and metabolic conditions (like diabetes) can also lead to cataracts. Women are more affected than men.

Cataracts are classified by their level of maturity (progression), cause, or appearance. The symptom is a reduction in visual acuity (ability). The onset is gradual, and progression is slow but constant in most instances. If only one eye is affected, it may not be noticed for quite a while as the other eye "compensates".

A cataract is easily diagnosed on examination, and no tests are needed. When looking in the eye with an ophthalmoscope, your doctor will be able to see a cataract. It is recommended that people over 40 have a regular eye check with an ophthalmologist. Your GP can refer you.

Treatment for cataracts is surgical removal and insertion of an intra-ocular lens- done when symptoms warrant it and prescription glasses are no longer sufficient. It may be many years from diagnosis to the time of surgery.

The procedure is generally done under local anaesthetic, and recovery is quick. You will need the eye padded for a short period of time and will be prescribed drops to use post-operatively.



St Elmo

MEDICAL PRACTICE

• MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide the highest standard of patient care whilst incorporating a holistic approach toward diagnosis and management of illness.

We are committed to promoting health, wellbeing and disease prevention to all patients. We do not discriminate in the provision of excellent care and aim to treat all patients with dignity and respect.

• MINOR SURGERY

At St Elmo Medical Practice we offer minor surgery to remove lesions, warts, moles and skin tags. Please book a double appointment with the doctor and the nurse if you require minor surgery.

• ON-SITE COAGULATION TESTING

We offer on-site coagulation testing for those people on Warfarin treatment. A quick finger prick is all it takes and our doctor will advise you of your result and new instructions for dosing. Tell reception staff when booking that you require an INR.

• TELEHEALTH CONFERENCING WITH SPECIALISTS

Our practice uses teleconferencing for patients to consult with specialists (via Skype on our computer) from all over Australia. This saves patients time, travel and money. Your telehealth consult will be organised by reception staff when your GP refers you. The GP will be present at the start of your telehealth consultation.

• SMS TEXT REMINDERS

If you have an appointment you will receive an SMS text the day before your appointment to remind you. To make this possible we will need to have your mobile phone number and consent to send SMS reminders. Please call at reception to update your phone details and give consent.

• DO YOU HAVE AMBULANCE COVER

If you don't have a Health Care Card or Pension Card you need Ambulance cover. Ambulance transport is expensive so if you don't have cover you are responsible for all costs incurred for transfer via ambulance.



MUSELI BARS

Natural nut butters (peanut butter or almond butter) are best for this, and they are different to commercial spreads because they have no added sugar, salt, preservatives, etc. It's 100% nuts, which means better flavour and a runnier consistency. Be sure to mix well to combine before using and even microwave slightly to obtain the right consistency, add honey or maple syrup for natural sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

- Almonds – whole, roasted, unsalted and roughly chopped.
- Sultanas, raisins, cranberries or any other dried fruit of choice.
- Pepitas (they give it some colour and bite).
- Sesame seeds (optional).
- Desiccated coconut (unsweetened). Flakes will also work, but because they are larger, they won't disperse as well throughout and should be roughly chopped.

- Cinnamon – just a pinch makes all the difference.
- Salt – Just a pinch.

DIRECTIONS

1. Put the peanut butter and honey in a saucepan over low heat and mix to combine - stirring almost constantly, until thickened. Scrape the base of the saucepan, getting in around the edges.
2. Immediately pour the mixture across the surface of the oats. Use the wooden spoon to mix to combine until you can no longer see dry oats (If it gets too hard to stir, microwave for 20 seconds).
3. Place a sheet of paper over a square pan). Scrape the mixture in, then press it into the pan using a combination of a wooden spatula to spread it out, then use your hands to press it in.
4. Press firmly, but keep some air in the mixture to avoid going too chewy.
5. Refrigerate for 2 -3 hours to set, then cut into bars depending on your size preference.

WORD SEARCH

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LISTERIA
 VISION
 DIGITAL
 CATARACT
 CHICKEN
 PLANTS
 CAUSE
 EYE
 FOOD
 TRAUMA
 DOCTOR
 BLOOD
 HOLTER
 LESION
 HEART
 MELANOMA
 ATRIAL
 SCHOOL
 LABOUR
 CALORIE