health news

Brook MEDICAL CENTRE

64 Brook Street Muswellbrook NSW 2333
www.brookmedical.com.au | Tel: 6543 1222

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2026 EDITION

FREE TO TAKE HOME!

Antibiotics

National Carers Week

Movember

Get Your Skin Checked

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

Follow us on Instagram
@healthnewsgp

PRACTICE DOCTORS

Dr Peter Brown - GP
MBBS, DRCOG, DRACOG

Dr Siv Rajeev
MBBS, FACRRM

Dr Raj Swamy
MBBS, FRACGP

Dr Philip Watson - GP
BScMed, MBBS, DRANZCOG, FRACGP, FARGP
Anaesthetics & Minor Procedures

Dr Sanjay Verma - GP (Proceduralist)
MBBS, FRACGP, FARGP (Surgery)
Endoscopies, Hernia Repair, Carpal Tunnel, Vasectomy & Appendectomy

Dr Clifton Washaya - Special General Surgeon
MB, ChB, FCS(ECSA) FCS (SA) FRACS (Gen Surg), MMed (Surg) FAMLC
General Surgery, Trauma, GI Endoscopy, Colonoscopy, Gastroscopy, Skin Cancer, Breast Surgery, Phlebology (Vein Surgery) Laparoscopic surgery , (gall Bladder, Hernias, bowel) Melanoma, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Vasectomy, Hydroceles, testicular/epididymal cysts, Robotic Surgery

Dr Nitin Trasi
MBBS, DGO, MD (O&G), AMC Cert, Adv. DRANZCOG
Women's Health, Antenatal & Postnatal Care,Sexual Health, Family Planning, Conception & Infertility

Dr Lojene Raveenthiran
MBBS,AMC

Dr Raviraj Kugapiriyan - GP

Dr Kavita Kasana - GP

REGISTRARS

Dr Daniel Garces

Dr Farhana Huq

Dr Gifty Abraham

Dr Emenike Muonanu

Dr Leila Mirbagher Ajorpaz

Dr Mainul Zubair

Dr Thomas Dalton

Dr Samia Younus

Dr Vincent Trang

Dr Fauzia Tabassum

PRACTICE MANAGER

Kristen Seymour

SURGERY HOURS

Monday-Friday (Appt) 8.30am–5.30pm

Saturday (No Appt) 9.00am–11.30am

AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY

Phone **6543 1222** to speak with a Doctor - often attending at the Hospital (phone **6542 2000**).

In case of a medical emergency, dial **000** and ask for an ambulance.

SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Muswellbrook Skin Cancer Clinic. Perhaps it's time to come in for a skin cancer check. All of our doctors can do this for you. If specialist attention is needed to any spots that look suspicious, we have several doctors & surgeons who can take the appropriate action.

OTHER SERVICES OFFERED

- Obstetrics & Ante-natal Care
- Spirometry
- Sports Medicine Hearing tests
- Casualty & Emergency
- Anaesthetics
- Pathology Laboratory
- Home Visits when necessary
- X-ray & CT Scanning
- Diabetics Care
- Ultrasound
- Surgery
- Cardiograph
- Skin Cancer Check
- Flu Clinic Seasonal
- Medicals – Sporting, Pre-Employment, Superannuation & Diving
- Lady Drs available – Women's Health, Contraception & Menopause
- Free immunisation clinics: 11am – 12pm Tues, Wed, Thurs or at any time by appointment with your GP.

Muswellbrook Diagnostic Imaging. Brook Medical Centre has state of the art imaging services at the rear of the building. Ultrasound and X-ray also available on referral from your doctor. Appointments may be made on 6543 3427.

Blood tests with pathology. Laverty Pathology is at the rear of the building if your doctor has ordered pathology tests for you.

BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

The account is to be settled at the time of consultation. Payments can be made by cash, cheque, Credit Card or EFTPOS. **Item 23- $90.** A Fee of **$5** will occur if the account is not paid on the day.

If you cannot attend your appointment please advise reception as soon as possible, otherwise a fee for non attendance may be charged.

HAVING YOUR OWN DOCTOR

When you phone for an appointment please ALWAYS ask for your regular doctor or backup doctor before accepting an appointment with another doctor.

It will be easier to get an appointment with your preferred doctor for regular checkups or prescriptions if you make your appointments well in advance.

FLU SEASON

As flu season continues, we encourage patients to book an appointment at our Flu Clinic. If you are presenting to the surgery with cold or flu symptoms, please wear a mask and have a negative COVID-19 test before attending. Thank you for helping us keep our patients and staff safe.

Antibiotics – When Do We Really Need Them?

Each year, World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (18–24 November) highlights one of the growing challenges facing healthcare worldwide: antimicrobial resistance. It is a timely reminder that while antibiotics can be lifesaving, they need to be used carefully and only when necessary.

Antibiotics are medicines used to treat certain bacterial infections. They work by killing bacteria or stopping them from multiplying. Importantly, antibiotics do not work against viruses, including those responsible for most colds, influenza and COVID-19.

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change over time and become resistant to medicines that previously killed them. This can make common infections more difficult to treat and may result in longer illnesses, more complicated medical care and fewer effective treatment options.

Everyone can help protect these important medicines. Don't pressure your doctor for antibiotics when they aren't recommended. If antibiotics are prescribed, take them exactly as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. Never take antibiotics prescribed for another person or save leftover antibiotics for another illness.

Preventing infections can also reduce our reliance on antibiotics. Regular handwashing, good hygiene, staying up to date with recommended vaccinations and avoiding the spread of illness all play a role.

This World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week, consider how you use antibiotics. These medicines are a valuable healthcare resource, and using them responsibly today can help ensure they continue to work when we genuinely need them in the future.

National Carers Week – Caring for Those Who Care

National Carers Week, held from 11–17 October 2026, is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the more than 3 million Australians who provide unpaid care and support to a family member or friend.

Carers come from all walks of life and may support someone living with a disability, chronic or mental health condition, terminal illness, alcohol or other drug issue, or an older person who needs assistance. Many carers balance these responsibilities with work, study, family commitments and their own health.

The 2026 theme, "Care for a carer: Making carers visible," encourages Australians to recognise the important contribution carers make and to consider how we can better support them.

Caring for another person can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be physically and emotionally demanding. Carers may experience stress, fatigue, social isolation and difficulty finding time to look after their own wellbeing.

National Carers Week is a reminder that carers need care too. Something as simple as checking in, offering practical help, providing a listening ear or giving a carer time for themselves can make a meaningful difference.

Carers needing additional assistance can access free information, counselling, peer support and other services through the Australian Government's Carer Gateway.

This October, take a moment to recognise the carers in your family, workplace and community—and ask: who cares for the carer?

Movember

Every November, moustaches appear on faces across Australia as part of Movember, a global movement dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of men.

Movember began in Melbourne in 2003 with a simple idea: grow a moustache and use it to start conversations about men's health. Since then, it has developed into a worldwide movement supporting more than 1,300 men's health projects.

The campaign focuses on three major areas: mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. These are important issues because many men are reluctant to discuss health concerns or seek help when something doesn't feel right.

Movember encourages men to take a more proactive approach to their health. This can include having regular health checks, knowing their family medical history, staying physically active and speaking to a doctor about unusual symptoms or concerns.

Mental health is equally important. Checking in with a mate, asking how someone is really going and being prepared to listen can make a meaningful difference. Movember encourages stronger social connections and conversations that go beyond everyday banter.

You don't need to grow a moustache to participate. You can raise funds, get active, organise an event or simply start a conversation.

This November, use Movember as a reminder: looking after your health isn't a weakness—it's one of the strongest things you can do.

The Social Media Trend Affecting Teens

A growing social media trend known as "looksmaxxing" is raising concerns about body image and self-esteem among teenagers, particularly boys and young men. The term refers to trying to "maximise" physical attractiveness through changes to appearance, fitness and lifestyle.

At its mildest, looksmaxxing can involve positive habits such as improving personal hygiene, skincare, hairstyles, clothing, posture and physical fitness. However, the trend can become problematic when teenagers begin obsessively comparing themselves with unrealistic beauty standards promoted online.

Some looksmaxxing content focuses heavily on facial symmetry, jawlines, body fat and muscularity. Teens may also encounter AI-powered tools that rate their faces and suggest perceived "flaws". More extreme forms have promoted restrictive dieting, excessive exercise, unregulated supplements, steroids and potentially dangerous practices intended to alter facial structure.

Australian teenagers are also encountering this content. The eSafety Commissioner warns that appearance-focused social media can create pressure to believe that personal value depends on how someone looks.

Parents should be alert to sudden changes in eating or exercise habits, excessive mirror checking, constant comparison with others, withdrawal from social activities or increasing distress about appearance.

Rather than dismissing looksmaxxing as simply another internet fad, parents can encourage open conversations about what teenagers are seeing online. Healthy grooming and exercise can build confidence, but appearance should never determine a young person's self-worth.

Helping teenagers value their personality, abilities, friendships and achievements can provide an important counterbalance to the pressure to look "perfect".

Get Your Skin Checked Before Summer

As summer approaches, Australians naturally start thinking about beaches, holidays and spending more time outdoors. It is also an ideal time to take a closer look at your skin.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun being the major cause. Most skin cancers can be successfully treated when detected early, making awareness of changes to your skin particularly important.

Before summer, get to know what is normal for your skin. Check your entire body, including areas that are easy to overlook such as your scalp, back, soles of the feet, between your toes and under your nails.

Look for new spots or changes to existing moles or freckles, particularly changes in size, shape or colour. Spots that become raised, bleed, itch, crust or simply look different from your other spots should also be investigated. If you notice anything unusual, make an appointment with your GP rather than waiting to see if it disappears.

People at higher risk of skin cancer should discuss with their doctor how frequently they need professional skin examinations.

With National Skin Cancer Action Week held in November, it's the perfect time to make skin health a priority before summer arrives so ask your GP about a skin check now!

FRESH FISH TACOS WITH MANGO & AVOCADO SALSA

Serves 4 | Prep: 20 minutes | Cook: 10 minutes

Fresh, colourful and packed with flavour, these fish tacos are perfect for a warm spring evening. The combination of grilled fish, creamy avocado and sweet mango makes for a light meal the whole family can enjoy.

For the fish

- 600g firm white fish fillets, such as barramundi, snapper or flathead
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- Juice of 1 lime
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 8 small soft tortillas

For the salsa

- 1 ripe mango, diced
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 cup finely shredded red cabbage
- ½ red capsicum, diced
- ¼ red onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup fresh coriander, roughly chopped
- Juice of 1 lime

To serve

- ½ cup natural Greek yoghurt
- Lime wedges
- Fresh coriander

Method

- Combine the olive oil, paprika, cumin and lime juice. Coat the fish in the mixture and season with black pepper.
- Heat a barbecue or frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook the fish for approximately 3–4 minutes on each side, depending on thickness, until cooked through and easily flaked with a fork.
- Meanwhile, combine the mango, avocado, cabbage, capsicum, onion, coriander and lime juice in a bowl. Toss gently.
- Warm the tortillas, then add the mango salsa and pieces of grilled fish. Top with a spoonful of Greek yoghurt, fresh coriander and a squeeze of lime.

WORD SEARCH

S	P	R	E	A	D	O	E	L	O	M	L	J	E	S
L	T	E	S	R	N	E	I	R	A	S	N	A	I	J
O	L	B	L	N	S	S	E	N	T	I	F	W	D	E
A	C	M	O	K	S	S	E	E	S	S	C	L	O	T
W	H	E	S	I	T	X	R	E	U	U	V	I	S	C
I	R	V	N	E	N	L	C	W	P	D	E	N	H	F
N	D	O	C	T	O	R	O	I	P	S	V	E	N	N
E	T	M	L	L	P	K	D	S	O	E	A	S	V	P
L	S	E	A	P	T	R	A	F	R	L	S	I	C	C
E	R	V	O	N	T	E	N	P	T	S	O	C	S	H
L	E	I	N	I	E	T	E	H	E	E	H	R	C	V
R	R	T	E	K	R	E	L	A	L	K	U	E	O	I
L	A	C	I	S	Y	H	P	R	C	Y	N	X	L	S
T	C	A	B	S	E	L	K	C	E	R	F	E	D	S
S	F	T	N	A	T	O	M	E	N	T	A	L	S	P

CARERS
HEALTH
SUPPORT
PHYSICAL
FITNESS
JAWLINES
EXERCISE
MOVEMBER
MENTAL
ACTIVE
COLDS
SPREAD
SKIN
FRECKLES
DOCTOR

Brook MEDICAL CENTRE

SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Referrals. Doctors in this practice are competent at handling common health problems. When necessary, they can use opinions from Specialists. You can discuss this openly with your doctor, including potential out of pocket expenses.

Patient Feedback. We welcome your comments or suggestions. We have a suggestion box placed around the surgery for any feedback. Please feel free to talk to your GP or the Practice Manager regarding any issues. If you prefer, you can contact the Health Care Complaints Commission on: 1800 043 159.

Despite our best intentions, we sometimes run late! This is because someone has needed unexpected urgent attention. Thank you for your consideration.

Communication. A doctor is available during normal surgery hours for emergency advice. Our staff are experienced in deciding the appropriate response to any phone request.

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.

Bring your Medicare Card. For all services it is important to bring your Medicare card with you when attending the doctor.

Interpreter Service Available. Please enquire at Reception

Repeat Prescriptions. If you require a repeat prescription, you can either book an appointment with your regular GP or submit a prescription request through the HotDoc app. Requests made via HotDoc will be assessed and completed by one of our doctors and incur a fee of $30.00.