



## DECEMBER 2022 - JANUARY 2023 EDITION

**FREE TO TAKE HOME!**



Keep safe while having fun



Exercise reduces Dementia



Tips for travellers



Plantar Fasciitis – heel pain

### ● PRACTICE DOCTORS

**Dr Mark Rikard-Bell** - GP  
 MBBS, DipCOG(SA), FRACGP, FACRRM,  
 Dip Skin Cancer College  
 Diving Medicals & Skin Clinics

**Dr Peter Brown** - GP  
 MBBS, DRACOG, DRACOG

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

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

**Dr Siv Rajeev**  
 MBBS, FACRRM

**Dr Raj Swamy**  
 MBBS, FRACGP

**Dr Clifton Washaya** - Surgeon  
 MBChB, FCS(Coseca) FCS(SA), FRACS

**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 Andy Woods**  
 MBBS, MRCOG, FRANZCOG

**Dr Lojene Raveenthiran**  
 MBBS, AMC

**Dr Raviraj Kugapiriyar** Registrar

**Dr Kavita Kasana** - GP

**Dr Aparna Sharma** Registrar

**Dr Daniel Garces** Registrar

**Dr Farhana Huq** - GP

### ● 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
- Medicals – Sporting, Pre-Employment, Superannuation & Diving
- Lady Drs available – Women's Health, Contraception & Menopause
- Free immunisation clinics: 11am – 12md Tues, Wed, Thurs & Fri or at any time by appointment with your GP.
- X-ray & CT Scanning
- Diabetics Care
- Ultrasound
- Surgery
- Cardiograph
- Skin Cancer Check
- Flu Clinic Seasonal

**Diabetes Educator: Annabel Thurlow** comes with 25 years' experience in diabetes and is a Diabetes Nurse Practitioner, Credentialed Diabetes Educator and Certified Insulin Pump Trainer. She sees those with Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes, women with gestational diabetes and people at risk of diabetes (pre-diabetes). GP referral is required; appointments Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

**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.** Laverety 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- \$87.** 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.

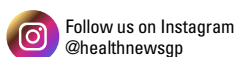
It will be easier to get an appointment with your preferred doctor for regular checkups or prescriptions if you make your appointments well in advance.

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](http://www.healthnews.net.au)



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▷ Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.

# Keep your child safe while having fun this summer

Summer holidays are fun for children but can be a bit stressful for parents. It is a bit easier to get them off screens when it is warm outside. Evidence increasingly shows that helicopter parenting can prevent children from gaining independence, yet equally, the days of "be home by dark" are long gone. So, what are the key issues to ensure that your child has fun and remains safe?

Children are at risk of dehydration, so ensure they drink plenty of water, especially outdoors. Whilst slip, slop, slap should go without saying, it is important to remember sunscreen may only last a few hours and needs to be reapplied. Playgrounds today are far safer than in the past, but falls can still occur. Age-appropriate supervision and choice of equipment can minimise this. Psychologists point out that allowing children to take some risks enables them to build resilience and learn their limitations.

Knowing how to swim is essential in Australia, as is knowing basic water safety. Swimming and fun in the water is a great activity for children (and adults). Make sure your child swims between the flags at the beach, and always watch them around water. Fences and gates do not replace vigilance.

Use insect repellent, especially at dusk. Insect bites and stings are usually annoying rather than serious but if you have any concerns- see your GP.



[More info](#) >>

## Exercise reduces Dementia

Good news from the United States shows the percentage of adults over 65 with dementia is decreasing each decade.



Similar reductions have been recorded in the UK and Europe. The reason for the decline has yet to be discovered and is thought to reflect many things. This includes better education (keeping the brain active from an early age), better nutrition and better living conditions.

Another factor, which helps, is regular exercise. Evidence shows that thinking and memory capability increases with activity at all ages. Trials in older people found that doing 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week led to improved mental functioning, which persisted for over 12 months if the person stopped.

Resistance training improves executive functions (higher thinking and abstraction),

whilst aerobic exercise helps verbal memory. So, it is good to mix resistance and aerobic exercise.

In addition to exercise, mental stimulation (crosswords puzzles reading) and social activities also reduce dementia risk, as does eating a brain health diet, such as the Mediterranean diet.

A Finnish study of 1260 people found a 40% improvement over two years in cognition scores for those who combined regular exercise, a good diet, mental stimulation and social engagement.

This is impressive. All these measures are simple and inexpensive. You can do much to reduce your chances of dementia – start today!

## Consuming alcohol safely in the festive season

**During the festive season, many of us can overdo it with regard to food and alcohol. There are simple things you can do to avoid this.**

There is no need to accept every invitation to drinks events. Everyone knows it is a busy time, so you can politely decline. Alternate your alcoholic drink with water. This means you can always have a drink in your hand but will have half the number of alcoholic beverages. Taking this one step further, there is no problem with drinking water or mineral water all night. An increasing number of people choose not to drink alcohol at all. If you feel the need for an excuse, you can claim medical reasons but do not feel any need to justify not wanting to drink.

Have a big glass of water before leaving for

the event so you won't arrive thirsty and eager for the first offering.

If you are consuming alcohol, it is important to eat. This slows the absorption of the alcohol and helps fill you up. It is okay to appear, have a drink or two over a couple of hours and leave. There is no need to be the first to arrive or be the last to leave functions.

Christmas day meals should be enjoyable, but too many drinks can fuel family tension. If you are hosting, be aware of the responsible serving of liquor and if you are a guest, remember to enjoy festive cheer in moderation. It is not that hard to do.





# Tips for travellers

Overseas travel is back on the agenda this Christmas season, and many will seek to take to the skies to visit loved ones or simply for a holiday.

Travel vaccinations are an important consideration before travelling, but most health issues people confront when travelling cannot be vaccinated against. Insurance claim statistics suggest we get the same health issues when travelling at home. This means minor problems like chest or sinus infections, viruses, gastro, cuts and bruises and more serious ones like heart attack and broken bones from trauma.

Talk with your doctor before travelling. Your medical circumstances may make specific itineraries problematic. Ensure you take an adequate supply of any regular medications you have been prescribed. A letter from your doctor listing them can be helpful at airport security. You don't need a suitcase full of first aid supplies, but a kit of basics can be beneficial. What you may need depends on where you are going. A simple pain killer, anti-diarrhoeal and antihistamine in your kit can cover many issues. Band-aids and antiseptics may save a trip to a medical facility.

In many countries, you should only drink bottled water. Beware salads and fruits that might be washed in local water. Eat mainly cooked vegetables and fruits that are peeled (e.g., bananas).

Be aware of local customs and laws. Ask if there are areas to avoid. If you are driving, make sure you have insurance. This may be separate to travel insurance, which is also a must, and less expensive than you might think.

Holidays should be fun, and with some simple precautions, they can remain so.



## Plantar Fasciitis – heel pain

A common cause of heel pain, plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of the tissue (plantar fascia) which runs along the sole of the foot connecting the heel to the toes creating the foot arch. Risk factors include age, being overweight, sports that stress the heel (e.g., running) and spending long periods on the feet.

The main symptom is pain under the heel. It can be dull or sharp. It is often worse first up in the morning, after prolonged sitting or after intense activity. Diagnosis is based mainly on history and examination. X-rays generally do not show anything. Some changes in the fascia may be seen on ultrasound or MRI.

Treatment is a mix of improving symptoms and preventing further aggravation. Analgesics or anti-inflammatory medications may help in the short term but are not a cure. Avoid activities that aggravate the situation. Wear shoes with good arch support and cushioning. Purpose-made insoles may be helpful, as can be stretching, as advised by a podiatrist or physiotherapist.

In more severe cases, cortisone injections may be recommended. Surgical treatment is viewed as a last resort.

Treatment is a medium-term proposition, so do not expect immediate results or get frustrated. Perseverance with treatment is important and, in most cases, will improve with time.



More info »

From all the team at Health News we wish you a very Merry Christmas and safe and prosperous New Year!



● **SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES**

**Repeat prescriptions.** The issue of repeat prescriptions generally requires a visit to the doctor. In rare circumstances, the doctor may write one without a consultation. (A \$15.00 script fee is payable when picking up your script at the surgery). It is helpful if we have at least 24 hours notice to deal with any request.

**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. 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



## ALL-NATURAL CHOC PEANUT BANANA ICE CREAM

This all-natural ice cream is a great substitute if you want a healthier version of ice cream to feed the children or even dinner guests.

### Ingredients

- 6 Bananas – peeled, chopped and Frozen
- ¼ Cup of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/3 Cup of natural smooth (or crunchy) peanut butter
- 2 Tbs of cacao powder

### Method

- Process all the ingredients together in a food processor or thermomix, making sure to scrape the sides down regularly.
- Once the mixture is smooth and resembles a soft serve ice cream, transfer to a chilled metal cake tin or loaf pan.
- Leave for approximately 2 hours and serve whilst still relatively soft.

