



*Our Country Practice*

## SWIFT STREET MEDICAL CENTRE

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(9am to 5pm - Monday to Friday)



### *Don't be Too Alarmed about that Sudden Bald Spot*



When a local patch of hair falls out of the scalp without warning, it usually means *Alopecia Areata*.

Someone with healthy hair may suddenly discover an area of complete baldness. This can be alarming and often prompts an urgent visit to the doctor. The cause is not fully understood. It may occur as a response to some stress in the body such as a serious illness or infection. It is thought to be related to the immune system. Alopecia Areata is most common in young adults. In most cases the hair soon grows back. There is no effective treatment except patience and trying not to worry about it.

Sometimes a patch of hair may be lost due to a fungal infection and it may look like Alopecia Areata. A simple test can diagnose this type of infection, which is easily treated

**No matter how good or bad your life is, wake up each morning and  
be thankful you still have one**



# *When Pap Smears are Abnormal*

Most adult women are now well aware of the importance of having regular pap smears (usually every 2 years) to allow Detection and cure of the early stages of cancer of the cervix (neck of womb). If a pap smear is not entirely normal this doesn't automatically mean that cancer is present.

Many things, such as inflammation and minor irritations, can cause the cells of the cervix to look abnormal, often on a temporary basis. Sometimes all that needs to be done is to repeat the smear test sooner than would otherwise be necessary.

When the cells obtained from the cervix show abnormalities that look suspicious of the pre-cancer state, a test known as a colposcopy is usually recommended. This procedure allows doctors to look closely at a woman's cervix through a special microscopic device – a colposcope. Special stains can be applied to the cervix to outline suspicious areas and biopsies taken for further examination. Sometimes abnormal cells are destroyed by laser, freezing or burning with an electric current (diathermy).

Having a colposcopy is a little like having a pap smear. A speculum is inserted into the vagina and the colposcope used to look directly at the cervix. The procedure is usually only slightly uncomfortable, especially if the patient is able to relax.

After a colposcopy it is usually wise to wear a pad for a few days as there is normally some discharge and perhaps a little bleeding if a biopsy was taken. It is best to avoid heavy physical activity for 24 hours and avoid swimming, spa baths and sexual intercourse for three days.



**Women's  
Health  
Matters●**



# Schizophrenia .. affects many

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness which affects about one person in a hundred. Although some people will only experience one or two brief episodes during their life, for others it is a lifelong problem. The illness usually first appears in the teens and early adult years. It may develop suddenly, or over a few days or weeks, or may take many months or longer to become obvious.

Schizophrenia affects people in a number of different ways but some features are present in almost all cases. These features include: **Delusions** – (false belief). These often take the form of persecution-believing others are plotting against, or trying to harm, the affected person. There may be delusions of grandeur – thinking oneself as having special powers or importance. These delusions, especially the persecution beliefs may cause the affected person to withdraw and literally hide from other people. **Hallucinations** – (false sensations). Usually these take the form of hearing voices. Sometimes the affected person may believe they have seen, tasted, smelled or felt things that don't exist. **Confused thinking**. This can result in speech which is difficult to follow, suddenly changing the subject for no obvious reason and a generally “jumbled” way of communicating. Other common features of Schizophrenia include a ‘flat’, non-emotional, withdrawn personality. Often there is a loss of drive and enthusiasm for every day tasks. This may be mistaken for laziness, but is part of the illness.

Many people think of people with Schizophrenia as having ‘dual’ or ‘split’ personalities. This is not correct and has probably resulted from the way unaffected people interpret the disordered thoughts and delusions of those with the illness. No one knows what causes Schizophrenia. It is more common in those whose parents have it and it is believed that there may be an inherited

tendency towards certain changes in brain chemistry which occur in those affected. For many years there was no treatment for Schizophrenia. This meant that many people with the illness were kept in mental hospitals for most of their lives. Most people with Schizophrenia now live in the general community and lead relatively normal lives.



# *Banoffee Pie*

Very easy: Prep time -10 mins; Cook time - 10 mins

## BASE

100g butter, melted

250g digestive biscuits, crushed

## CARAMEL

100g butter

100g dark brown soft sugar

397g can Carnation Condensed Milk

## TOPPING

4 small bananas

300ml carton whipping cream, lightly whipped  
grated chocolate

## ***DIRECTIONS:***

Grease a 20cm loose-bottomed cake tin. Tip the biscuit crumbs into a bowl. Add the butter and mix in. Spoon the crumbs into the base and about halfway up the sides of the tin to make a pie shell. Chill for 10 minutes.

***Melt the butter and sugar into a non-stick saucepan over a low heat, stirring all the time until the sugar has dissolved. Add the condensed milk and bring to a rapid boil for about a minute, stirring all the time for a thick golden caramel. Spread the caramel over the base, cool and then chill for about 1 hour, until firm or until ready to serve.***

Carefully lift the pie from the tin and place on a serving plate. Slice the bananas; fold half of them into the softly whipped cream and spoon over the base. Decorate with the remaining bananas and finish with the grated chocolate.

***Make sure that you really boil the filling for at least 1 minute to be sure it sets to a perfect squidgy caramel.***

