

Our Country Practice



SWIFT STREET MEDICAL CENTRE



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Well .. Who would have thought .. Here we are, half-way through another year already.

*And what better time to float a gentle reminder to all, in relation to **Health Checks**.*

Why regular health checks are important

It is a good idea to visit a doctor regularly, even if you feel healthy. The purpose of these visits is to:



- check for current or emerging medical problems
- assess your risk of future medical issues
- prompt you to maintain a healthy lifestyle
- update vaccinations.



Health checks are usually incorporated into routine medical care. Your doctor will often perform these checks when you are visiting for another condition, such as a cold or another problem. Your doctor will then tell you how often you need to have a health check.

Having a health check is also a time to examine your lifestyle to see what improvements can be made.

Regular health checks can help to identify early warning signs of disease or illness. Heart disease, diabetes and some cancers can often be picked up in their early stages, when treatment may be more successful.

When you have a check, your doctor will talk to you about your medical history, your family's history of disease and your lifestyle. Your diet, weight, how much you exercise, and whether or not you smoke and drink alcohol or take illegal drugs will also be discussed.

If you have high-risk factors, such as a family history of a condition, it may be more likely that you will develop a particular disease. Regular checks may help your doctor pick up early warning signs.

If you have a high risk of a particular health condition, your doctor may recommend more frequent health checks at an earlier age.

These are some common tests, but your doctor may recommend others according to your situation.

Health check-ups for heart disease may include: Blood Pressure; Blood Tests; ECG; Obesity.

The Health Check for Diabetes would include a fasting blood sugar level test; Bowel Screening

is available for the detection of Bowel Cancer; Advancing age is a significant risk factor for osteoporosis in both men and women and a bone density test helps to determine the health of your bones. There are specific health checks for women, specific health checks for men and

specific Health Checks for the elderly, just to name a few.

So please, if you have any concerns at all, don't hesitate to ask your DOCTOR for advice.



Fevers, Infection and Anti-Biotics



What is a Fever?

Fever is a rise in body temperature above the normal temperature, usually caused by infection. Normal body temperature is around 37°C (give or take a degree, depending on individual differences). There may also be minor fluctuations over the course of the day and night. Contrary to popular belief, the severity of fever isn't necessarily related to the seriousness of the illness – for example, life-threatening meningitis might only cause a small temperature rise.

The fever triggered by a viral or bacterial infection is caused by chemicals produced by the immune system, which reset the body's thermostat to a higher level. Most cases of mild fever resolve by themselves within a couple of days. A mild fever (up to 39°C) can actually help the immune system to get rid of an infection. In children between the ages of six months and six years, fever can trigger convulsions. A fever of 42.4°C or higher, particularly in the elderly, can permanently damage the brain.

Self-treatment suggestions for fever

Suggestions to treat fever include:

Take paracetamol or ibuprofen in appropriate doses to help bring your temperature down.

Drink plenty of fluids, particularly water.

Avoid alcohol, tea and coffee as these drinks can cause slight dehydration.

Sponge exposed skin with tepid water. To boost the cooling effect of evaporation, you could try standing in front of a fan.

Avoid taking cold baths or showers. Skin reacts to the cold by constricting its blood vessels, which will trap body heat. The cold may also cause shivering, which can generate more heat.

Make sure you have plenty of rest, including bed rest.

When to see your doctor for fever symptoms

You should always consult with your doctor in the following cases:

You are still feverish after three days, despite home treatment.

Your temperature is over 40°C.

You are shivering and shaking involuntarily, or your teeth are chattering.

You are hot, but not sweating.

You seem to be getting sicker as time goes by.

You have unusual symptoms such as hallucinations, vomiting, neck stiffness, skin rash, rapid heart rate, chills or muscle spasms.

You feel confused and drowsy.

You have a severe headache that doesn't respond to painkillers.

You have recently travelled overseas.

Infections are generally caused by bacteria or viruses. These can be spread in blood, body fluids, contaminated food and airborne droplets or by animals and insects. Some infections can be prevented by immunisation.

Antibiotic medications are used to kill bacteria, which can cause illness and disease. They have made a major contribution to human health. Many diseases that once killed people can now be treated effectively with antibiotics. However, some bacteria have become resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria are bacteria that are not controlled or killed by antibiotics. They are able to survive and even multiply in the presence of an antibiotic. Most infection-causing bacteria can become resistant to at least some antibiotics. Bacteria that are resistant to many antibiotics are known as multi-resistant organisms.

Antibiotic resistance can cause serious disease and is an important public health problem. It can be prevented by minimising unnecessary prescribing and overprescribing of antibiotics, the correct use of prescribed antibiotics, and good hygiene and infection control.

Good hygiene is important all year round to protect ourselves, and others, from illness. During winter, influenza, colds and gastroenteritis are more common and easily spread among people. It's therefore important to observe good hygiene practices like washing your hands regularly and thoroughly to prevent the spread of viruses.



MUSHROOMS

Not Only are they Good for You, but they Taste Great Too!



Mushrooms are a good source of riboflavin (vitamin B2) and niacin (vitamin B3). They contain dietary fibre, which is important in keeping your bowel healthy. Mushrooms also contain minerals such as potassium (which helps to regulate blood pressure), phosphorus, zinc and selenium. Energy – 100 g of mushrooms supplies about 100 kJ (depending on the variety). Mushrooms are versatile and can be eaten raw or cooked. There are many varieties available in Australia. They are a good source of vitamins B2 and B3 and minerals (potassium phosphorus, zinc and selenium). Mushrooms are usually at their peak between March and April, although they are available year round.

What is a mushroom?

The earthy, delicate flavours of mushrooms add another dimension to dishes. The ancient Egyptians considered mushrooms to be a luxury food, only to be eaten by the pharaohs. The Roman emperor Julius Caesar made rules about who was permitted to eat mushrooms. Records show that mushrooms were also part of the ancient Greek diet in 300 BC. The French started cultivating mushrooms in caves and tunnels in the late 15th century. Eventually, modern cultivation methods were developed and mushrooms are now available year round in Australia.

Varieties

In Australia, mushrooms are classified as cultivated or wild. Mushrooms available in the supermarket and fresh food markets are usually cultivated. These include button, cups and flat, oyster, shiitake, enoki, shimeji, Portabello and Swiss brown mushrooms. These mushrooms vary in size, shape and colour. Wood ear mushrooms are popular in Asian cuisines and can be found in specialty fresh food markets.

How are they grown and harvested?

Mushrooms do not require sunlight to grow. They reproduce by releasing spores from the gills (the delicate rib structures under the cap) that are carried by the wind to other areas. Commercially, mushrooms are grown in artificially controlled, hygienic environments, with careful monitoring of temperature, humidity and other conditions required for growing. Spawn, the seeds of mushrooms, is added to a soil-like substance made of a blended, nutrient-rich mixture of wheat straw, poultry waste or material from stables (called the substrate). Peat moss placed over the surface helps the mushrooms grow. Mushrooms appear about 12 days later and are harvested by hand after about three weeks. Over a six-week period, three batches of mushroom crops (flushes) are produced from each batch of substrate. The substrate is then used as potting mix or garden mulch.

How to store and keep mushrooms

Select mushrooms that are dry and firm to the touch. Avoid slimy, wilted, discoloured or damaged mushrooms. Store mushrooms in a paper bag in the crisper section of your fridge. Avoid keeping mushrooms in plastic bags (or containers that collect moisture) as they will 'sweat' and deteriorate. Use your mushrooms within three or four days of buying them.

Interesting Tips and facts

The largest living organism is a mushroom – a honey mushroom (*Armillaria ostoyae*) in the USA covers nearly nine square kilometres of land. *Mushrooms lack chlorophyll (used by plants to turn sunlight into nutrients) – they can grow in the dark and obtain nutrients by metabolising decaying organic material (such as plants).*

Truffles are a type of wild mushroom that grow underground – specially trained pigs and dogs are used to find them.

The Octopus Stinkhorn, a mushroom found in Australia, resembles an octopus with long 'arms' and smells like decaying flesh when it matures.

ALERT!!!

Some mushrooms can be toxic when eaten. Care should be taken if you are collecting your own mushrooms. You should identify all mushrooms before using them. Do not eat the mushrooms if you have any doubts about whether they are safe to use. It is recommended that you only eat mushrooms you have purchased from the supermarket, greengrocer or other reputable source.

**If you are concerned, contact the
NSW Poisons Information Centre for advice (Tel 13 11 26).**





Healthy Homemade Muesli Bars

Ingredients

- 1 Banana - mashed
- 2 Eggs - lightly whisked
- 80g Butter - melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Honey
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups Rolled Oats
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Shredded Coconut
- 1 cup Trail Mix
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Dates - chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Choc Chips (optional)
- 1 tsp Cinnamon

Topping

White Chocolate - melted

Mix all wet ingredients together. Add the dry ingredients to the bowl and mix well. Press this mixture into a greased and lined rectangular baking tray. Bake at 160d for about 30 - 40 minutes.

Allow the slice to cool in the tray before removing it. (This will allow you to cut it evenly without it crumbling.)

Melt the white chocolate and drizzle across the top of the slice before slicing.

Slice into bars and store in an airtight container lined with foil in the fridge.

This will last for about 5 days
(.. If you're lucky)

Can also be frozen for a later date ☺

(.. If there's anything left to freeze, that is! ☺)