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SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

CONSULTATIONS can be arranged by
phoning. PH: 5655 1355

Monday to Friday 8.30am–6.00pm

Saturday 8.30am–12.00noon

The practice prefers to see patients by
appointment in order to minimise people's
waiting time.

Home visits can be arranged when
necessary. If you need a home visit,
please contact the surgery as soon as
possible after 8.30am.

For After hours emergency medical
attention – at night, weekends or public
holidays please call 03 56542753 where
a nurse will triage your needs and contact
the doctor on call.



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**YOUR DOCTOR
MARCH 2020**

Epilepsy awareness

Epilepsy is a common condition that can develop at any age, regardless of gender or ethnic group. Epilepsy affects the brain, and means that a person has shown a tendency to have recurring seizures.

What is a seizure?

A seizure happens when there is a sudden, intense burst of electrical activity in the brain. This causes a disruption to the normal electrical activity, causing our thoughts, feelings or movements to become confused or uncontrolled.

Seizures can range from momentary and barely perceptible, to serious problems needing immediate medical attention.

Possible causes include brain damage – caused from a stroke, head injury or infection, or brain tumours, abnormalities in brain development, and genetic factors. However, in over half of cases the cause is unknown. You can experience a one-off seizure without any obvious cause, which doesn't necessarily mean you have epilepsy.

Types of epileptic seizures

There are several types of epileptic seizures, and sometimes a person may experience a combination of more than one kind.

A 'primary generalised seizure' involves the whole brain and therefore the whole body. Some of the most common types and their characteristics are:

- Absence seizures can make you lose awareness, or be unresponsive for a short time.
- Tonic seizures can make your muscles stiffen up and then relax, which can result in a fall if you're standing.
- Myoclonic seizures show the characteristic 'fitting' movements with jerking and twitching.
- Tonic-clonic seizures have two phases: the 'tonic' phase causes stiffness and loss of consciousness, then jerking movements during the 'clonic' phase.

A 'focal' seizure starts in one part of the brain and affects the part of the body controlled by that area. The symptoms can range from involuntary stiffening or movement of the limbs, to unpleasant smell or taste, making unusual sounds, and general confusion.

Seizures can have different after-effects depending on the type. They may make you feel unwell, drowsy, tired and confused afterwards. Sometimes there is no memory of the seizure, or the events just before or after it.

A first seizure should always have some medical assessment, but people who know they are epileptic may be able to manage their seizures without needing medical intervention every time. People with epilepsy usually take medications to reduce their risk of having seizures, and may wear a medical alert bracelet to let others know of their condition. Some people with epilepsy may have some regular feelings or symptoms that let them know that they will have a seizure – known as an 'aura'.

What you can do to help

It can be frightening to see someone having a seizure, especially if you don't know how to help. Learning the appropriate response and having a little knowledge of first aid for epileptic seizures can be invaluable.

March 2020 is Epilepsy Awareness Month, and is held to help improve general awareness and understanding of this disorder, and is the perfect time to learn more about this condition.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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All about olive oil

Walking down the oil aisle at your supermarket can be confusing due to the vast range of different choices – from animal fats to seed and coconut oils. However, olive oil is gaining in popularity due to its health benefits.

Olive oil is made from the fruit of the olive tree, a plant native to the Mediterranean and historically important to the diet of the region. The ‘Mediterranean diet’ is renowned for its health properties, which are attributed to a range of factors. These include a relatively low consumption of meat and dairy products, high intake of fresh fruit and vegetables, and the fat content of the diet coming largely from healthier plant-based sources, such as olive oil.

Olive oil, especially extra virgin olive oil, is considered one of the healthiest oils in our diet; it contains:

- plant phenols – known to disrupt the development of cancers
- anti-inflammatories – can help to reduce the problems caused by rheumatoid and other types of arthritis, as well as other inflammatory conditions

- monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats – rich in oleic acid and omega-3 and omega-6; healthy fats associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers
- anti-oxidants – these compounds reduce cell damage and the risk of some cancers

Getting the best quality olive oil is important, as the less refined and processed the oil is, the more of its nutritional value it retains. The description of the oil – extra virgin, virgin, and light – refers to the process of extraction. ‘Extra virgin’ means it’s from the first pressing of the fruit, and has to meet high standards for production and content. It’s typically darker in colour and has the most flavour, and the most nutritional content of all olive oils. ‘Virgin’ is from the next pressing, and still yields good, but less, amounts of plant phenols and other healthy compounds. Then there are refined and ‘light’ olive oils, which can be extracted by chemical methods and typically have few of the health-giving compounds associated with extra virgin. It’s still a good oil for cooking and much healthier than using dairy or animal fats.

The evidence for the healthy properties of olive oil is compelling, and it’s a delicious addition to your diet, as well as benefitting your hair, skin and nails. Olive oil is still high in calories and should be counted as dietary fat, but replacing other fats in your diet with olive oil can add lots of goodness.



WORD SEARCH

- ANTIOXIDANTS
- ARTHRITIS
- AURA
- BACTERIA
- BOOSTER
- CELL
- CHANGE
- CONTAGIOUS
- DIET
- EPILEPSY
- FAT
- GENETIC
- GOALS
- HABIT
- HEALTH
- IMMUNISATION
- MEDITERRANEAN
- MINDFULNESS
- MONOUNSATURATED
- MOTIVATION
- OIL
- OLIVE
- SEIZURE
- STROKE
- TETANUS
- VACCINATION
- VERRUCCAS
- VIRUS
- WARTS

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

Worrying about warts

Warts can come in all shapes and sizes; they don't usually cause any major problems, but can be uncomfortable and unsightly. They're very common, particularly in childhood. They're contagious and easily passed on by direct contact, or indirectly, like at a public swimming pool.

Warts are lumps and bumps on the skin caused by a virus – one of a group known as the human papilloma virus (HPV). Warts are caused by many different sorts of virus under the umbrella term of HPV; so developing immunity to one type doesn't protect against other types.

TYPES OF WARTS

There are five major types of warts; each type has a distinct appearance and appears on a different part of the body.

Common warts, as the name suggests, are the typical lumps you see on the hands, elbows, and knees. They are very common, very contagious, and not usually problematic.

Plantar warts, also called verrucas, are found on the soles of the feet and tend to be flat, or to grow inwards. These usually go away after a while, but can be painful or affect walking.

Flat warts are often the same colours of the skin and flat-topped, so are not very noticeable. These usually grow on the face, thighs, or arms, and feel like small, calloused areas.

Filiform warts are small stalk-like warts, like small skin tags. This type is often considered the most unsightly as they're commonly found on the face or neck.

Periungual warts grow under and around the toenails and fingernails. They start small and grow slowly into clusters, which can be painful and affect nail growth.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THEM?

Most warts don't usually need specific medical attention and will go away in around 18 months without treatment; however medical advice should be sought if you:

- have an illness that affects your immune system, such as HIV
- find they become very painful, or are in a particularly sensitive place
- experience bleeding warts (without cause) or they look infected, or change colour
- have genital warts

Even if you don't experience any of the above symptoms, but your warts are worrying you, seeing your doctor will help.



Kissing a frog will not give you warts!



Spaghetti with zucchini, tomato and olive oil

Try this colourful Mediterranean dish for a quick and healthy dinner.

Ingredients

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 125g dried spaghetti | 125g cherry tomatoes, halved |
| 2 medium zucchini spiralised, or sliced into thin strips | Pinch dried red chilli flakes |
| 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil | 1 cup basil leaves, torn into pieces |
| 2 cloves crushed garlic | ¾ cup grated parmesan cheese |

Directions

1. Cook spaghetti in plenty of salted boiling water, according to packet instructions.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil over medium heat in a wide non-stick frying pan, add zucchini and cook for 3 minutes or until tender.
3. Add garlic, chilli and cherry tomatoes to pan and cook until tomatoes begin to collapse.
4. Drain spaghetti and transfer into the pan, cook for a minute, add half the basil and stir to combine.
5. Serve in bowls with the remaining basil and parmesan.

Tetanus – could you be at risk?

Have you ever been concerned that your wound could result in tetanus? The disease is uncommon now, but if your immunisation is not up to date, you could be at risk.

Tetanus is an infection caused by bacteria that exist naturally in soil, dust and manure, and can be contracted through a wound that breaks the skin and allows the bacteria in. The wound could be as minor as a prick from a thorn, to scrapes, piercings, cuts and animal bites. They're more likely to become infected if they're deep wounds.

What does Tetanus do?

Infection with tetanus causes serious illness, which can take days or even weeks to emerge. The bacteria produce a toxin that attacks your nervous system. The symptoms include fever with high temperatures, sweating, rapid breathing and heartbeat, diarrhoea, and other generalised illness. The more specific symptoms of tetanus are painful muscle spasms and stiffening. These can occur anywhere in the body but tend to follow a pattern starting with the muscles of the cheek and jaw, then neck, throat, chest and so on. Tetanus is sometimes referred to as 'lockjaw', as the spasms cause the jaw to close, or 'lock'. Breathing can be affected in severe cases.

What can we do about Tetanus?

If you're concerned about a deep or dirty wound, seek medical advice, especially if your immunisations are not current; tetanus vaccination is part of the recommended routine immunisation schedule in most countries. Boosters of the tetanus vaccine may be recommended for those who are not fully immunised.



TIPS FOR STAYING HEALTHY DURING THE FLU SEASON

The flu also known as influenza is caused by a highly contagious virus that is spread by coughs and sneezes. Each year it affects thousands of Victorians. The flu isn't like the common cold, it often develops quickly and last for a few weeks. There are varying strains of the influenza virus and it is a global issue. The most common in the news at the moment is the Novel Coronavirus that is affecting China and many other countries currently. The influenza virus usually results in needing time off from work or school and staying away from family and friends. Unfortunately for vulnerable people, like children, the elderly and people with a weakened immune system, the flu can have serious and devastating outcomes. As we are heading into flu season again it is important to go over some of the key points to help avoid getting the flu this year.

The first step in helping to prevent the flu this season is with **vaccination**. Vaccinations will be available in April/May 2020. Please contact your local GP to discuss your options.

Secondly there are 3 important steps that you can take to stop the spread of the influenza virus.

- 1) Cover your mouth – if you feel a sneeze or cough coming on and you don't have a tissue handy, it is important to cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Why? Your hands touch many surfaces in your day to day activities but your elbow does not therefore reducing the spread of those germs. If you have a tissue it is important to cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing but don't hang on to it, dispose of it in the bin immediately.

- 2) Hand Hygiene – washing your hands regularly with soap and water is the most important routine to include in your day.

The flu virus can live on hard surfaces for hours and are easily spread when people then touch these surfaces.

- 3) Stay home – staying at home while you are unwell is the best way to avoid spreading the flu. Avoid going to work or school or visiting busy public places and vulnerable people, such as the elderly or the young. Avoid contact with others as much as possible while the infection is contagious. For adults this is usually around 3–5 days from when the first symptoms appear, and up to 7 days in younger children.

Finally if you do need to see a doctor it is important to mention to the reception that you think you may have the symptoms of the flu, you may be asked on arrival to wear a mask and to be seated in a quiet room. If you have been traveling overseas you may be asked to remain in your car until the doctor is ready to see you.

(www.betterhealthchannel.vic.gov.au)

Making healthy habits easier

Habits can be good – being in the habit of turning lights off when you leave a room, or looking both ways before you cross the road are useful behaviours learned and repeated until they are second nature. However, habits can also be unpleasant or unhealthy, like picking your nose or biting your nails.

A behaviour is considered a 'habit' when it is repeated compulsively and without intention. Understanding why we have bad habits can be the first step on the road to breaking them. Even identifying any behaviour in ourselves as a bad habit means that we feel some sort of compulsion to change, and that's the first step.

Habits can be hard to break, and some people find it helpful to 'swap' a bad habit for a healthier one – instead of smoking, try becoming a compulsive carrot-eater. Some people find it easier to make a gradual change, and some find it helpful to set goals. These are easier to reach if they are measurable, achievable and specific, for example, "I'm going to replace ice-cream with yoghurt", rather than "I won't eat sweets again". Changing habits is a personal process, and it can take time, motivation and perseverance.

The hardest habits to break are those that we associate with some kind of feeling of reward

– without even getting into the chemical buzz of cigarettes, alcohol or drug use, anything that gives you some form of satisfaction can be hard to stop. That's where those healthy swaps can come in – whatever your poison, there's something better you can do to feel good. If a compulsive eater can try stopping for a few minutes of contemplation before they allow themselves to snack, that's the start of breaking a habit.

"Bad habits are like a comfortable bed, easy to get into, but hard to get out of"
-Anon.

Simple mindfulness techniques – giving yourself the time to be aware of and understand your compulsions, to stop and think before you do it, can help a lot. Reminding yourself of your motivation, and rewarding yourself in healthy ways for achieving goals can help. Punishing yourself for not achieving your goals straight away is not being helpful or kind. Sometimes trying to achieve 'perfection' means that you don't feel good enough, and give up on the whole thing. It may take time, it may take some false starts, but if you want to break a habit to improve your health and your life, it can be done.

Whether it's a New Year's resolution, or inspiration has come from elsewhere, changing an ingrained behaviour can be incredibly difficult, but keeping your mind on the goal will help you make that change, one step at a time.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified health care professional in all matters pertaining to your physical, emotional and mental health.

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