



**Cardiovascular Risk**



**Myasthenia Gravis**



**Exercise in Childhood**



**Preventing Falls**

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)

● **PRACTICE DOCTORS**

- Dr Marc Herington
- Dr Kirsten Scott
- Dr Damien Polioudakis
- Dr Bree Latta
- Dr Leah Watts
- Dr Christopher Kearney
- Dr Jane Karmouche
- Dr Gillian Porter
- Dr Timothy Johnston
- Dr Tina Ling
- Dr Charles Aitken

● **REGISTERED PRACTICE NURSE**

- Lorianna Marchese
- **ON SITE PROFESSIONALS**
- Loretta Egan .....Podiatrist
- Jennifer Donnelly ..... Dietitian

● **OTHER SERVICES**

- Docklands Cosmetic Clinic
- For all appointments phone:  
0419 22 44 91

**Dorevitch Pathology**

Monday – Friday..... 8am – 4.30pm  
(No appointment required)

● **SURGERY HOURS**

**Monday – Friday**  
8am – 6pm  
(by appointment)

**Saturday**  
9am – 12 midday  
(by appointment)

● **AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY**

If you require medical attention outside of normal surgery hours, Victoria Harbour Medical Centre provides out-of-hours care via the National Home Doctor Service. They can be contacted on:

**13 SICK (13 7425)** or call **9629 1414** for a recorded message.

If an extreme emergency dial: **000 (triple zero)**

▷ *Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.*

● **BILLING ARRANGEMENTS**

Fees are payable at the time of consultation by cash or credit card. The AMA fee structure forms the basis of our billing policy and is displayed in the reception area of the surgery. Repatriation patients will be bulk billed.

● **RECALL SYSTEM**

Our practice is now using a secure mobile phone messaging service via HealthEngine recalls. Instead of receiving a letter in the mail, you will now receive a SMS recall or reminder notification on your mobile device. Please contact the practice for more information.

● **APPOINTMENTS**

We run by appointments, but emergencies will always be given priority. We request that all come to the reception desk on arrival. If you have a complex problem or are new to the practice, please request a double appointment. Unfortunately at times your doctor may be delayed due to emergencies or complicated medical problems. We realize your time is valuable and always endeavour to minimize waiting times.

● **ON-LINE APPOINTMENT BOOKING**

For existing and new patients our practice offers on-line appointments. ***This service is available via our website, app and HealthEngine.***

● **HOME VISITS**

Victoria Harbour Medical Centre home visits can be arranged within normal opening hours if a patient is too ill to attend the Medical Centre and where it is safe and reasonable. The patient must be a regular patient of the practice and live within a 5km radius of the practice.

All home visits will only be booked at the discretion of the doctor, whose decision will be final.

● **TELEPHONE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Doctors in this practice may be contacted during normal surgery hours. If the doctor is with a patient, a message will be taken. Your call will always be put through in the event of an emergency.

Communication via email is kept to a minimal and is conducted with appropriate regard to the privacy and confidentiality of the patient's health information. The GP will determine that this is clinically safe and that a face-to-face consultation is unnecessary for that patient.

● **PATHOLOGY TESTS AND INVESTIGATIONS**

Test results are generally available within 2-3 days of the test being performed. Some blood tests can take considerably longer. Results are downloaded electronically to our doctors by our preferred pathology and imaging providers. Attending other pathology or imaging providers can cause further delays.

Urgent results will be notified to you by your doctor as soon as possible. Other results are available by arrangement with the ordering doctor. Each of our doctors have their own preferred methods for notifying results. If you urgently require results it is advised to make an appointment with the ordering doctor.

● **PATIENT FEEDBACK**

Your satisfaction is important to us. If you feel you have an idea of areas where we can improve, please complete our patient feedback form and place it in the suggestion box which is located at reception. If you have a complaint, please discuss this with your Doctor or Practice Manager. If your complaint was not resolved please take the matter to the Health Complaints Commissioner: Phone: 1300 582 113 or email: [hsc@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:hsc@health.vic.gov.au)

# Cardiovascular Risk Assessment & Management

Heart disease remains a major killer of Australians with 17533 deaths in 2018. On the plus side, fatalities have decreased over 20% in a decade.

Typical symptoms are pain in the chest, left arm, neck, jaw or back, together with nausea, sweating and shortness of breath. Not everyone gets typical symptoms. Warning signs can include tiredness, chest discomfort on exertion and shortness of breath.

Diagnosis is based on history, electrocardiogram (ECG) and blood tests. You will likely undergo an angiogram where dye is inserted into the arteries to examine blood flow to the heart. Survival rates have increased due to better and earlier treatment. This can include medications, stenting (opening the artery) or surgery. Length of hospital stay is much less than in the past.

Risk factors include a family history, smoking,

raised cholesterol, high blood pressure and having diabetes. There may be no risk factors.

Prevention, where possible is key. There are online tools where you can work out your overall risk. These tools consider a number of factors. There is much you can do to reduce your risk. Don't smoke. Eat a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight. Get some regular exercise. Have a regular check up with your GP. Managing risk factors such as high blood pressure, raised cholesterol and diabetes can include both lifestyle measures and medication. Regular monitoring is important. Limit salt intake, reduce weight (if overweight) and reduce sugars in the diet. Managing stress also can help.

 [www.cvdcheck.org.au/calculator](http://www.cvdcheck.org.au/calculator)



## Myasthenia Gravis

This condition causes muscle weakness and fatigue. It is thought to be due to antibodies "attacking" the nerve receptors on the muscles. The Thymus gland, which sits in the chest, produces the antibodies but what triggers this is not known. There is also a form of Myasthenia without antibodies involved.

It can occur at any age but is more common in women under 40 and men over 60. Symptoms are typically weakness and tiredness, and severity ranges from mild to near full paralysis. It can affect any muscles but the upper body more than the lower part. Facial muscles are often first affected. People may notice droopy eyelids or problems with swallowing or chewing. In the most severe cases, breathing muscles can be affected.

Diagnosis is based largely on the symptoms and a neurological examination, which shows muscle weakness but no effect on sensation. Blood tests may show the presence of antibodies. You would be referred to a neurologist, and some specialized tests can be done.

Treatments include cholinesterase inhibitor medications (to improve muscle function) immunosuppressants, (e.g. steroids), and plasmapheresis (filtering the plasma from the blood). Some have a growth in the Thymus gland, which can be surgically removed.

Around 20% will go into spontaneous remission. Living with Myasthenia Gravis can mean making adjustments to your routine. You may need to do things more slowly and plan your day. Simple measures like an eye patch, eating smaller, more frequent meals and installing handrails or other aids can help.

 <https://brainfoundation.org.au/disorders/myasthenia-gravis/>



## Spring Time

Spring is when allergy symptoms are most prevalent. The classic "hay fever" is a runny nose sneezing and watery eyes. The technical term allergic rhinitis means inflammation of the nose caused by an exaggerated response to a substance.

Allergic conjunctivitis is when the same underlying response affects the eyes, causing watery red and itchy eyes.

The symptoms are a result of the body trying to get rid of an irritation. Sneezing and runny nose are brought about by the production of mucous under the influence of histamine (produced by the body's reaction to an irritant). Other symptoms can be (paradoxically) a blocked nose, sinus congestion and itchy throat. In the eyes, the watering redness and itching are also brought about by the release of histamines.

The commonest treatment is an antihistamine - available without a prescription. Some can make you drowsy as a side effect; others do not so check the label. Other treatments are nasal sprays. Some are on prescription and contain a mild hydrocortisone, which reduces nasal inflammation. There are eye drops for eye symptoms. Some need a prescription.

Avoidance of known allergens is helpful but not always possible. There are ways of being tested for allergies and in some instances being desensitized to what you are allergic to. If symptoms are mild, there is nothing wrong with using a tissue and riding it out as the season passes.

Talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

# Preventing Falls in the Elderly

About one third of people over the age of 65 fall every year. Most are not injured and get up and go on with life. However, a fall runs the risk of hip fracture. This is a medical emergency requiring major surgery and can start a decline in independence.

Family and friends can be vigilant – to lessen dangers for an elderly friend or relative and prevent a serious fall happening. Heart conditions, poor eyesight, arthritis, muscular problems, disorders of the feet, or multiple medications all increase fall risk.

Here are some tips to prevent them. Four or more medications together increase the risk of side effects or mistakes on doses. Check regularly that treatment is still needed, and doses are correct. Arrange an eyesight check. Problems such as cataracts, glaucoma or degeneration of the retina can slowly worsen vision in a way that is easily missed.

Unsteadiness on the feet can be due to medical problems of balance or low blood pressure – ask the doctor to check. Lack of exercise may lead to weakness of leg muscles and poor coordination – a light exercise program can make all the difference. Around



the home, check and remedy any hazards likely to lead to a fall. This includes slippery floors, uneven walking surfaces, poor lighting, or cluttered living areas. It may be useful to

have handrails installed into the bathroom or toilet. For people with conditions like Parkinson's disease, walking aids can be a 'must'.

# Relevance of Exercise in Childhood

Once upon a time children didn't need to "exercise" because they were active. They walked to and from school and played outdoors rather than on screens.

During lockdowns, we were all less active. Closed playgrounds and cancelled sport meant less physical activity for children. As we get back out there, we need to be getting our children active again.

Over 20% of children aged 12 through 16 are overweight or obese. This reflects both consumptions of more processed foods higher in fats and sugars but also a reduction in physical activity.

We cannot wind back the clock, but we can help our children be healthier. The Australian government recommends one hour of physical activity each day for children over the age of five. This should be a mix of moderate and vigorous exercise. This can include walking, running, bike riding, any form of suitable sport and of course outdoor play. It does not have to be in one continuous block of time.

Do not fret if you can't manage this amount every day. Any amount of physical activity is better than none.

There are many benefits to your child from being active. It reduces childhood obesity. It improves motor function. It improves their



circulation and strengthens the bones and muscles as well as improving balance and coordination skills. Active children tend to sleep better and often have enhanced self-esteem. Mental health problems are less common in inactive children.

It also establishes good habits for later in life where regular exercise reduces the chances of many diseases, including heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer.

A bonus is when you encourage your children to exercise it may encourage you to do the same.



## BEEF AND BROCCOLI

- 2/3 c. low-sodium soy sauce, divided
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 3 tbsp. packed brown sugar, divided
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp. cornstarch, divided
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. sirloin steak, sliced thinly against grain
- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 c. low-sodium beef (or chicken)broth
- 2 tsp.
- Sriracha (optional)
- 1 head broccoli, cut into florets
- Sesame seeds, for garnish
- Thinly sliced green onions, for garnish

### Directions

In a medium bowl, whisk 1/3 cup soy sauce, lime juice, 1 tablespoon brown sugar, 1 egg, and 1 tablespoon of cornstarch until

combined. Add steak, season with salt and pepper, and toss until steak is coated. Marinate 20 minutes to 1 hour.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add steak in a single layer, working in batches if needed, and cook until seared, about 2 minutes per side. Remove steak and set aside.

Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Then stir in broth, remaining 2 tablespoons brown sugar, remaining 1/3 cup soy sauce, and Sriracha. Bring mixture to a simmer. Add broccoli and simmer until tender, about 5 minutes. Add remaining cornstarch (in a slurry) and season sauce with salt and pepper (if necessary), then return steak to skillet.

Garnish with sesame seeds and green onions before serving.

Serve with steamed rice.

## WORD SEARCH

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

MYASTHENIA  
 DISEASE  
 EXCERSISE  
 ELDERLY  
 GRAVIS  
 SPRING  
 HEART  
 CHILDREN  
 FALLS  
 TIME



### SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Victoria Harbour Medical Centre is located at 850 Collins Street with the entrance via Merchant Street next to Victoria Harbour Pharmacy and opposite Woolworths.

Providing a full range of General Practice services, the Victoria Harbour Medical Centre is committed to providing Melbourne's waterfront community with quality and friendly medical care.

Victoria Harbour Medical Centre offers a range of services to our wider community including:

- General Medicine
- Women's Health
- Men's Health
- Chronic Disease Management
- Mental Health
- Minor Surgery
- Travel Medicine

Our doctors are fully qualified Gps and fellows of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. The practice also serves an important teaching function, as a placement for Registrars in their final year of Specialists and General Practice training.

### ANTENATAL SHARED CARE

**Dr Kirsten Scott, Dr Jane Karmouche and Dr Gillian Porter** are accredited Maternity Care Affiliates who work in collaboration with The Royal women's Hospital for Antenatal Shared Care.

For more information on this service, please visit our website or contact the practice.

### PRACTICE PRIVACY POLICY

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of this practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised staff.



**Proudly AGPAL Accredited**

Our commitment to your safety and care