

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2024 EDITION **FREE TO TAKE HOME!**



Healthy food choices



Melanomas



Atrial Fibrillation



Cataracts

● **PRACTICE DOCTORS**

- Dr Marc Herington
- Dr Kirsten Scott
- Dr Damien Polioudakis
- Dr Bree Latta
- Dr Leah Spencer Watts
- Dr Christopher Kearney
- Dr Gillian Porter

Dr Timothy Johnston

Dr Eugenie Prior

Dr Pavani Kurra

Dr. Anna Braun

● **REGISTERED PRACTICE NURSE**

Lorianna Marchese

Sue Johnstone

● **ON SITE PROFESSIONALS**

Loretta EganPodiatrist

Jennifer Donnelly Dietitian

● **OTHER SERVICES**

Dorevitch Pathology

Monday – Friday.....8am – 4.00pm

(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 Doctor Doctor. They can be contacted on:

132 660 or call **9629 1414** for a recorded message.

If an extreme emergency dial : **000**

(triple zero)

● **BILLING ARRANGEMENTS**

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

● **RECALL SYSTEM**

Our practice uses a secure mobile phone messaging service via HealthEngine recalls. Instead of receiving a letter in the mail, you will 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 on arrival to the practice you see reception to check in. If you have a complex issue or are new to the practice, please request a double appointment. Unfortunately, at times your doctor may be delayed due to an emergency or a complicated medical issue. We acknowledge your time is valuable and always endeavour to minimise waiting times.

● **ON-LINE APPOINTMENT BOOKING**

Our practice offers online bookings for face- to- face consultations and telehealth.

Please note: **Telehealth appointments** are only for existing patients at this clinic and have been seen face- to- face by a doctor within 1 year.

● **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.

● **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

YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT:

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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.

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



Healthy food choices for school-aged children

One in four Australian children are overweight or obese. There are two main drivers of this. Firstly, is the tendency for children to snack on high-calorie foods and drinks. Second is the replacement of physical activity with time on the computer or other electronic devices. We can't turn back time, but it is not all bad news. There is much you can do as a parent or guardian to help a child who is battling with weight issues.

Back to school means thinking about lunchboxes. It is fine to have a sweet treat in the lunchbox some days, but there are many healthy snack options too. Sticks of carrot or celery can be a snack. Fruit in season is a great snack. Even with snack bars, you can select those with natural ingredients, whole grains and less sugar by reading the labels. Read the labels on cracker biscuits, too. Some are high in fats and sugar, whilst others (like rice crackers) are not. A mix of seeds, nuts (watch for allergies), and dried fruit is another simple snack, as are cheese sticks or popcorn. Substitute sweet drinks with water. Eliminating liquid calories can cut down calorie intake without leaving a child hungry. Have soft drinks only on special occasions or no more than once a week. Rather than fruit juice, give your child a piece of fruit and a glass of water. This provides them with more fibre and fewer calories.



Avoid Listeria in pregnancy

Listeria is an infection caused by a common bacterium. It occurs in the soil and water. Thus, plants and marine life can be infected with the bacteria, as well as animals that eat plants. There are around 65 cases in Australia each year, and 10% of these are in pregnant women who are at greatest risk in the third trimester.

Listeriosis increases the risk of stillbirth, low birth weight and premature labour. Symptoms can be mild or severe, with fever, headaches, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

Whilst uncommon, it is important to take steps to avoid potential exposure to Listeria. Fortunately, this is not difficult and involves not eating "high-risk" foods whilst pregnant. Foods to avoid are processed deli poultry meats (e.g. sliced chicken), soft cheeses (brie camembert), raw seafood (e.g. oysters) pre-made sushi, unpasteurised juices and soft serve ice creams.

You can continue to enjoy plenty of foods whilst pregnant, including hard cheeses, smoked seafood, hard frozen ice cream or gelato, freshly prepared sushi, pasteurised juices and hot deli meats (cooked at over 75°C).

Maintaining a balanced diet is important when pregnant, and you may need certain supplements. Talk to your GP about any concerns you have and also about both diet and the need (if any) for supplements.

Avoiding Listeria is not difficult, and there is no need to stress over every mouthful of food you eat.



More info »

Melanomas

Australia continues to have the highest rates of melanoma in the world. That does not mean every spot on the skin is cancerous or potentially cancerous, though. Melanomas are the least common form of skin cancer but the most life-threatening. The Melanoma Institute estimated 15,229 cases in 2019 and some 1726 deaths.

There are specific characteristics which point to a spot on the skin being a melanoma, but none are absolute. An asymmetrical lesion with an uneven border and multiple colours would be a textbook melanoma. Another pointer changes over a short period, like a few weeks.

On the flip side, a spot of any colour that has been present for five years without changing at all will be relatively harmless.

With digital technology, it is possible for moles to be photographed and comparisons made after a few months to see if there is a change. When there

is enough suspicion, the mole may be biopsied and analysed in the lab for an exact diagnosis. Once again, only some spots will need this.

An annual skin check with your doctor is a good idea, as well as checking for any new or changing spots of concern. New does not always equal cancer though, which is a good thing.

The best way to avoid getting skin cancer is to take care in the sun. The message of slip, slop, slap is not new but remains valid. Over summer, there is no reason not to enjoy an outdoor lifestyle, but remember to look after your skin.



Atrial Fibrillation

Our hearts beat over 100,000 times per day, and most do this in a regular fashion. The pacemaker sends an electric signal for the heart muscles to contract, pumping blood out to the body.

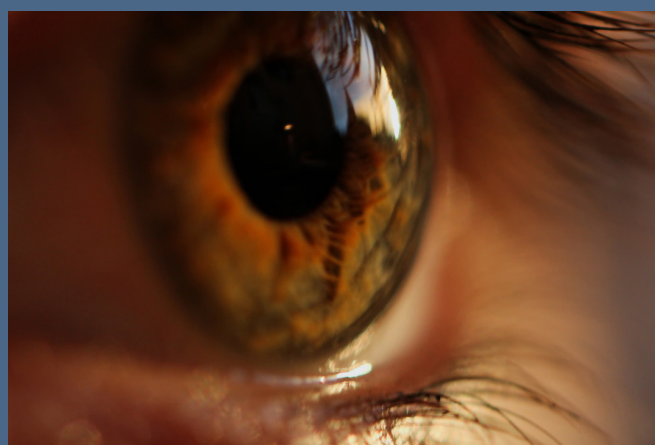
Arrhythmias are conditions where the heart beats irregularly. In atrial fibrillation (AF), the top two heart chambers can beat very fast, and the muscles contract in an uncoordinated way. This distorts the electrical message to the rest of the heart. In turn, the contractions of the heart become less efficient.

Typical symptoms include palpitations, shortness of breath, fluttering of the heart, dizziness and sometimes fainting. The heart beats in a fast and irregular pattern. Around 2% of people overall and 10% of those over 75 may be affected. Risk factors include high blood pressure, established heart disease, trauma to the chest and use of certain drugs, including caffeine and alcohol.

Your doctor will take a history and perform a physical examination. Diagnosis can be made with plain ECG testing, but you may be referred for a Holter monitor (a 24-hour ECG) as AF can be intermittent.

Treatment may include medication to slow the heart rate and make the heart beat regularly. You may be prescribed blood thinners too as AF increases the risk of stroke. Cardioversion (electric shock therapy) can jolt the heart out of AF and back to normal. In severe cases, surgery (ablation) is an option.

Lifestyle changes like quitting smoking, reducing alcohol and caffeine, attaining a healthy weight and regular exercise all help to prevent and manage AF.



Cataracts

This is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss worldwide. Cataracts occur when the lens of the eye goes cloudy or opaque. Around 10% of Australians have cataracts, increasing from 4% of 50-59-year-olds to over 60% of 90-year-olds.

Advancing age is the most typical reason, but trauma, radiation exposure, some drugs (like steroids), and metabolic conditions (like diabetes) can also lead to cataracts. Women are more affected than men.

Cataracts are classified by their level of maturity (progression), cause, or appearance. The symptom is a reduction in visual acuity (ability). The onset is gradual, and progression is slow but constant in most instances. If only one eye is affected, it may not be noticed for quite a while as the other eye "compensates".

A cataract is easily diagnosed on examination, and no tests are needed. When looking in the eye with an ophthalmoscope, your doctor will be able to see a cataract. It is recommended that people over 40 have a regular eye check with an ophthalmologist. Your GP can refer you.

Treatment for cataracts is surgical removal and insertion of an intra-ocular lens- done when symptoms warrant it and prescription glasses are no longer sufficient. It may be many years from diagnosis to the time of surgery.

The procedure is generally done under local anaesthetic, and recovery is quick. You will need the eye padded for a short period of time and will be prescribed drops to use post-operatively.

● **SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES**

Victoria Harbour Medical Centre is located at 850 Collins Street with the main entrance via Merchant Street next to Victoria Harbour Pharmacy and opposite Woolworths. Providing a full range of General Practice services, Victoria Harbour Medical Centre is committed to 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
- Sexual Health.

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 Gillian Porter, Dr Eugene Prior & Dr Bree Latta 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.



MUSELI BARS

Natural nut butters (peanut butter or almond butter) are best for this, and they are different to commercial spreads because they have no added sugar, salt, preservatives, etc. It’s 100% nuts, which means better flavour and a runnier consistency. Be sure to mix well to combine before using and even microwave slightly to obtain the right consistency, add honey or maple syrup for natural sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

- Almonds – whole, roasted, unsalted and roughly chopped.
- Sultanas, raisins, cranberries or any other dried fruit of choice.
- Pepitas (they give it some colour and bite).
- Sesame seeds (optional).
- Desiccated coconut (unsweetened). Flakes will also work, but because they are larger, they won’t disperse as well throughout and should be roughly chopped.

- Cinnamon – just a pinch makes all the difference.
- Salt – Just a pinch.

DIRECTIONS

1. Put the peanut butter and honey in a saucepan over low heat and mix to combine - stirring almost constantly, until thickened. Scrape the base of the saucepan, getting in around the edges.
2. Immediately pour the mixture across the surface of the oats. Use the wooden spoon to mix to combine until you can no longer see dry oats (If it gets too hard to stir, microwave for 20 seconds).
3. Place a sheet of paper over a square pan). Scrape the mixture in, then press it into the pan using a combination of a wooden spatula to spread it out, then use your hands to press it in.
4. Press firmly, but keep some air in the mixture to avoid going too chewy.
5. Refrigerate for 2 -3 hours to set, then cut into bars depending on your size preference.

WORD SEARCH

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- LISTERIA
- VISION
- DIGITAL
- CATARACT
- CHICKEN
- PLANTS
- CAUSE
- EYE
- FOOD
- TRAUMA
- DOCTOR
- BLOOD
- HOLTER
- LESION
- HEART
- MELANOMA
- ATRIAL
- SCHOOL
- LABOUR
- CALORIE