

# ATHERFIELD MEDICAL & SKIN CANCER CLINIC

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We are an accredited general practice and a Family Medicine Training Practice.

All practitioners are vocationally registered or are in advanced training for vocational registration.

All our practitioners are involved in ongoing medical education.

## SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

We provide a complete range of general practitioner medical care.

**Consultations are by appointment.**

**Monday – Thursday** 8:30am to 5:30pm

**Friday** 8:30am to 5:00pm

**Saturday** 8:30am to 11:00am

Public holidays excluded.

## APPOINTMENT TIMES

The duration of your appointment is flexible, and you will be asked if the time allocated is sufficient for your needs. If in doubt, please ask our reception staff.

Nobody likes to be kept waiting. We are aware of this, however the unpredictable nature of medical practice means that doctors sometimes have to run behind time. We sincerely regret any inconvenience caused.

## TELEPHONING YOUR DOCTOR

If your call is assessed as urgent it may be transferred to the doctor on call if your preferred practitioner is unavailable. If you wish to leave a message for your doctor to return your call please provide a phone number, a brief indication as to the content of your call and a time that you will be available.

# YOUR DOCTOR

JANUARY 2024



**ALCOHOL AND WELL-BEING**



**BABIES AND BACKCARE**



**THE "SILENT KILLER"**



**PROTEIN POWER**

*Compliments of your GP*

## Revitalise your health: a fresh start for 2024

The New Year is often a time for both reflection on the past and anticipation for the year ahead, prompting us to consider the changes we want, (or need) to make, and how to achieve them.

Many resolutions revolve around eating better, losing weight, and improving wellbeing. You can take a holistic approach to a healthy body with these suggestions...

### Exercise

Getting a regular mix of exercise – strength, cardiovascular, and flexibility – will keep you mobile, fit and energetic, minimise the risk of many lifestyle diseases, and make you feel good. Exercise doesn't have to be a formal activity; you just have to move every day!

### Nutrition

Being healthy is a balance between being active and eating sensibly. You can reduce the risk of a range of health problems by maintaining a healthy body weight. Cut back on sugar, alcohol, salt and saturated fats. Eat a variety of nutrient-dense food such as vegetables, fruit, whole grains, healthy fats and lean proteins. Additionally, ensure you drink enough water, as every system in your body depends on hydration.

### Sleep

You might think you can manage on five hours of sleep, but your body probably disagrees!

Typically, adults need about 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Sleeping helps your body restore and repair itself and boosts brain function.

If you struggle with sleep issues, we can assist you or guide you to the right resources.

### Maintain brain health

Living a mentally active life is as important as physical exercise. Stimulate your brain with reading, games and puzzles, or learn a new skill. Try activities that require manual dexterity as well as mental effort, such as drawing, or playing an instrument. Brain-challenging activities can help establish connections between nerve cells, and may even help your brain generate new cells.

### Connect with others

Being social is good for your health and wellbeing. Spending time with friends and family helps enhance happiness, lessen sorrows, and increases your sense of belonging and purpose. Helping others fulfils many basic emotional needs for both the helper and recipient.

### Think positively

Laughter really is great medicine, especially when it comes to managing stress. Laughter reduces stress hormones, increases the release of 'feel-good' endorphins, and boosts your immune system. Additionally, reflecting on the positive aspects of your life enhances happiness and resilience.



**Here's a great tip for any age group:**

**Take up dancing – it can keep you mentally and physically active, and you'll probably make friends and have a lot of fun - all from one activity!**

*Our newsletter is free! Please take a copy with you.*

## Do you know the impact of alcohol on your well-being?

We all know that 'kicking back with a cold one' is a popular Aussie pastime. But have you ever wondered what that drink is really doing to your body? It's crucial to understand how alcohol can influence your overall health so you can make informed decisions about it.

### Firstly – your brain

Alcohol may initially make you feel relaxed, but it messes with the delicate balance of chemicals in your brain, affecting your mood and judgment. It can impair your ability to concentrate, make decisions, and even lead to memory lapses.

### Your heart

Now, let's talk about your 'ticker'. Alcohol might seem to warm you up, but it can cause your blood vessels to expand, leading to high blood pressure. High blood pressure, in turn, increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other serious health problems.

### Your liver

Ah, your body's detox hero. But even this remarkable organ has its limits. Drinking too much can lead to liver inflammation, fatty liver disease, hepatitis, and even cirrhosis. Your liver works hard, but excessive alcohol can damage this vital organ.

### Your pancreas

Your pancreas helps regulate your body's sugar levels, influencing your liver, kidneys, and brain. Alcohol, sadly, can mess with this balance, disrupting multiple body systems and potentially causing pancreatitis – a dangerous inflammation of the pancreas.

### Your immune system

Booze weakens your immunity, making you more susceptible to illnesses and infections. So, perhaps that cold you can't seem

to shake off might have something to do with those extra drinks.

### The rest of your body

Believe it or not, alcohol affects almost every part of you. It can weaken your bones, disrupt your sleep, and wreak havoc on your digestive system.

It's not just about the immediate effects either – over time, excessive alcohol consumption can significantly increase your risk of certain cancers. It can also lead to mental health issues, and affect your relationships and employment.

### Would you like better health?

Reducing or eliminating alcohol intake can significantly improve your well-being. You'll notice better sleep, digestion, skin, mood, immunity, and energy levels. What's more, you'll save money and possibly achieve a trimmer waistline. That's a lot to like!

This isn't about giving up something; it's about gaining something invaluable – your health! By understanding the impact of your choices on yourself and those around you, you're making a positive move towards a healthier, happier lifestyle.



## Protein-packed tofu and whole grain stir-fry

*Enjoy a satisfying and nutritious meal that fuels your body with the goodness of protein and other vital nutrients.*

### Ingredients:

- 1 block firm tofu, cubed
- 1 cup cooked whole grains
- 1 cup mixed vegetables of choice, sliced
- 2 Tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 Tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 Tblsp vegetable oil
- Garnish of choice
- Salt & pepper to taste



### Instructions:

1. Whisk together peanut butter, soy sauce, honey, garlic, and ginger. Set aside.
2. Stir-fry cubed tofu in vegetable oil until golden and crispy. Remove and set aside.
3. In the same pan, stir-fry sliced vegetables until just tender.
4. Add cooked tofu, whole grains, and peanut sauce to the pan. Mix well.
5. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Garnish with sesame seeds and chopped spring onions, or your favourite herbs.

## The power of plant-based protein

Protein is an essential nutrient, crucial for maintaining a healthy body. While commonly associated with meat, a variety of plant-based options can adequately meet your protein needs.

### Why is protein essential?

Protein aids in cell repair, muscle building, skin, hair, and nail health, while also regulating hormones. Additionally, it keeps you feeling full and energised, making it a dietary cornerstone.

### Plant-based vs. meat-based protein

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. While your body can make some of them, nine have to be obtained through your diet. Animal products like beef, fish, and dairy, contain all of these essential amino acids making them complete proteins.

Some plant products, such as soy beans and quinoa, are complete proteins, however others lack certain amino acids, so eating a varied diet is important.

Plant-based proteins have many health benefits. They are usually lower in unhealthy fats and cholesterol, which is good for your heart. They also provide important vitamins, minerals, and fibre making you healthier overall.

In contrast, meat-based proteins, while rich in protein, can be high in unhealthy fats and can lead to chronic diseases if consumed excessively.

### Common plant-based protein sources

**Legumes:** A variety of beans, lentils, and peas are excellent options.

**Nuts and Seeds:** Almonds, peanuts, chia, hemp, and pumpkin seeds are protein-rich and versatile.

**Whole Grains:** Quinoa, brown rice, bulgur, and whole wheat products offer protein diversity and can be used in many ways.

**Tofu and Tempeh:** These soy-based products are rich in protein and perfect for hearty meals and salads.

**Dairy and Dairy Alternatives:** Milk, yogurt, and cheese provide protein. If you're vegan, there are various plant-based alternatives.

**Spirulina and Chlorella:** These are types of algae that are protein-dense and available in supplement form.

### Making healthy choices

Incorporating plant-based proteins into your diet can significantly reduce the risk of chronic diseases. So, look beyond meat and embrace the power of plant-based proteins for a more balanced diet.

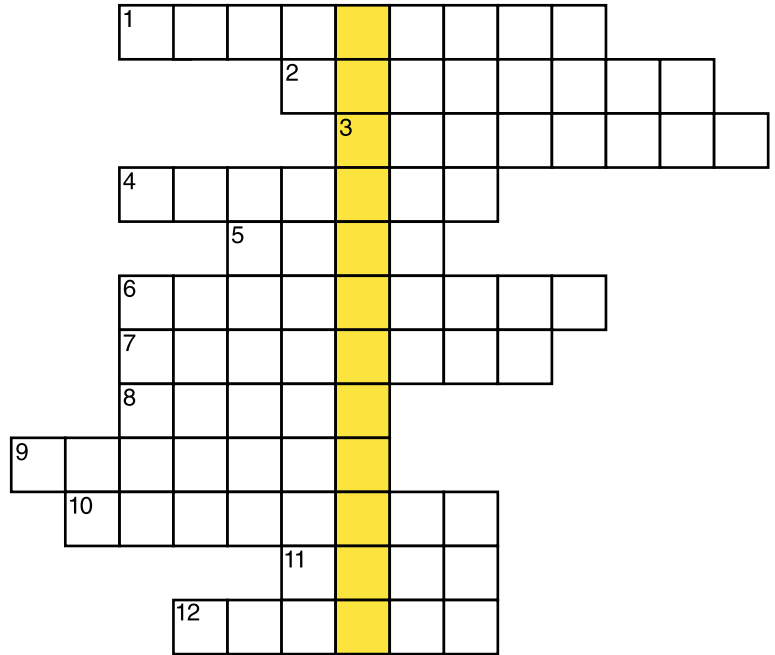
*Discover the power of plant-based proteins for a balanced, heart-healthy, and nutritious diet.*



# HIDDEN WORD

Find the hidden word in the bold squares by finding the answers to the clues in the puzzle. The hidden word is on the back page.

1. A serious disease of the liver that can be caused by drinking too much alcohol.
2. A number that indicates the pressure on artery walls when your heart pumps blood.
3. An organ that helps to regulate your body's sugar levels.
4. A nutrient that aids in cell repair, muscle building, skin, hair, nail, and hormone health.
5. The muscles in the middle area of your body important for stability, posture and injury prevention.
6. A number that indicates the pressure when your heart is at rest between beats.
7. A serious disease in which your body cannot properly control the amount of sugar in your blood.
8. The organ of the body in your head that controls functions, movements, sensations, and thoughts.
9. Plants (such as peas, lentils, or beans), with seeds that grow in long cases (called pods).
10. The blood vessels that carry blood from your heart to all parts of your body.
11. A soft, white food made from soybeans and often used instead of meat.
12. A type of grain that is a complete protein.



The hidden word is \_\_\_\_\_

## Why is high blood pressure “the silent killer”?

You might be wondering, why the dramatic title? Read on to find out about high blood pressure (hypertension) and why it's often called the “silent killer.”

First, let's explain blood pressure

Blood pressure is the amount of force of blood on the walls of your blood vessels (arteries) as your heart pumps it around your body. It's affected by how much blood your heart pumps and how easily it flows through your arteries.

High blood pressure occurs when there's too much force on the artery walls, straining them and making your heart work harder to circulate blood.

### What's normal and what's not?

Blood pressure involves two numbers: ideally, a healthy blood pressure is around 120/80 mmHg, but this can vary among people. Your doctor can advise you based on your specific health and circumstances.

The higher figure, systolic, shows the pressure on artery walls when your heart pumps blood. The lower number, diastolic, indicates the pressure when your heart is at rest between beats. High blood pressure is generally a systolic reading over 140 and/or a diastolic reading above 90.

### The silent killer unmasked

So, why is high blood pressure called the silent killer? There are often no warning signs. You can feel fine, without any noticeable symptoms while your blood pressure is quietly harming your body. That's why regular check-ups are so crucial – they can unmask this silent villain before it's too late.

### What do we mean by harm?

High blood pressure can damage your arteries and is a major risk factor for serious diseases like stroke, heart attack, diabetes and heart failure. It can damage other important organs in the body, such as your brain and kidneys, and even cause vision loss. Scary, right? But there's a lot you can do to keep your blood pressure in check.

### Prevention and protection

Healthy eating: Load up on fruits, veggies, whole grains, and lean proteins. Ditch processed foods, sugary and salty snacks. Cutting down on salt will help to lower blood pressure quickly.

- Stay active: Inactivity can lead to weight gain and high blood pressure; even a daily brisk walk can do wonders for your health and overall well-being.

- Shed extra kilos: Carrying excess weight puts extra strain on your heart.
- Limit alcohol: Cut back for a healthier heart - alcohol can spike up your blood pressure.
- Manage stress: Stress and hypertension often go hand-in-hand. Find healthy ways to relax.
- Quit smoking: Smoking damages your arteries and can raise your blood pressure. Quitting boosts overall health.
- Have a blood pressure check: It's essential to have your blood pressure monitored regularly.

Knowing and understanding your blood pressure levels empowers you to make informed decisions about your lifestyle, diet, and exercise routine. It's a small yet significant step that can make a world of difference.

**Start the New Year right by prioritising your health – schedule a blood pressure check and take the first step toward a healthier you in the coming year.**

# Caring for your baby... and your back

Congratulations on becoming a parent! While parenthood is a wonderful experience, pregnancy and giving birth can take a toll on your body. Pregnancy brings hormonal changes, increased body weight, and shifts in your pelvis and lower back, increasing the risk of joint and muscle strain.

After childbirth, you'll be doing lots of activities like lifting, dressing, and bathing your baby. Even if you've healed, the added weight and awkward positions increase the risk of backache. So, how can you prevent injury or discomfort?

## Lifting and moving safely

During feeding times, sit upright in a chair and bring your baby close to your chest, using a pillow to support their weight. A pillow designed for breast-feeding can be practical and helpful.

To prevent backache, it's essential to master proper lifting techniques. When picking up a baby, regardless of whether you're lifting up from the floor, bed, or cot, some key principles apply. Bend your knees, squat down, and bring the baby close to your chest.



Engage your core muscles and lift using your legs, not your back. Avoid twisting your body during the lift.

When carrying your baby around, use a baby-safe carrier, sling or wrap to ease the workload, and avoid perching your baby on one hip.

As your little one grows, it's even more important to follow correct lifting guidelines. Additionally, in situations like lifting baby or toddler into or out of a highchair, remove the tray beforehand. When transferring them in and out of the car, take them out of the car seat first - it might seem easier, but the added weight can strain your back.

## Strengthening

Once you are ready, focus on gentle exercise. Strengthening your core is important for stability, good posture and injury prevention. Seek professional advice on suitable and safe ways to strengthen and exercise during and after your pregnancy.

Regular walking can also aid physical recovery and help boost your mood and fitness.

Being a new parent is challenging enough without having to deal with backache. Observing these simple tips will help to minimise the risk of back pain and allow you to enjoy every moment with your little one.

## Questions to ask at your next doctor's visit

Asking questions is key to good communication with your doctor. To get the most out of your next visit, use the area below to note what you'd like to know and take this list with you to your next appointment so you don't forget what it was you wanted to ask..

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME

1.
2.
3.
NOTES:

## HIDDEN WORD SOLUTION

hypertension

**Disclaimer:** The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your health should always be made in consultation with your health care provider. Talk to your doctor first.

# OUR PRACTICE

## FEES

To allow us to provide you with the services to which you have become accustomed, it is necessary for us to charge realistic fees.

A list of fees charged by our practitioners is available on the practice notice board.

Arrangements for DVA patients are unchanged. Bulk billing should not be anticipated for any medical service.

Services rendered out of hours may attract the recommended fee, as does the provision of repeat prescriptions when the patient does not need or request to see the doctor.

If you have any difficulty or query with your account, do not hesitate to discuss the matter with the doctor.

All practitioners of the medical service provide home visits to patients who are unable to attend the rooms.



## FEEDBACK

We are committed to improving the quality of the services we provide. We need your feedback. Tell us about the good points of our service, but more importantly, tell us about the areas in which you feel our service can be improved. You may be sure that your opinion will be valued and acted upon if possible. If you have a complaint, we will do everything we can to satisfy your complaint, but in the event that our best efforts are inadequate, you are invited to contact the Health Care Complaints Commission, Locked Mail Bag 18, Strawberry Hills, NSW, Telephone: 1800 043159.



YOUR DOCTOR is a service to patients of Atherfield Medical & Skin Cancer Clinic. Each edition contains accurate and up-to-date information about health issues relevant to you and your family. It will also have news and matters of interest about the practice and services available to you. By keeping each edition you will soon build up a library of useful and important knowledge which can help you to get healthy and stay that way. Let us know if there are any particular topics you would like to see dealt with in future editions of YOUR DOCTOR.

Our newsletter is free! Please take a copy with you.