ATHERFIELD MEDICAL & SKIN CANCER CLINIC

65 Lead Street
Yass 2582

P: (02) 6226 1888

Dr David Harrison
BM, BS, DRANZCOG, DCH, FRACGP, MSportsMed
Graduated Flinders University of S.A.

Dr Raja Ahluwalia
MBBS (Pune), FRACGP, G. Dip MH (GP)
Graduate Armed Forces Medical College, Pune (India)

Dr Matthew Thompson
ACCSCMS (Skin Cancer College of Australasia), FRACGP, MBBS (ANU), BMedSci (UTS)

Dr Madeline Evans
MD (USyd) BA - Comms (UTS)

Dr Dilip Bandara
MBBS (Sri Lanka), AMC

Dr Anjum Musa
MBBS

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

OCTOBER 2026



THAT YELLOW TONGUE COATING



MUSCLE HEALTH



WHEN MUCUS LINGERS



BREAST SCREENING DEVELOPMENTS

Compliments of your GP



Sugar: Sorting fact from fiction

Sugar can seem surprisingly complicated. Is fructose worse than glucose? Is honey or syrup healthier than table sugar? And can you really have a "sweet tooth"? Here are some of the answers.

Types of sugar

Sugar is a type of carbohydrate that provides your body with energy. There are three main types:

- **Glucose** occurs naturally in foods such as fruit and vegetables. Your body also produces glucose from carbohydrates such as bread, rice and potatoes.
- **Fructose** is found naturally in fruit, some vegetables and honey.
- **Sucrose** is ordinary table sugar. It's made from glucose and fructose and occurs naturally in sugar cane and sugar beet.

Both fructose and sucrose are also added to many processed foods and drinks.

How does your body handle them?

Glucose can be used directly by your cells for energy, while much of the fructose you consume is processed by your liver. Sucrose is broken down into glucose and fructose during digestion.

This doesn't mean that one type of sugar is healthier than another. What matters is how much you consume and the type of foods and drinks you get it from. A sugary drink can provide a large amount of sugar without many nutrients.

Is sugar bad for you?

Not exactly. Glucose is an important source of energy for your body. The concern is regularly consuming too much **free sugar** – a term used for the sugar added to foods and drinks, as well as the sugar in honey, fruit juice, and maple, rice and date syrups.

Too much free sugar can provide excess calories without many nutrients. It can increase the risk of tooth decay, and is very easy to overconsume.

The sugar in whole fruit is different because also has fibre, vitamins and other nutrients, which can help you feel fuller. Fruit juice and other sugary drinks contain few nutrients and don't fill you up as much, so you can consume a lot of sugar without feeling satisfied.

Honey, maple syrup and rice syrup may sound healthier than table sugar, but they're all concentrated sources of sugar.

Can sugar give you a 'sweet tooth'?

You may enjoy sweet foods, but that doesn't mean you're addicted to sugar.

Research suggests that reducing sugar doesn't automatically make people crave less sweet food. Sweet preferences vary, and more research is needed to understand how they differ.

Foods such as cakes and biscuits often combine sugar and fat, making them especially appealing and easy to overeat. This isn't considered an addiction, but these foods can encourage you to eat more than you intended.

Where should you start?

You don't need to eliminate sugar. Instead, try small changes. You could gradually reduce the sugar you add to tea or coffee, swap one sugary drink for water, or choose unsweetened cereal or yoghurt.

The goal isn't to ban sugar – it's to make very sweet foods and drinks less of an everyday habit.

Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

Muscle health: Why muscles are more than just a source of strength

When you think about muscles, you probably picture them helping you lift, carry or move. However, they do much more than that – they support your metabolism, communicate with other parts of your body and help keep you healthy as you age.

Your metabolic powerhouse

Your muscles make up around 30–40% of your body weight and are a major part of your body's metabolism. They help your body use energy, regulate blood sugar and burn calories.

After you eat, your muscles take glucose (sugar) from your bloodstream to use for energy or store for later. This helps keep blood sugar levels in a healthy range and may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Even when you're resting, your muscles continue to use energy, helping your body burn calories throughout the day, not just when you're active.

Muscle communication

Scientists now know that muscles do more than just help you move. When they contract, they release chemical messengers called myokines, which travel through your bloodstream to act on other organs.

Early research suggests some of these myokines may help reduce inflammation, support your heart and bones, and even play a role in brain health and immunity. Scientists are still learning how this works, but it shows that your muscles can influence much more than movement.

Ageing and muscle strength

From around your thirties, you gradually begin to lose some muscle mass and strength. This natural process can speed up later in life and is known as sarcopenia.

Over time, this decline can make everyday tasks more difficult, affect your balance and increase the risk of falls and fractures. It can also make it harder for your body to regulate blood sugar and maintain a healthy metabolism.

The good news is that this isn't inevitable. People of all ages can build and maintain muscle through regular activity and good nutrition.

Protecting your muscle health

Looking after your muscles doesn't mean spending hours in the gym. Small, consistent habits make a real difference.

Aim to:

- Do strength-building exercises at least two days a week, using body weight, resistance bands or weights.
- Do activities that improve balance, mobility and coordination three or more days a week. Yoga, tai chi, simple stretching and balance exercises are good options.
- Stay mobile every day by walking, gardening or taking the stairs.
- Include protein-rich foods such as fish, eggs, dairy, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and lean meat.

Break up long periods of sitting by getting up and moving regularly.

Your muscles are working hard every day to support your health. Looking after them can help you stay strong, mobile and independent as you age.

Think muscles are just for lifting and moving? Think again.

Discover the surprising role your muscles play in your metabolism, health and ageing.

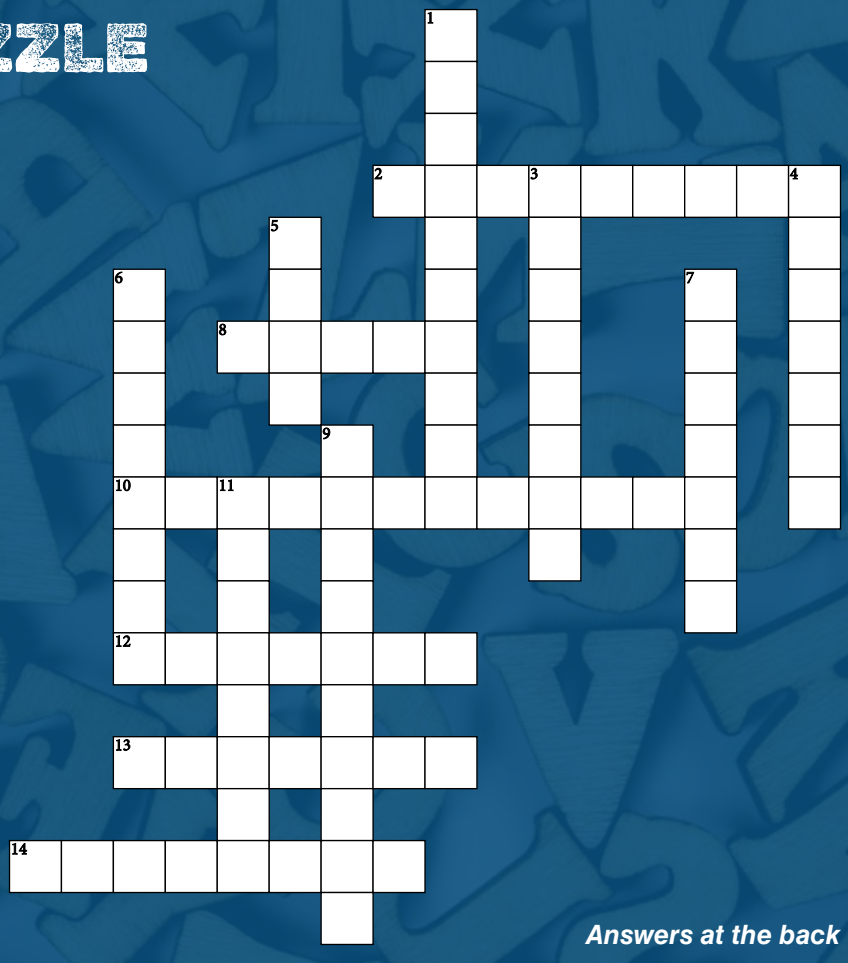
Crossword puzzle

ACROSS

2. Breast imaging (9)
8. Relating to the nose (5)
10. Body's response to injury or infection (12)
12. Ordinary table sugar (7)
13. Nutrient needed for muscle health (7)
14. Tiny living organisms (8)

DOWN

1. How the body uses energy (10)
3. The ability to move easily (8)
4. Help with movement, metabolism and healthy ageing (7)
5. Relating to the mouth (4)
6. Chemical messengers from muscles (8)
7. The ability to stay steady (7)
9. Age-related muscle loss (10)
11. Sugar found naturally in fruit (8)



Answers at the back

When a cold leaves you with a lingering nasal drip



The worst of your cold or other respiratory infection has passed, but you're still clearing your throat, swallowing mucus or feeling a drip at the back of your throat. It can be frustrating – especially when you are otherwise feeling well. So why can these symptoms linger?

Inflammation can continue for a while

During an infection, the lining of your nose and sinuses can become inflamed and produce extra mucus. Even after the infection has settled, this inflammation can take time to clear. The mucus can then drain into your throat, causing post-nasal drip.

You may notice it more when lying down or first thing in the morning. Both the mucus and repeatedly trying to clear it can irritate your throat, causing soreness and keeping the cycle going.

Simple things to try

There are several practical ways to make you feel more comfortable:

- **Drink plenty of water.**
  Staying well hydrated can make mucus easier to clear.
- **Try a saline spray or rinse.**
  This can help clear mucus from your nasal passages.
- **Soothe your throat.**
  Gargling with salty water may help ease irritation.
- **Avoid irritants.**
  Smoke, fumes and strong smells can irritate your nose and throat and increase the urge to clear your throat.
- **Stop the cycle.**
  When you feel the urge to clear it, try sipping water or swallowing instead.

Our understanding is changing

Post-nasal drip sounds straightforward, but there is still no definitive explanation for why symptoms persist in some people.

Researchers are investigating whether ongoing irritation and increased sensitivity in the nose and throat may help explain why symptoms continue, even when there is no longer an infection.

When should you see your GP?

Post-nasal drip can take time to settle, but see your GP if symptoms are severe or not improving, or if it keeps happening.

You should also seek advice if you develop severe facial pain, fever, breathing difficulties, blood in your mucus or strong-smelling nasal discharge.

Breast screening: looking beyond your age



Over many years, breast cancer screening has mainly been guided by age, with routine screening recommended for women aged 50–74, and more frequent or specialised screening for those at higher risk. There is now increasing focus on tailoring screening more closely to individual risk.

How might screening change?

Breast cancer risk is influenced by more than age. Family history, inherited genetic changes, reproductive and hormonal factors and breast density can all play a part. Other factors may also contribute, including diet, alcohol intake and how physically active you are.

Researchers are exploring a more personalised approach that considers other risk factors and whether different screening methods or intervals could benefit some women. The aim is to better match screening to each person, not simply increase screening. For now, Australia's current screening program remains in place.

Why does breast density matter?

You may have heard the term 'dense breasts' on a mammogram report. Breast density describes the amount of glandular and connective tissue compared with fatty tissue in the breast. It can't be judged by how your breasts look or feel.

Dense breast tissue is important for two reasons. It's associated with a higher risk of breast cancer, and it can make breast cancer harder to detect on a mammogram because both dense tissue and cancer can appear white.

BreastScreen Australia recommends providing information about breast density with mammogram results, and some states and territories are already doing this. If you are told you have dense breasts, don't be alarmed. This does not mean you have breast cancer. Density is only one part of the bigger picture.

Your GP can help put your result into context by considering your other risk factors. For now, continue to take part in recommended breast screening and see your doctor if you notice a new or unusual breast change, regardless of when your last mammogram was.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. A good time to check if you're up to date with your breast screening.



HOME-BAKED SEED CRACKERS

Wow your friends with your next cheese and cracker platter. These crisp, golden crackers are easy to make, packed with wholesome ingredients, and a delicious homemade alternative to expensive speciality crackers.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup wholemeal flour
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup water
- ½ tsp salt
- Optional: ½ tsp dried rosemary, thyme or mixed herbs.

METHOD

1. Heat oven to 180°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Mix all ingredients in a bowl to form a soft dough. Knead briefly, then rest for 10 minutes.
3. Place the dough between two sheets of baking paper and roll to 2-3mm thick. Remove the top sheet and score into squares.
4. Bake for 18-25 minutes. Check at 15 minutes and remove any crackers that are already golden; return the rest to finish baking.
5. Cool completely on a rack before breaking into crackers – they crisp as they cool.

TOPPING IDEAS

- Spicy: Add chilli flakes or smoked paprika.
- Cheesy: Sprinkle with finely grated Parmesan before baking.
- Simple: Serve with hummus, avocado, cheese or a fresh tomato salsa.



Why does my tongue have a yellow coating?

Have you ever noticed that your tongue has a yellowish coating? It can look a little unpleasant, but in many cases, there's a simple explanation.

Your tongue naturally collects bacteria, dead cells and tiny particles from food and drink. If these build up on the surface, they can create a thicker coating that looks yellow and may contribute to bad breath.

What causes it?

There are several reasons why your tongue may develop this coating. Poor oral hygiene can allow more bacteria and dead cells to accumulate, while a dry mouth reduces the flow of saliva that normally helps keep your mouth clean. Certain medications may also cause a dry mouth.

Smoking and drinking a lot of coffee or tea can also contribute, and some foods and drinks can temporarily stain the tongue.

You may also notice it when you have a cold or flu. A blocked nose can make you breathe through your mouth, which can dry it out and allow a coating to build up on your tongue.

Other conditions can sometimes cause changes to your tongue. For example, oral thrush usually produces creamy white patches.

You may have heard that a yellow tongue coating might mean you have a digestive problem, but there isn't good evidence that this alone is a sign of unhealthy digestion.

What can you do?

Good oral hygiene can usually help. Brush your teeth twice a day and clean your tongue with your toothbrush or a tongue scraper. Avoid harsh scraping or brushing, which can irritate your tongue.

Drinking plenty of water can help if your mouth is dry, and avoiding smoking may also improve the appearance of your tongue.

When should you get it checked?

A yellow coating is often nothing to worry about. If it persists despite good oral hygiene, or you develop pain, sores or other unusual changes in your mouth, talk to your GP.

Questions to ask at your doctor's visit

Asking questions helps you get the care you need. To make the most of your visit, jot down anything you'd like to know about in the space below. Take this list with you so it's easy to remember what you wanted to ask.

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME

1.
2.
3.
NOTES:

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS
2. MAMMOGRAM
8. NASAL
10. INFLAMMATION
12. SUCROSE
13. PROTEIN
14. BACTERIA

DOWN
1. METABOLISM
3. MOBILITY
4. MUSCLES
5. ORAL
6. MYOKINES
7. BALANCE
9. SARCOPENIA
11. FRUCTOSE

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.