

# ALICE STREET MEDICAL CENTRE



15 Alice Street  
Atherton QLD 4883

P: 07 4091 3122  
A/H: 0418 184 070  
F: 07 4091 1317

**Dr Tony McLellan** **Dr Ed Stark**  
**Dr Chris Earl** **Dr Dan Caines**  
**Dr Robin Leven** **Dr Emma Griffiths**  
**Dr David Simonds** **Dr Gene Walker**  
**Dr Meech Freeman**

*Our doctors have satisfied the requirements of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and are on the Vocational Register of General Practitioners.*

They are family doctors experienced in the broad range of general practice and as well as routine consulting involving all age groups they do:

- Obstetrics, including caesarean sections and ultrasound scans
- Epidurals
- General anaesthetics
- Surgery, including both minor surgery and some major surgery
- Immunisations
- Audiograms
- Skin cancers
- Family planning, including tubal ligations and vasectomies

## STAFF

Madeleine Shaw (Practice Manager)

Jen DeBondi, Melissa McDonald, Julie Pink, Sasha Snow, Gabrielle Turner, Lisa Blaney and Lerae Hubner.

## NURSING STAFF

Robyn Trimble RN Marea Mead RN  
Lauren Caines RN Heidi Baker RN  
Anna Montgomery RN

## SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

CONSULTATIONS are by appointment.

**Monday to Friday** 8am to 5pm  
**Saturday** 8am to 11am

EMERGENCIES will be dealt with immediately. AFTER HOURS the doctor on call can be contacted by ringing 0418 184 070. HOME VISITS are made where appropriate. Please contact the surgery as soon as possible after 8am to arrange a home visit. NURSING HOME VISITS are made on request.

## AFTER HOURS CONTACT DETAILS

Phone numbers are placed on the external door, recorded on our answering service message and noted on all our stationery. These numbers include:

After-hours mobile: 0418 184 070  
1300 Health: 1300 432 584  
GP Helpline: 1800 022 222  
Atherton Hospital: 07 4091 0211  
Ambulance emergency service: 000

# YOUR DOCTOR



FREE!!  
TAKE ME  
HOME

**FEBRUARY 2020**

## Ovarian cancer – are you at risk?

February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, which is held each year to raise awareness of this serious disease.

Ovarian cancer is sometimes called one of the silent cancers, because its symptoms are easy to overlook or ignore. Each year over 1,600 women in Australia are diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Although survival rates are improving, there is still only around a 46 percent chance of survival five years after diagnosis.

### What is ovarian cancer?

Ovarian cancer develops when abnormal cells grow in or on the ovaries in an uncontrolled way. These cells can spread and develop into secondary cancer throughout the body. The ovaries are a pair of small organs in the female reproductive system that produce and store the ova, or eggs, during a woman's reproductive years.

*The earlier the disease is identified, the higher the chances of treatment being successful*

### Who's at risk?

The exact cause of ovarian cancer is unknown, but the likelihood of developing the disease may be higher if a woman has one or more risk factors.

The biggest factor is age, with the incidence of the disease becoming higher after menopause. Although ovarian cancer can occur in younger women, the average age of diagnosis is 64. Hereditary risk factors include the inheritance of a mutated gene, or having a strong family history of ovarian, breast, or bowel cancer. Ovarian cancer is less likely in women who have had more breaks in their cycle of ovulation, such as pregnancies, breastfeeding, and using certain contraceptives.

### Symptoms

One of the reasons that ovarian cancer has such a low survival rate is because in most cases it is not diagnosed until it has progressed to an advanced stage.

Typically, this is because the early signs of ovarian cancer may be confused with the symptoms of some common stomach and digestive issues.

Symptoms may include:

- abdominal bloating and increased abdomen size
- indigestion or nausea
- feeling full quickly after eating a small amount
- pressure or pain in the pelvis or lower back
- frequent or urgent urination
- changes in bowel movements
- bleeding after menopause or in-between periods
- pain during sexual intercourse

Other more general symptoms include feeling fatigued, unexplained weight fluctuations, or generally just feeling unwell.

Currently there is no screening test for ovarian cancer. The chances of successful treatment are higher the earlier the disease is identified, so knowing the signs and seeking advice promptly are important.

### Treatment

As there are many different forms and stages of ovarian cancer, the treatment will be an individualised plan based on the results of scans and examinations.

### What can I do?

The best way to improve survival rates from ovarian cancer is through supporting research and education. Getting involved with Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month this February is a great start.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms, or concerned about your risk factors, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- Mental health & the workplace
- Tinnitus
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Mouth-watering melon
- Word Search
- Minty melon and feta salad

**Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!**

## Minty melon and feta salad

Cool and refreshing, this salad is the perfect balance of sweet and tart flavours.

### INGREDIENTS

3 cups seedless, cubed watermelon  
1 medium thin-skinned cucumber, chopped  
2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh mint leaves  
80g goat feta cheese, crumbled

### FOR THE DRESSING

¼ cup fresh lime juice  
2 Tbsp runny honey  
3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tsp grated ginger  
½ tsp sea salt  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

Whisk the dressing ingredients together. Gently combine melon, cucumber, mint and dressing. Serve sprinkled with feta cheese.



## Taking control of tinnitus

Tinnitus is the word for hearing a sound that doesn't come from an external source, sometimes described as a ringing in the ear. It can affect one or both ears, and can vary in pitch from a very low rumble to a very high squeal. Some people describe it as a hissing, whooshing, throbbing, or singing. Tinnitus can be continuous, or it may come and go.

### What causes tinnitus?

Tinnitus is commonly linked to hearing loss, especially long-term or short-term damage to the ears due to loud noise – it's very common after a loud concert or listening to loud music through earphones. Loud noise can damage the tiny hair-like cells which receive and convey sound. This sort of short-term damage usually resolves itself, but can cause long-term problems if it happens too often.

A number of health conditions can cause or worsen tinnitus; these include other ear problems, chronic health conditions, head and neck injuries, certain medications, and extreme stress. In many cases, an exact cause may not be found.

### What can I do about tinnitus?

Some people find their tinnitus gets worse after a cold or nasal congestion. This will usually resolve itself, but if the tinnitus

continues for more than a week after the cold has gone, check with your doctor for signs of an ear infection.

It's a good idea to have a healthcare professional check your ears for excessive wax build-up or damage to the eardrum if tinnitus is continuous or frequent. They can also refer you for further tests if you have other symptoms such as dizziness, which may point to different issues.



Prevention is better than cure, and it's never too late to start protecting your ears from further damage.

If you work in an environment with a lot of loud noise, such as a music venue, or with loud machinery, make sure you have ear protection.

Tinnitus affects everyone differently; for some it can significantly affect their quality of life and they may experience fatigue, stress, anxiety, sleep problems and depression. Treating these conditions may not help your tinnitus but can make you feel better. Regular exercise can improve wellbeing and may help reduce or mask the noise, making tinnitus less noticeable.

Tinnitus is common, and doesn't normally cause a problem. Very occasionally however, tinnitus can be a symptom of something else, and should be investigated by a doctor.

## Is your workplace affecting your mental health?

Now is the time when many people head back to work after the summer holidays; do you look forward to it, or feel anxious about returning?

Work-related stress is a growing problem that affects productivity, health and well-being. It can cause an increase in absenteeism, a drop in work performance, and loss of earnings – all factors that increase the risk of mental illness.

High job demands, shift work, and bad relationships in the workplace can all contribute to poor mental health. Lack of support structure, feeling unable to speak out about problems in the workplace, and organisational change can have an impact as well.

### Symptoms

'Mental illness' encompasses a huge range of different conditions, but some of the most common work-related problems have recognisable features, including:

- losing interest and enjoyment in normal activities
- feeling anxious, overwhelmed, worried or frightened
- experiencing fatigue or sleep disturbances
- suffering heart palpitations, chest pain, headaches, and stomach upsets

Sometimes these are indicators of other health problems, so it's important to see your doctor if you're experiencing any of these symptoms.

### Management

It's important for employers to recognise work-related stress as a significant health issue, and provide a safe and supportive environment for their employees.

Unfortunately, mental health can still be one of the hardest topics to broach, but there has been progress in recent years to fight the stigma surrounding mental illness and to encourage an open and judgement-free culture.

Recognising that there's a problem is the first positive step when tackling mental illness. Realising you're not alone and asking for help is the second. A number of organisations specialise in helping people with mental health problems and there are many treatment options. See your doctor to discuss your concerns and find out what help is available.

**It's ok to  
ask for  
help**

# WORD SEARCH

N S R A A V J J Z Y T P M Y X Z T T I B V C D S P E R B I F  
 S P H X F A E Q A L N D I Z Z I N E S S G A V L P A M A Z V  
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 Q E A V C M T L T R T O I E F G F S M E N O P A U S E N S O  
 J M C B P I J M Y A D X N M S S Q I F F R K N Y C J J W Q I  
 Q K X A W R A E O H S R E K X U Y O X J H H O N E S G M T K  
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 E O U R G N E J L D B M I E Z S Y P L A X B K H Y A G T E E  
 C R P H E S T C J I A S I U Z V J D N R V F M D W R T K Y M  
 N R T A E U A I E X J U I C M I F V X R H O B U J I F U C I  
 A A K L E V R Q H D S Q H D I S O R D E R P S N R N U B L F  
 C U B E P S D N B E Q U V T L M S J Y Q Y N T X S T D U J S  
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 Q M H Q T I Y Z S L D M M N D R A D Q A V F G L L I O H D S  
 J P B E Y C T L A Z R Q Z F G T M G I S U T I N N I T T H T  
 V R E E D B E L N P L M R W R O J I E E S X C Z Z M H M L J  
 D D Q H O B H E F S Q U Z O W N Q V P A Z U N Y C J K K K D  
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- ANXIETY
- AUTISM
- CANCER
- CELL
- COPPER
- DEPRESSION
- DISORDER
- DIZZINESS
- EARDRUM
- EARWAX
- ELECTROLYTES
- FIBRE
- HEARING
- HYDRATE
- INSOMNIA
- MELONS
- MENOPAUSE
- MORTALITY
- NASAL
- OVA
- POTASSIUM
- ROCKMELON
- SAD
- SODIUM
- SPECTRUM
- SUGAR
- TINNITUS
- URINARY

## Mouth-watering melons

Eating more fruit and vegetables is always high on the agenda for healthy eating. When it comes to making a healthy choice, melons are loved around the world. They're hydrating, delicious, and are relatively low in calories – perfect for a sweet yet healthy snack.

Melons contain a range of essential nutrients, while containing no cholesterol, almost no fat, and a relatively small amount of natural sodium. They also contain two types of fibre: soluble fibre helps to reduce cholesterol and regulate blood sugar, and insoluble fibre helps to support a healthy bowel.

Melons are rich in various health-giving compounds, even containing nutrients known to help prevent or fight heart disease, stroke and digestive disorders. Melons also contain complex antioxidants, those

chemicals known to combat cell damage and reduce cancer risk. Watermelons, with their rich red colour, are the best melon for sourcing antioxidants, though they're lower in other nutrients than other melons.

Different types of melon can have very different vitamin and mineral content. A single serving of 130g of honeydew melon provides 45 % of your recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamin C; the same amount of cantaloupe, or rockmelon, contains a whopping 80% of your RDA! Vitamin C is associated with healthy immune systems, clear skin, and general good health.

Melons are also high in:

- potassium – essential for a healthy heart and good blood pressure
- beta-carotene – helps produce vitamin A, necessary for healthy eyes
- copper – helps with the production and function of red and white blood cells

Melons – especially watermelons as the name suggests – have extremely high water content. Not only that, but the levels of sodium, potassium, and other essential electrolytes makes them a perfect source of hydration – like a natural sports drink, in its own eco-friendly packaging!



The best news of all is that melons are healthy, delicious, and easy to add to your diet, try them:

- whizzed up in smoothies
- sliced in vegetable or fruit salads
- pureed and frozen into delicious ice blocks

Whatever way you like them; melons are a great addition to a healthy diet.



# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

**Autism is a condition which affects the way people understand and interact with others and their environment.**

It's considered a 'spectrum' disorder, which means that the severity of the condition varies from person to person. Some people have very mild ASD, perhaps only noticeable from the outside as a slight variance in the way that person communicates, to very severe ASD, which can be profound, and sometimes debilitating.

People with autism may also have other difficulties such as mental health problems and learning disabilities, or they may have no noticeable disorders. They can often be highly intelligent and may not require any extra assistance with daily life.

In short, people with autism are as varied and individual as anyone else. Many people do not see autism as a disorder, but a way to recognise the unique differences, abilities, and strengths individuals with autism have.

Autism can sometimes be identified in very early childhood, and is noticed when a child doesn't appear to move through the normal stages of development in the same way as their peers.

Young children with ASD may present with traits such as:

- being unresponsive to facial expressions, such as not smiling back when smiled at
- avoiding eye contact
- repeating movements or phrases often

Older children and adults may have other signs of ASD such as:

- feeling socially anxious or not understanding social cues, for example 'personal space'
- finding it difficult to understand how others are feeling
- taking things very literally or not understanding metaphors
- needing a strict routine and feeling anxious about changes, or needing to plan changes very carefully
- noticing details or patterns that other people don't, or being very single-minded about interests

Almost four times as many boys as girls have a diagnosis of autism. The reason for this is unclear but there seems to be a difference in the way the traits of ASD present themselves in girls. Girls with ASD tend to be quieter than boys with ASD; therefore the condition might not be noticed as early.

If you, your child, or loved one has unusual difficulties with social or environmental interaction, a healthcare professional, developmental specialist or autism awareness charity will listen to your concerns and offer helpful advice.

A diagnosis of autism can be met with mixed responses; often people feel relief that there's a tangible reason for something they've always felt wasn't quite right. Having a diagnosis can help ensure that extra needs can be understood and met, especially at school or in the workplace.

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*- People with autism are as varied and individual as anyone else -*

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**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.

## JANUARY UPDATE

### DR'S ON HOLIDAYS

Dr Ed Stark 24/01/20 – 09/02/20  
Dan Caines 10/02/20 – 23/02/20

### ONE OFF ANNUAL FEE

With March approaching, we would like to remind those of you who we normally bulk bill (aged pensioners and children under 16 yrs old) that we will be asking for your one-off annual fee at your first visit after March 1, 2020. We will only charge this fee when you attend for a standard appointment and so the amount payable will be \$81 with a Medicare refund due to you of \$38.20.

### CONSULTATION REQUIRED

Just a friendly reminder that our policy is if you require a prescription, you must see a doctor.

This is the same requirement for Patient Travel Forms, Referrals, Driver's License renewals and any other paperwork / forms. They are all legal documents and therefore there is a requirement that you attend.

### HEALTH ASSESSMENTS AND DRIVER'S LICENSE

We understand that your time is precious, so we are trying to combine your Health Assessment appointment with your Driver's License renewal. Both of these appointments address similar issues and therefore it is a good opportunity to have them done in one consultation if possible.

### REQUESTING TO SPEAK TO THE DOCTOR

Quite often we have patients who phone wanting to speak to the Doctor. Unfortunately, this is near impossible as they are fully booked and trying to keep to time with patients. We are always happy to put you through to a nurse or send the doctor a message to return your call at their convenience. The preferred option for our doctors is not to consult over the phone but rather to see you in person to better diagnose the situation.

### AFTER HOURS DOCTOR ON CALL

As a patient of Alice Street Medical Centre you are able to access our after hours on call doctor. There is a Doctor available on Mbl: 0418184070 between 5pm and 8 am every day. You can phone and discuss your concerns and then the doctor will decide if you are to come and meet them at the surgery for further attention. There will be a fee charged for this service, but you will only be out of pocket \$70.00.

The best thing about this service is that you will not have a lengthy wait time at the hospital emergency department.

To try the latest **RECIPE** take me home...