

## ST AGNES SURGERY

1251 North East Rd  
Ridgehaven 5097

P: 8264 3333



## TEA TREE SURGERY

975 North East Rd  
Modbury 5092

P: 8264 4555



### PRACTICE PARTNERS

#### Dr John Lepoidevin

MBBS DRCOG (Eng)

#### Dr Karen Hand

MBBS FRACGP

#### Dr James Robertson

MBBS FRACGP

#### Dr Jyothi Menon

MBBS FRACGP MRCP (Paed)

#### Dr Stephen Davis

MBBS FRACGP Dip Pall Med (clin)

#### Dr Hamad Harb

MBBS (Russia) FRACGP

Dip Skin Cancer Surgery and Molescan

#### Dr Hung Tran

MBBS FRACGP

### ASSOCIATE DOCTORS

#### Dr Robert D Rushton-Smith

MBBS DRCOG FRACGP FACRRM DRANCOG

#### Dr Jamie Mattner

MBBS DCH FRACGP

#### Dr Suresh Babu

MBBS DipAvMed(UK) MSc OccMed(UK) FACaSM

#### Dr Paul Veitch

MBBS FRACGP

#### Dr Christopher G Platis

MBBS

### SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

#### ST AGNES SURGERY

**Monday to Friday** 8.00am–5.30pm

#### TEA TREE SURGERY

**Monday to Friday** 8.30am–6.00pm

**Saturday** 8.00am–1.00pm

### WEEKEND AFTER HOURS & PUBLIC HOLIDAY HOURS

Tea Tree Surgery will close at 1.00pm on weekends. After hours service sessions are at **Tea Tree Surgery**.

**Saturday** 8.00am–1.00pm

**Sunday & Public Hols** 9.00am–1.00pm

An appointment time is required.

For urgent medical problems outside these hours, a duty doctor can be contacted on 8264 3333 (St Agnes Surgery) or 8264 4555 (Tea Tree Surgery). Follow the instructions on the recorded message.

You can now find us on the web at

[www.stagnessurgery.com.au](http://www.stagnessurgery.com.au)

# YOUR DOCTOR

FREE!!  
TAKE ME HOME



OCTOBER 2017

## The effects of exercise in early life

Most adults are aware that regular exercise is good for their health.

In addition to a healthy diet, the benefits of regular physical activity for weight control, warding off diabetes and improving mood are well documented. More recently, attention has been focused on encouraging children to exercise more regularly.

With childhood obesity rising rapidly, increasing emphasis is being placed on the benefits of exercise as a way to combat this condition. Whilst we may not think children need encouragement to get active, greater use of portable electronic devices and more time spent on screen-related activities mean that children are leading a more sedentary life.

A report in 2015 suggested that, on average, children between five and sixteen years old spend six and a half hours each day looking at screens. This figure had more than doubled compared to results gathered 20 years earlier. Encouraging children away from screens is an ongoing challenge for many parents – however a recent study from New Zealand adds another layer to the argument in favour of ensuring young children get active regularly.

Using rats as a model, the group of researchers looked at the effects activity levels in early life had on the health of the animals as they got older. Surprisingly, they found that regular exercise early in life changed the way the rats' bodies handled high calorie diets, even well into 'mid-life'.

When the rats were given a high calorie diet in mid-life, as expected, all the rats became overweight. However, those that

had exercised regularly as youngsters stayed healthy and did not show signs of developing high blood pressure, diabetes or vascular disease – the same conditions that are often found in overweight people.

The animals who had exercised less earlier in their life developed all the typical problems. This is fascinating as it is the first time that such long-term effects of early exercise have been observed. Not only were the animals healthier as 'children', the benefits of exercise were maintained right through into middle-age.

Of course, for humans, keeping an eye on our weight throughout life is important. The best way to stay healthy is to eat well and exercise regularly. This research may go some way, however, to explaining why some adults seem relatively healthy despite being overweight, whilst others quickly develop problems when they gain weight.

Encouraging exercise in the early years is well known for forming good habits later in life, making unhealthy weight gain less likely. This new study suggests that, even for those who go on to become overweight in middle age, having exercised regularly in childhood might help them remain well.

Australian Government recommendations are that toddlers and pre-schoolers should be physically active for at least 3 hours every day, whilst older children should accumulate at least 60 minutes over the course of a day. If we achieve this, we may not only be keeping our children healthy and avoiding obesity in early life, but also helping to prevent obesity-related diseases later in life.

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!

# Reducing the risk of dementia

**Throughout our ageing population, dementia is becoming ever more common. The burden on family and carers is huge, with sufferers often needing years of round-the-clock care.**

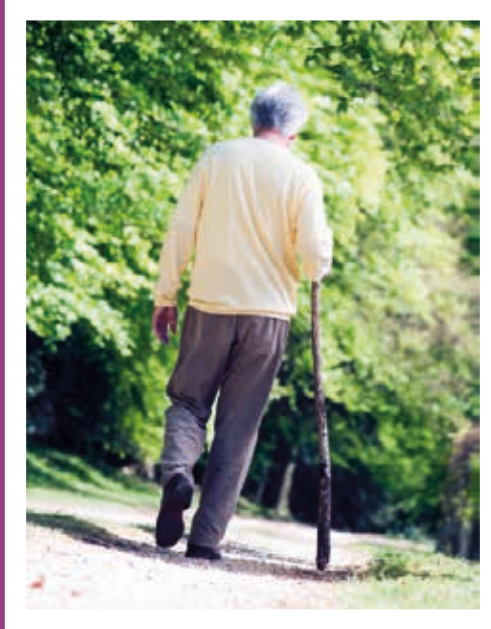
This cruel disease sees the gradual, unstoppable decline in the cognitive function of a person – making it seem like they are slowly but steadily disappearing before our eyes.

Whilst we know that age is the single biggest risk factor for dementia, attention has increasingly turned to searching out other factors that may contribute to the likelihood of developing dementia, particularly to try and identify those which we can alter.

We know that dementia runs in families and there is little we can do about that. There are however many things we can control which might reduce the risk.

For example, we know that our health in mid-life makes a difference. Bad habits during this period can set in motion changes which can lead to cognitive decline and even

dementia in our later years. And it's the same health messages that keep coming through – obesity, diabetes and raised blood pressure in middle-age have all been shown to increase the chance of dementia in old-age. For those of us with the opportunity to do so, this provides yet another incentive to look after ourselves in order to preserve both mind and body for the future.



Even in later life there are things we can do to reduce the risk of dementia. Regular physical activity – whatever our age – has been shown to help prevent mental decline. Smoking increases the risk, whilst moderate alcohol consumption seems to reduce it. There may also be dietary changes that could help – a recent study found that people who regularly drink artificially sweetened drinks have a higher risk of dementia. So, substituting 'diet' drinks with say tea or coffee could, it seems, help ward off dementia.

The hunt goes on with investigations into fields as diverse as low vitamin D and exposure to pesticides. Because of these continual studies the list of things we can do to help ourselves keeps growing. Keeping your weight stable, engaging in regular physical exercise, not smoking, indulging in the occasional glass of wine and even avoiding artificially sweetened drinks all have the power to help. At the moment we cannot completely prevent or 'cure' dementia, but we can all help ourselves a little by reducing our own risk.

## ACROSS

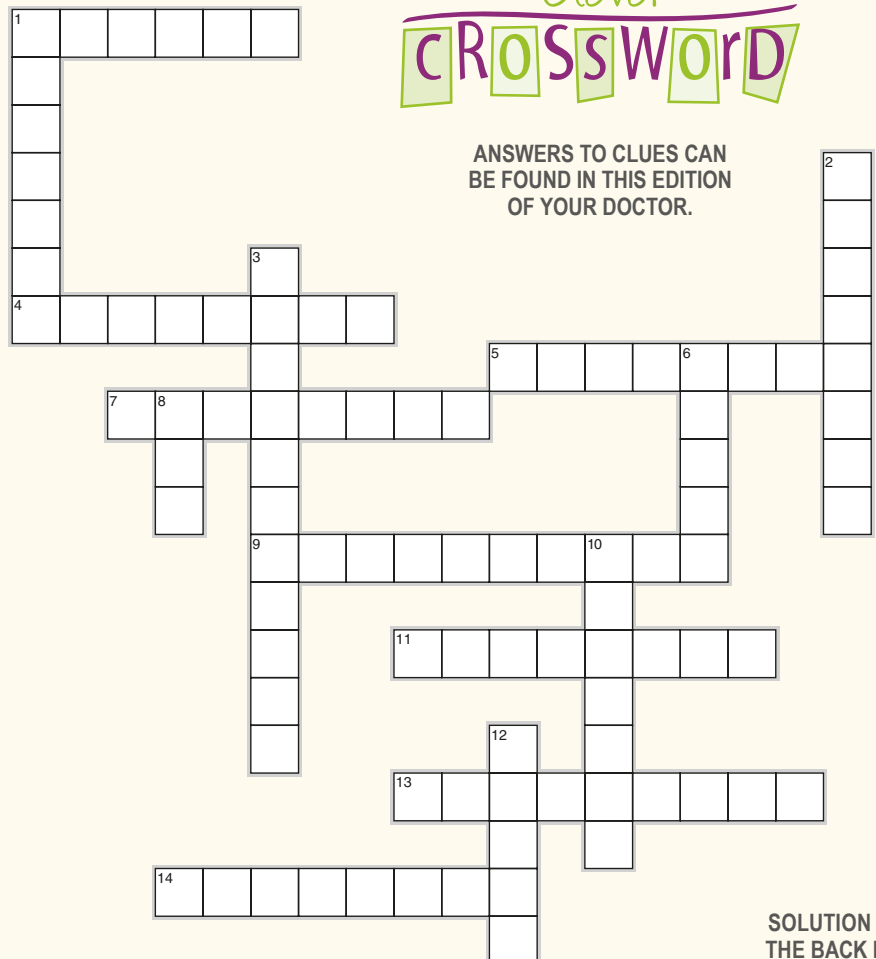
1. A new medical glue inspired by slugs is both flexible and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Using medical glues to close wounds helps prevent this.
5. Chemical 'messenger' our nerves use to pass sleep messages to the brain.
7. A type of disease common in overweight people.
9. Nerves or chemicals that help or hinder us in falling asleep.
11. Exercising as a child can help reduce the risk of this in middle age.
13. Taking this may help to reduce the effects of jet lag.
14. A food very high in vitamin B3.

## DOWN

1. NZ children aged 5-16 spend around 6 ½ hours a day looking at these.
2. Something to avoid in the evening for a good night's sleep.
3. Around 103,000 families in Australia are affected by this each year.
6. Produced by slugs, what is the inspiration for a new medical glue?
8. What is the single biggest risk factor for dementia?
10. This middle age condition increases the risk of dementia later in life.
12. Catch up on this before you travel to avoid jet lag.

## Clever CROSSWORD

ANSWERS TO CLUES CAN  
BE FOUND IN THIS EDITION  
OF YOUR DOCTOR.



**SOLUTION IS ON  
THE BACK PAGE.**



## Vitamin B3 may help reduce birth defects and miscarriages

For most couples, becoming pregnant and having a baby seems like the most natural thing in the world; and it's a happy and hopeful time.

However, for a significant number of couples, miscarriage – sometimes repeated miscarriages – can turn the happy event into a hugely stressful and distressing time.

Figures show that around 103,000 families in Australia are affected by miscarriage each year. Although we know that a large proportion of miscarriages are due to genetic problems with the baby, the reasons behind recurrent miscarriages are often unclear. A few couples will have an identifiable cause, but for the majority we simply don't understand why it happens.

A recent study from Australia, published in the highly regarded New England Journal of Medicine, may shed some light on a possible cause for the tragedy of miscarriage. The group found that

recurrent miscarriage – and some birth defects – could be explained by a problem with processing vitamin B3. Furthermore, when this problem was reproduced in experiments, miscarriages could be reduced by treating the mother with high doses of the vitamin. Vitamin B3 is found in many foods such as poultry, peanuts and (in very high levels) vegemite.

We are still a long way from suggesting pregnant women have an extra vegemite sandwich every day, as the treatment hasn't yet been trialled in women. What's more, the doses given in the experiments were far higher than our recommended daily intake. But this study does represent a real breakthrough in understanding one of the possible causes of recurrent miscarriage.

If such a simple dietary treatment (or vitamin supplement) really could help families avoid the heartbreak caused by miscarriage, that would be truly remarkable.

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## Medical glue inspired by slugs

When skin or tissue is injured or damaged, doctors and surgeons need ways to join things back together.

Closing wounds helps to stop bleeding and prevent infection, and promotes healing with the least possible scarring. Wounds need to be closed both when they happen accidentally – eg, a gashed head following a fall from a bike, or a finger cut by a kitchen knife, and when they are deliberately formed during an operation.

Traditionally, most wounds are stitched closed. Although effective, suturing requires skill to achieve a good result, can be uncomfortable or even painful for the patient, and is time-consuming. Simple wounds can be closed with dressings such as 'steri-strips', which work a bit like a sticking plaster. However, these need clean, dry surfaces to stick to, and can only be used on the surface of the skin.

Internal wounds are more challenging, as the area is usually moist and whatever substance is used to close a wound, needs to be well tolerated by the body. Medical 'glues' do exist, but until now they too have struggled with wet or moving surfaces, and their use has been limited.

A new substance which appears to overcome these challenges has been developed by an international group of scientists. The researchers took inspiration from the sticky mucus produced by slugs to form the new 'glue'. Slug mucus is extremely sticky and also incredibly flexible.

By studying its properties and chemical make-up, the researchers have created a new medical glue with incredible properties. The new glue is made up of two elements – one incredibly sticky and the other very flexible. The adhesive bonds closely to the natural tissue, working even in wet conditions. The flexible part means the glue stays in place, even when the tissues are moving. During testing, the researchers claim to have used the glue to close a hole in an animal's heart.

Potentially, this glue has a huge range of uses – from closing cuts after accidents to helping surgeons during difficult procedures and reducing scarring after routine surgery. It just goes to show what fascinating advances we can make by taking inspiration from the natural world – even something as mundane as the common slug!

## The nerves behind jet lag

Jet lag is a common condition for many who undertake long distance flights. The dragging tiredness, inability to sleep in the 'new' night-time and sometimes the days it takes to adapt to the new time zone often means that valuable days of enjoyment are lost.

On one level, jet lag is very easy to understand. We can appreciate that our body and brain become 'confused' by the rapid change in rhythm, and can take some time to adapt. In order to try and prevent jet lag, we need to have a more in-depth understanding of processes in the brain, the chemicals that influence our state of wakefulness, and how these are controlled.

Advice for minimising jet lag or recovering from it more quickly includes eating well, keeping hydrated and catching up on sleep before you travel. Some suggest taking melatonin (the substance that regulates our sleep-wake cycle), but not all studies support this. Most agree that it takes several days to adapt to a change in time zone.

New research has perhaps taken us a step closer to being able to control jet lag, and possibly even eliminating it completely. A study from America published in 'Current Biology' journal has identified specific neurons (nerve cells) within the brain which are responsible for regulating our day-night, sleep-wake cycle; and dopamine as the chemical messenger these nerves use to pass on messages.

Although a long way from developing a treatment, findings like these are the first step towards understanding what causes jet lag, and therefore identifying opportunities for possible remedies. Perhaps one day we may be able to make the most of every day during a round-the-world trip.



## Chocolate Brownie: a healthier version...

*A tasty flourless treat full of black bean protein...*

Suitable to freeze

### INGREDIENTS

400g tin black beans, drained and rinsed  
4 eggs  
100g butter (or coconut oil), softened  
½ cup coconut sugar (or other unrefined sugar)  
1 tsp vanilla essence  
½ cup cocoa  
2 tsp baking powder  
Pinch of salt

### METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 170°C. Line a 20cm cake tin with baking paper.
2. Place beans and eggs into food processor and process until smooth. Set aside.
3. In a separate bowl, cream butter (or oil) and coconut sugar until light and fluffy.
4. Add vanilla essence. Sift in cocoa powder, baking powder and salt, and add the black bean mixture. Gently fold together until just combined.
6. Pour into prepared tin and bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean.
7. Allow to stand in tin for 5 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight container.



*... don't mention it and no-one will know any different!*

### Serving suggestions

*On its own warm or cold, or dust with cocoa and top with raspberries and natural yoghurt.*

## Sleep regulator may be outside the brain

Sleep seems like one of the most natural things in the world – mostly because we all need it. When we are tired we should simply be able to close our eyes, and drift off.

Unfortunately for many, the impact of the modern world and the demands of our daily lives often mean it isn't as easy as all that. Sleep problems and insomnia are affecting a growing number of people. In fact, 1 in 4 Australians report having sleep difficulties, with similar results in New Zealand.

The amount of sleep needed by an adult individual varies, however most should aim for around seven to eight hours each night.

For many who are struggling to nod off, there are simple remedies which may help. Getting sufficient physical exercise, avoiding caffeine in the evening, and ensuring we have some 'screen-free' time before bed are all good ways of helping sleep to come sooner.

For something so fundamental to us all, it is perhaps surprising how little scientists

understand about sleep. We really don't know what triggers it, nor why it is so vital. For people suffering from sleep disorders, or simply trying to catch up on lost hours, this can be frustrating as doctors don't have easy solutions.

Many studies have been done searching the brain for sleep regulators – nerves or chemicals which either help or hinder us in falling asleep. However, for the first time recently, a group has discovered that one of the key regulators of sleep might be found outside the brain. American scientists found that by changing the levels of a specific muscle protein, they could increase or decrease how much the mice in their experiments slept.

Up until now, we have thought that sleep is controlled solely by the brain. However, this new research suggests that perhaps we should be searching more widely for solutions to assist those troubled by disturbed sleep.

## PRACTICE UPDATE

### MOLESCAN

Molescan is available again through Dr Harb at Tea Tree Surgery.

### DUTY DOCTOR CLINIC

Each weekday from 4.00pm to 6.00pm our patients who need to be seen on that day, but cannot get an appointment, can be seen at Tea Tree Surgery by the Duty Doctor. An appointment time is required. Normal fees apply.

### DIABETES CLINICS

St Agnes Surgery and Tea Tree Surgery offer a Diabetes Clinic (held at the St Agnes Surgery) which is proving very successful with patients achieving significantly improved control and knowledge of their diabetes.

### PAP SMEAR CLINIC

Saturday mornings at Tea Tree Surgery with a female Doctor. Normal fees apply.

### ENURESIS CLINIC

Dry Bed Program for children 6 years and over. Speak to your Doctor for more information.

### SENIOR'S HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

St Agnes Surgery provides a comprehensive health assessment for patients 75 years of age and over – the program involves a detailed functional and safety assessment at home conducted by our Nurse, followed by a medical check-up at the Surgery.

### PRACTICE ACCREDITATION

St Agnes Surgery and Tea Tree Surgery have achieved FULL ACCREDITATION until 2020. Accreditation reflects the attainment of national standards of quality at a practice level.

### PRIVACY

This practice is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your personal health information. 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 members of staff.

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**  
DOWN  
ACROSS: 1. STICKY 4. SCARRING 5. DOPAMINE 7. VASCULAR  
9. REGULATORS 11. DIABETES 13. MELATONIN 14. VEGEMITE  
1. SCORENS 2. CAFFEINE 3. MISCARRIAGE 6. MUCUS  
8. AGE 10. OBESITY 12. SLEEP

Take me home and give our healthy RECIPE a try!