

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is a bacterial infection of the skin and underlying tissues. It can affect any part of the body, but is most common on the lower legs.

WHAT CAUSES CELLULITIS?

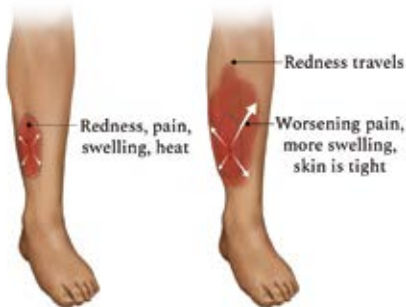
Cellulitis is caused by bacteria entering the skin and causing an infection. Our skin is usually a good protective barrier against the many different types of bacteria that live on it; however, a wound, insect bite, or cracked dry skin can be enough to allow these bacteria to infect the tissues. People with dry skin conditions like eczema may be more likely to develop cellulitis.

It's not always possible to prevent cellulitis, but good hygiene can help reduce the risk of developing infections in wounds. Proper wound care and seeking medical advice for any concerns can help stop any problems developing or getting worse.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The typical symptoms of cellulitis include:

- a red area which is hot to touch
- redness which spreads over time – it can be helpful to mark the edges of the red area to see if it's spreading each day
- swelling
- pain in the affected area.



Cellulitis can get worse and trigger sepsis, a widespread reaction to infection in the body. Signs to look out for which could require urgent treatment include:

- a high temperature (fever), chills or shivering
- feeling drowsy or dizzy
- having flu-like symptoms such as muscle aches.

TREATING CELLULITIS

Taking simple painkillers as recommended can help with pain, and managing cellulitis through good wound care can help the skin to recover. Some people with cellulitis of the lower leg find that it helps to keep the legs elevated, especially if they're swollen. If you have an existing skin condition that might make the skin more susceptible to infections, good management of that condition is essential.

If you have signs of cellulitis, it's important to see a doctor for diagnosis and medical management. See a doctor urgently if you start to feel unwell in other ways too, as cellulitis can spread quickly and cause serious illness.

Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a neurological disorder – a condition affecting the nervous system – which affects movement and function. It's a progressive, degenerative disease, which means that it gets worse over time.

WHAT CAUSES PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

It isn't fully understood why some people get PD and others don't, but it's thought to be a combination of genetic and environmental factors. We do know, however, that our risk of getting PD increases as we get older; the average age of diagnosis is around 65. It can also occur earlier in life – known as young-onset Parkinson's – but it's uncommon among younger people.

Parkinson's occurs when some of the nerve cells in the brain stop working well. This is linked to a reduction in a chemical called dopamine, which means that chemical signals in the brain aren't transmitted as well as they should be. Low levels of dopamine affect how your body moves, and causes the typical symptoms of Parkinson's.

SYMPTOMS OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE

As a progressive condition, PD is often described in stages, based on the severity of the symptoms at that time. Problems with movement and coordination are the most pronounced symptoms, especially in the early stages. PD has very characteristic movement symptoms; including tremor in the hands which is typically described as a 'pill rolling' type movement. PD is also associated with muscle stiffness, rigid stop-start movements and a shuffling gait.

Other non-movement related symptoms include chronic pain, constipation, sleep and

memory concerns, anxiety and depression. Each person diagnosed with Parkinson's disease has a different combination of symptoms, which makes treatment difficult. There's no known cure for PD, but there are ways to manage it.

LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S

Medications to reduce the symptoms are usually a very important part of managing PD and can make a huge difference to a person's ability to live independently with the disease. Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists can provide strategies to help manage symptoms that affect mobility.

“There are more than 100,000 people living with Parkinson's disease in Australia.”

As the disease progresses, people with Parkinson's often find that their movement and mobility problems make it harder to go about their usual lives. Having support, whether from family or formal care packages, is important and often becomes essential. A person in the very late stages of Parkinson's can become reliant on carers for almost all of their daily living activities, including positional changes. Memory, thought processes, and communication are severely reduced at the end stages of PD, and good nursing care is essential.

Some people progress through the stages and become ill very quickly. Other people can continue to live independent lives with manageable symptoms for many years.

Baked Camembert with figs and walnuts

Celebrate fresh fig season with this easy oven recipe. The sweet and savoury flavour of the figs is delicious, and pairs perfectly with the camembert. It looks spectacular – for very little effort!

Serve as an appetiser to share, or a party snack.

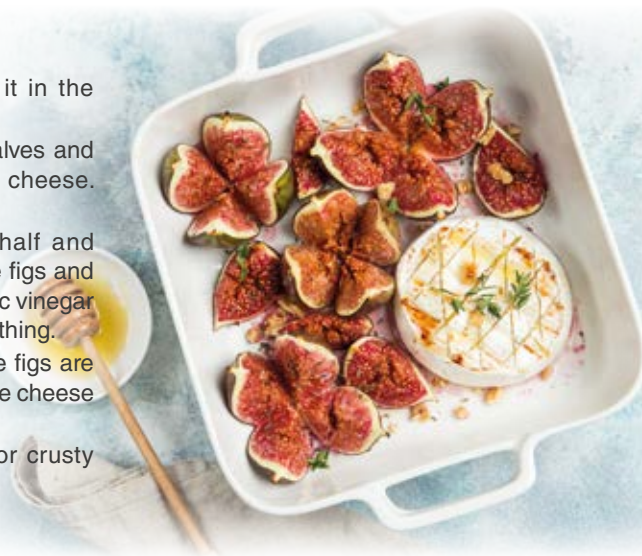
INGREDIENTS

4-6 fresh ripe figs
1 whole camembert
1/3 cup walnut halves

4 rosemary sprigs
3 Tbsp runny honey
2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

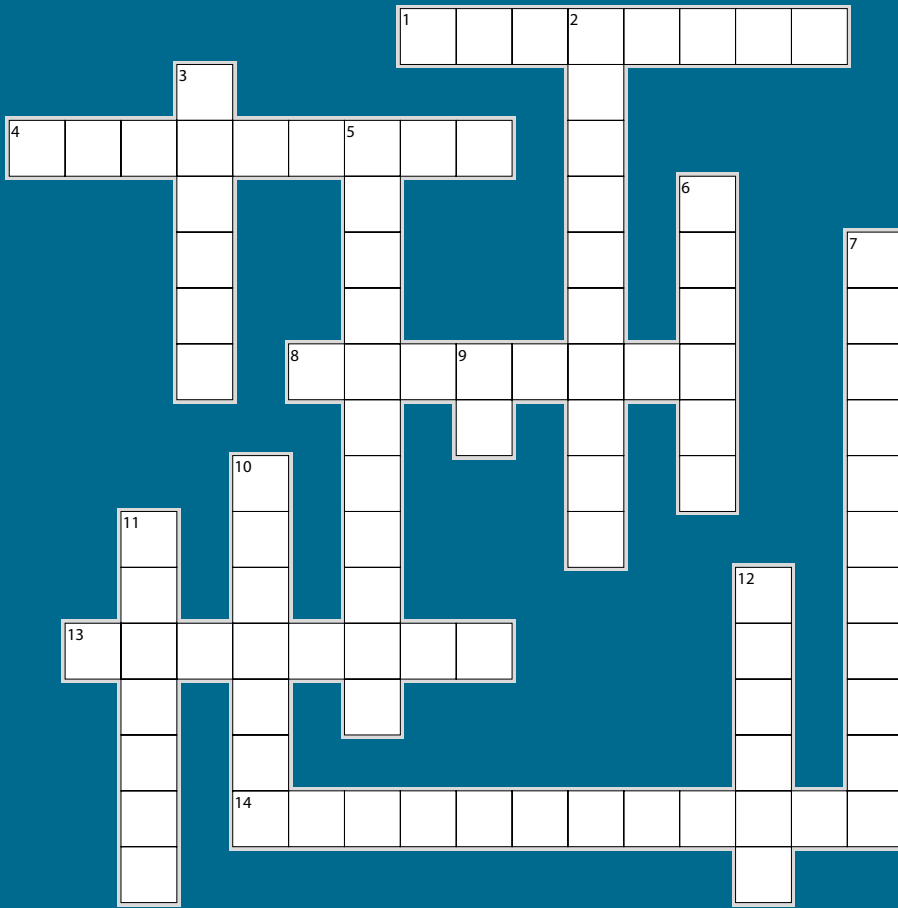
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Unwrap the cheese and put it in the middle of a large baking dish.
3. Cut the figs into quarters or halves and place cut side up around the cheese. Scatter walnuts over.
4. Cut the rosemary sprigs in half and tuck between and on top of the figs and cheese. Mix honey and balsamic vinegar together and drizzle over everything.
5. Bake for 15 minutes or until the figs are golden and caramelised, and the cheese just starts melting.
6. Serve warm with sourdough or crusty bread.



CROSSWORD CORNER

Solution is on the back page



Answers can be found in this edition of *Your Doctor*.

ACROSS

1. Pain coming from the organs is called
4. A vitamin that helps control the way blood clots (7,1)
8. A pain-relieving drug for severe pain
13. A chemical that transmits information between neurons in the brain
14. Difficulty in having bowel movements

DOWN

2. A bacterial infection in the layers of the skin and underlying tissues
3. Feeling sick and/or vomiting
5. A disease or disorder that affects the nervous system
6. An inflammation of the skin causing itching and scaly or crusty patches
7. Lack of fluids
9. Short for Parkinson's disease
10. Pain from the tissues of the body (such as the skin) is called
11. Swollen with liquid, air or gas
12. A widespread, serious reaction to infection in the body

Common questions about constipation

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M CONSTIPATED?

When we feel the urge to empty our bowels but are unable to after a few days, when it's difficult and painful to pass, or only a few hard, small lumps, we call that constipation. Constipation can also make you feel 'sluggish' and cause bloating and stomach pain.

Keep in mind that everyone's bowel habits are different – some people go several times a day, others only a few times a week – digestive systems simply work at different speeds.

WHAT CAUSES CONSTIPATION?

Some of the most common causes include:

- being less active than usual
- dehydration
- lack of dietary fibre and a diet low in fruit and vegetables
- some medications, such as codeine or morphine-based medicines
- pregnancy and just after giving birth.

Constipation is generally more common as we age, especially if we become less mobile. Holding on and ignoring the urge to go to the toilet can also lead to constipation.

WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT IT?

Mild constipation is common and usually resolves after improvements in diet, hydration and exercise. There are many different over-the-counter remedies available, and a pharmacist can advise you on these.

WHEN I SHOULD CONSULT MY DOCTOR ABOUT CONSTIPATION?

When your constipation is unexplained and doesn't resolve, it can lead to serious problems.

See your doctor if:

- your constipation doesn't improve, lasts a long time, or is a frequent problem
- there is blood in your stool
- you have been very bloated and uncomfortable for a long time
- you're losing weight without trying
- you think that medications might be causing the problem.

How much do you know about fibre?

1. Which of these is not a type of fibre?
 - Soluble fibre
 - Insoluble fibre
 - Resistant starch
 - Fructose
2. What is the recommended daily allowance (RDI) of fibre for adults?
 - 20mg
 - 30mg
 - 40mg
 - 50mg
3. Which of these vegetables contains the least fibre?
 - Spinach
 - Tomatoes
 - Broccoli
 - Parsnips
4. Which of these contains the most fibre?
 - Pears
 - Bananas
 - Raspberries
 - Kiwifruit

5. Which of these is highest in fibre?

- Wholemeal bread
- Baked beans
- Wholegrain oats
- Brown rice

1. Fructose 2. 30mg. Most Australian adults only get 20mg a day. 3. Tomatoes 4. Raspberries 5. Baked beans. They're all good options but pulses (dried peas, beans and lentils) are very high in fibre.

ANSWERS

Figs

The edible fig has been cultivated by humans since ancient times – they’re soft, juicy, and a little crunchy as they’re full of tiny seeds. They can be eaten raw or cooked, and are delicious and nutritious. Dried figs are more readily available and taste much sweeter.

ARE FIGS GOOD FOR ME?

Fresh figs contain a wide variety of vitamins, but only in fairly small quantities. However, when it comes to essential dietary minerals, figs are incredibly nutritious, with high levels of essential elements like potassium, calcium, copper, magnesium and manganese.

Drying figs effectively concentrates these nutrients by lowering the water content; so if we compare the same weight of dried and fresh figs, the dried ones are much higher in dietary fibre, iron, and other minerals. Some vitamins can be destabilised or destroyed by the drying process, so fresh figs are higher in vitamin C and vitamin A. Dried figs are, by weight, considerably higher in sugar and kilojoules than fresh figs, so they should be eaten in moderation.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS – AND RISKS – OF EATING FIGS?

The range of essential dietary minerals in figs is a good reason for eating them, and they can contribute to all-round good health.

In particular they may support healthy digestion, decrease your risk of heart disease, and help you manage your blood sugar levels.

Figs are high in dietary fibre, so they’re very good for the digestive system; some people find that they’re particularly helpful for managing constipation. The downside to that is that they can cause diarrhoea – particularly dried figs – so try adding them to your diet gradually so that you can monitor and manage any ill-effects.

Figs are high in vitamin K, which is a vitamin that helps control the way blood clots. This is essential in a healthy diet, but people who take certain blood thinners such as warfarin should aim to keep levels of vitamin K in their diet fairly consistent.

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 which is proving very successful with patients achieving significantly improved control and knowledge of their diabetes.

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 conducted by our Nurse, followed by a medical check-up with your Doctor.

PRACTICE ACCREDITATION

St Agnes Surgery and Tea Tree Surgery have achieved FULL ACCREDITATION until 2023. 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.

Discuss your concerns with the doctor

It’s a good idea to think about what you’d like to discuss before your visit. This form can help you organise your thoughts. After you make an appointment, take a minute to write down the doctor’s name and appointment details. Then use this form to make a list of your concerns.

DOCTOR’S NAME	DATE	TIME
1.		
2.		
3.		
NOTES:		

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

DOWN
 2. CELLULITIS 3. NAUSEA 5. NEUROPATHIC 6. ECZEMA
 7. DEHYDRATION 9. PD 10. SOMATIC 11. BLOATED 12. SEPSIS

ACROSS
 1. VISCERAL 4. VITAMIN K 8. MORPHINE 13. DOPAMINE
 14. CONSTIPATION

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