

# 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**

**Dr Karen Hand**

**Dr James Robertson**

**Dr Jyothi Menon**

**Dr Stephen Davis**

**Dr Hamad Harb**

**Dr Janet Davie**

## ASSOCIATE DOCTORS

**Dr Suresh Babu AM**

**Dr Paul Veitch**

**Dr Georgia Peters**

**Dr Emily Harty**

**Dr Natasha Lambert**

**Dr Chloe Shelton**

## 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–12.00pm

## WEEKEND AFTER HOURS &

### PUBLIC HOLIDAY HOURS

After hours service sessions are at **Tea**

**Tree Surgery.**

**Saturday** 8.00am–12.00pm

**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

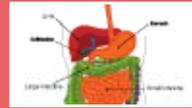
[www.stagnessurgery.com.au](http://www.stagnessurgery.com.au)

# YOUR DOCTOR

MAY 2023



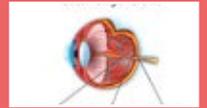
TAKE CARE OF  
CHOLESTEROL



KNOW YOUR  
GALLBLADDER



GARLIC:  
DID YOU KNOW?



LOOK FOR  
SIGNS OF AMD

*Compliments of your GP*

## Keeping a check on your kidneys

One in ten Australians over 18 years old won't find out their kidneys are failing until it's too late. So what do our kidneys do and how can we look after them?

You have two kidneys, one on either side in the back of your lower abdomen. As you can imagine, they're shaped like kidney beans, although each one is about the size of your fist. They're responsible for filtering your blood and removing waste products and excess water, which is stored in your bladder and excreted as urine.

Having healthy kidneys is incredibly important for many aspects of your health, including maintaining your body's balance of fluids and electrolytes and healthy blood pressure. Imbalanced electrolytes – such as having too much or too little potassium in your blood – can cause serious health problems.

### Kidney health checks

An estimated 1.7 million Australians have at least one sign of chronic kidney disease that can be picked up with a blood test. Sadly, it's common for people to experience few – or no symptoms at all – until they have permanent damage.

If you have kidney or cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or are at high risk of these diseases, you should have regular kidney health checks. People on certain medications may also require kidney function tests.

Blood tests for kidney function look for the balance of urea and electrolytes in your blood. Blood pressure checks also give doctors a clue about kidney function. A urine test can show the presence of protein, blood, or various other chemicals in your urine.

**Smoking affects your blood vessels, which means your kidneys need to work harder to filter blood which can cause them damage**

How often you should have these tests depends on the reasons they need to be done, and what the tests show.

### How to keep your kidneys healthy

Apart from kidney health checks; having an active, healthy lifestyle is the best thing you can do to keep your kidneys healthy.

Keep your weight in a healthy range, control your blood sugar, monitor your blood pressure and stop smoking. Drink plenty of water daily, it helps clear sodium and toxins from your kidneys.

If you're concerned about your risk of kidney disease or whether you should have a kidney check, talk to your GP. Knowing about any damage early on can help slow or prevent future health problems.



*Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.*

# Take control of your cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that's found in every cell of your body. It plays a vital role in many body functions such as making hormones, vitamin D, and bile acids that help digest fats. However, high levels of cholesterol in your blood can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

## What do LDL and HDL mean?

There are two types of cholesterol in your blood, LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and HDL (high-density lipoprotein).

LDL is often referred to as 'bad' cholesterol because it can build up in the walls of your arteries, forming deposits that can lead to blockages and heart attacks. HDL is often called 'good' cholesterol because it helps remove excess cholesterol from your blood and carries it to your liver where it's processed and eliminated from your body.

There aren't usually any signs to indicate you have high cholesterol, that's why it's essential to have regular cholesterol screening tests to check for high levels. Medical issues that can result from high cholesterol include heart disease, stroke, and artery disease.

## Cholesterol level test

A simple blood test can determine cholesterol levels and help individuals take steps to manage them if necessary.

Generally adults should have their cholesterol levels tested every five years starting at 45 years of age, and 35 years of age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However if you have risk factors such as a family history of heart disease, or



existing health conditions, you may require tests more often or at an earlier age - it's best to ask your doctor about your specific health needs.

## Preventing high cholesterol levels

Fortunately, there are practical lifestyle changes you can make that can help prevent high cholesterol levels:

- a healthy diet low in salt, saturated and trans fats, high in fibre, and rich in fruits and vegetables
- exercise at moderate-intensity for at least 30 minutes every day
- maintain a healthy weight
- quit smoking
- limit alcohol

Apart from lifestyle changes, some people may require medication to manage their cholesterol levels. However, medication should be used with lifestyle changes, rather than as a substitute for them.

It's also important to note that cholesterol management is not a one-time event.

Maintaining healthy levels requires ongoing efforts to make healthy lifestyle choices part of your daily routine and regular cholesterol screenings to assess your progress.

**Adults should have their cholesterol levels tested every 5 years**

In conclusion, high cholesterol levels can have severe health consequences, but they can be controlled with healthy lifestyle changes, medication, or a combination of both. By having regular cholesterol screenings, and working with a healthcare provider, you can take control of your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

# CROSSWORD

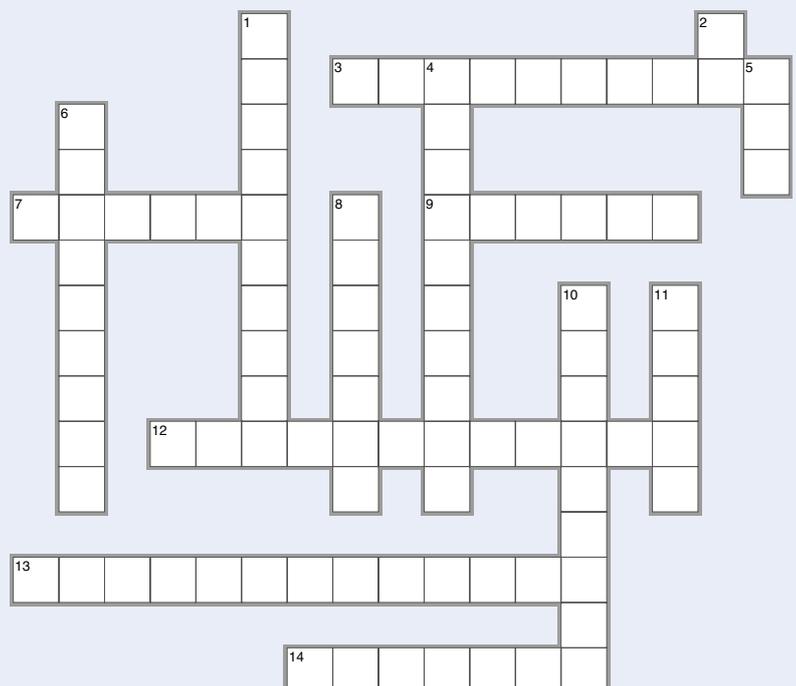
Answers can be found in this edition of Your Doctor

## ACROSS

1. A condition where the gallbladder becomes inflamed and swollen.
4. Small, hard deposits that form inside a gallbladder.
9. An area at the retina centre at the back of your eye, responsible for central vision.
11. Abbreviation for low-density lipoprotein.
12. Sudden blockage or rupture of a blood vessel in the brain.
13. A small pear-shaped organ which aids digestion.
14. Poisons.

## DOWN

2. A waxy, fat-like substance that's found in every cell of your body.
3. Minerals in your body that help control fluid levels.
5. Abbreviation for age-related macular degeneration.
6. Feeling like you want to vomit.
7. A digestive fluid produced by your liver.
8. Abbreviation for high-density lipoprotein.
10. Blood vessels.



Solution is on the back page



## One pot pasta & pumpkin bake

*This healthy, quick and easy meal is sure to become a family favourite.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped finely
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 red capsicum, deseeded and diced
- Pinch chilli flakes
- 3 cups diced pumpkin
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 300g small pasta such as macaroni
- 1 400g can evaporated milk
- 1 Tbsp fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 1 cup fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs
- ¾ cup freshly grated cheese

### METHOD

1. Heat oil in a large frying pan; add onion, garlic, capsicum and chilli flakes. Cook for a few minutes, until soft.
2. Add pumpkin and 1 cup of stock. Cover and simmer until pumpkin is soft. Mash the mixture a little, add remaining stock, dried pasta, sage and evaporated milk and simmer gently until the liquid is absorbed. If the mixture is drying out too much, cover the pan or add a little more stock or water.
3. When cooked, remove sage leaves, sprinkle with cheese and breadcrumbs and brown under a hot grill. Serve with a fresh green salad.

### Variations

- Add other vegetables – such as spinach and zucchini, to the pumpkin.
- Add chopped cooked chicken or lean bacon during final simmering stage (after pasta has softened).



## AMD is an eye disease you should not ignore

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is responsible for half of all blindness and severe vision loss in Australia, and is most common in people aged 50 years and over.

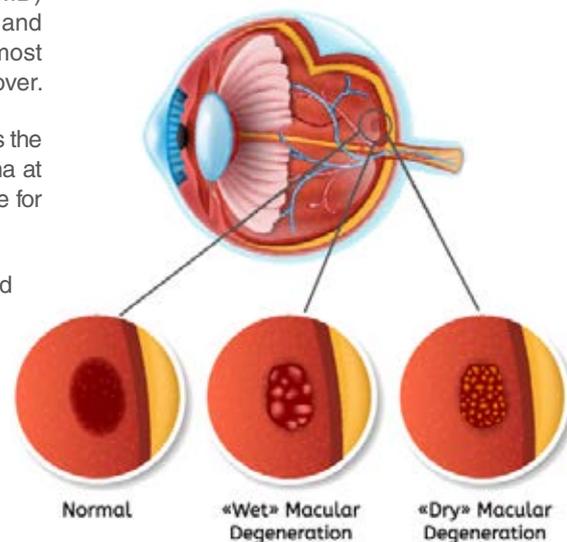
AMD is a painless eye disease that affects the macula, an area at the centre of the retina at the back of your eye, which is responsible for central vision.

There are two main forms of AMD, called wet and dry. AMD can't be cured, but treatment is available depending on the severity and type.

Dry AMD is the most common kind in Australia. The light-sensitive cells in the macula slowly break down causing gradual loss of vision over several years. There is currently no approved treatment for dry AMD; however considerable research is underway and development of different treatments continues.

In wet AMD, abnormal blood vessel growth causes damage to the retina which destroys the light-sensitive cells in the macula. Wet AMD is more severe and progresses rapidly, however there are a number of effective treatments for this form which aim to preserve vision for as long as possible. Early detection is vital so that treatment can begin promptly.

During the early stages of either form of AMD, you may not notice any symptoms. Once the disease progresses you can experience distorted vision - where straight



lines appear bent, have difficulty seeing fine details (even when wearing glasses), and dark or blurred patches in the centre of your vision.

Risk factors for AMD include age, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, and a family history of the disease. Although AMD is age-related, that doesn't mean it's a normal or inevitable part of getting older. You can check your risk factors at [www.checkmymacula.com.au](http://www.checkmymacula.com.au)

To help reduce the risk of AMD developing, it's recommended to maintain a healthy diet and weight, quit smoking, and exercise regularly. It's very important to have regular eye exams, especially as you get older.

## Get to know your gallbladder

*Your gallbladder is a small pear-shaped organ located under your liver in the upper right side of your abdomen.*

Its main function is to store bile (also called gall), a digestive fluid produced by your liver that helps to break down fats in your small intestine. When you eat, your gallbladder releases bile into your small intestine to help your digestion.

### What can go wrong with a gallbladder?

Some of the more common medical issues that can happen with your gallbladder are:

- Gallstones: these are small, hard deposits that form inside your gallbladder. They can cause pain, inflammation, and infection.
- Cholecystitis: this is a condition where the gallbladder becomes inflamed and swollen. It can be caused by gallstones or other factors and can lead to severe pain and fever.
- Biliary colic: this is a type of pain that occurs when a gallstone blocks the bile duct, causing your gallbladder to contract and spasm.

### How to prevent gallbladder problems

To keep your gallbladder in good working order you should:

- Maintain a healthy weight: being overweight or obese increases the risk of developing gallstones.
- Eat a healthy diet: a diet high in fibre and low in saturated fat can help prevent gallstones and other gallbladder issues.
- Exercise regularly: regular physical activity can help you to maintain a healthy weight and reduce your risk of gallbladder problems.
- Avoid rapid weight loss: losing weight too quickly can increase the risk of developing gallstones.
- Stay hydrated: drinking plenty of water can help prevent gallstones and keep the bile in your gallbladder flowing smoothly.

If you experience symptoms such as abdominal pain, high fever, nausea, or vomiting, it's important to see your doctor.

# Garlic: the good and the not-so-good

Garlic is a plant that belongs to the Allium family, which also includes onions, shallots, and leeks. It's a popular ingredient used in cooking around the world, but it's also known for its health benefits. Let's explore some of the good and bad features of garlic.

## The health benefits

Garlic has been used for its medicinal properties for thousands of years. It contains sulphur compounds, which are responsible for many of its health benefits.

- It may help to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Studies have shown that it can help lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels, which are two major risk factors for heart disease.
- It may have anti-inflammatory properties. Garlic contains compounds that can help reduce inflammation in your body, which can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease.
- Garlic contains compounds that can help the function of your immune system, which helps your body fight off infection and disease.
- It may have anti-cancer properties. Some studies have shown that garlic may help reduce the risk of certain types of cancer, such as stomach and colon cancer.

- It may improve cognitive function. Garlic contains compounds that may help improve the way you think and reason, and help protect against neurological diseases like Alzheimer's.

**Garlic may help lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels**

## The not-so-good

Garlic is generally considered safe for most people to eat, but if you consume a lot of it you could experience some unpleasant side effects, such as: bad breath and body odour, digestive problems, and allergic reaction. Garlic may also interact with certain medications, including blood thinners and some antibiotics.

Raw garlic is generally more nutritious than cooked garlic, as cooking can destroy some of the beneficial compounds. However, cooking garlic can also make it easier to digest and more edible.

While garlic can provide many health benefits, it's important to eat it in moderation. If you're taking medication or experiencing any negative side effects after eating garlic, it's best to talk to your doctor.

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1. CHOLECYSTITIS 4. GALLSTONES 9. MACULA 11. LDL 12. STROKE 13. GALLBLADDER 14. TOXINS  
DOWN: 2. CHOLESTEROL 3. ELECTROLYTES 5. AMD 6. NAUSEA 7. BILE 8. HDL 10. ARTERIES

## 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:		

**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 newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.*

# PRACTICE INFORMATION

## 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.