

# ST AGNES SURGERY

1251 North East Road  
Ridgehaven 5097

P: 8264 3333



# TEA TREE SURGERY

975 North East Road  
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**

**Dr Natasha Lambert**

## ASSOCIATE DOCTORS

**Dr Suresh Babu AM**

**Dr Paul Veitch**

**Dr Georgia Peters**

**Dr Emily Harty**

**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

SEPTEMBER 2023



**FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER**



**PROSTATE PROBLEMS**



**THE POWER OF PAPAYA**



**JOINT PAIN & WEIGHT**

*Compliments of your GP*

## Understanding asthma

Asthma is a complex and serious condition which can appear at all ages and stages of life. In Australia, about one in nine people have asthma, one of the highest rates in the world.

Each year, asthma claims the lives of around 400 Australians, but with proper medication and management, asthma can be controlled. Although there's currently no cure, researchers are continuing to investigate the causes, treatments and prevention of asthma.

### What is asthma?

Asthma is a condition that affects your airways, which transport air into your lungs. People with asthma have sensitive airways that become inflamed when exposed to triggers. The airways swell and become narrow, causing breathing difficulties and symptoms such as wheezing, breathlessness, coughing, and chest tightness.

### What causes asthma?

The exact causes of asthma are unknown, but genetics and a family history of asthma, eczema, and hay fever can increase the likelihood of developing it. Environmental factors, including exposure to tobacco smoke – especially as a baby or young child – obesity, and certain workplace chemicals can increase the risk of developing asthma.

### Common asthma triggers

Asthma triggers are different for each person, and can come from your environment or lifestyle. Types of triggers include: cold

and flu viruses, smoke, pollution, exercise, or allergies to pollen or dust mites. Some triggers can be prevented, like cigarette smoke, but others are more difficult to avoid, such as viruses, and weather changes.

### Exercise and asthma

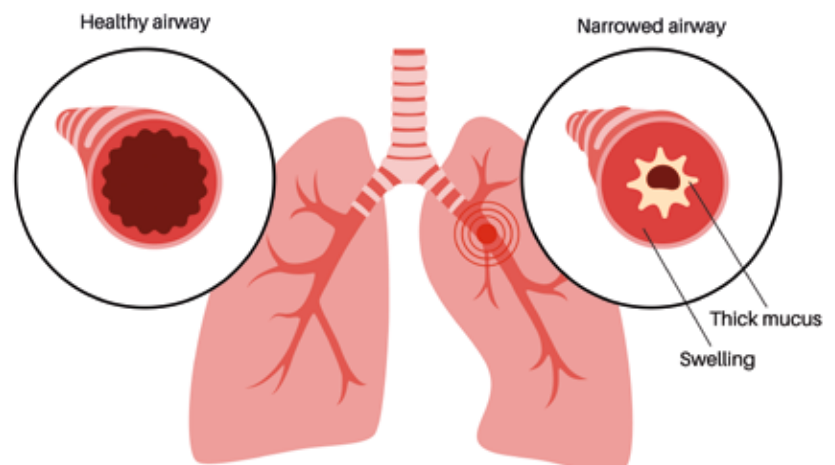
Although exercise can trigger asthma symptoms, it needn't be avoided. Being physically active is an important part of asthma management. It can help with weight control, improve your lung capacity, circulation, and is also a great stress release. Once your asthma is well-managed, you can lead an active life.

### Managing asthma

By learning how to recognise triggers and respond to early warning signs, you can lower your chance of having asthma symptoms. Everybody with asthma should have an Asthma Action Plan, which guides them on recognising their symptoms and taking appropriate actions. If your child has asthma, ensure those around them are aware of this, and know how to recognise their symptoms and respond in an emergency.

There are also a number of approved apps that can help in different ways: learning about asthma, rating air quality, first aid education, and tracking symptoms and management.

Remember, having asthma doesn't define who you are, or limit your potential. By staying proactive and sticking to your treatment plan, you can minimise the impact of asthma on your daily life and take control of your health.



1-7 September is National Asthma Week. Visit the website for details, and to learn about the apps. [www.asthma.org.au](http://www.asthma.org.au)

*Our newsletter is free! You can take a copy with you.*

# Weight matters when it comes to joint pain

We all know that good health is important, but sometimes we overlook certain aspects that can have a big impact on our well-being. One such aspect is being overweight and its connection to joint problems. Let's discuss how this can affect your joints, and share some tips on how to prevent injury and improve your overall health.

Carrying extra body weight puts added stress on your joints, especially your knees, hips, and ankles. Imagine carrying a heavy backpack all day, every day. It's no wonder that this can lead to problems!

Over time, excess pressure on a joint can contribute to the development of osteoarthritis (OA). Our cartilage acts as a shock absorber for our bones; with OA the cartilage wears away and our bones are no longer able to move smoothly. Joints can get painful, swollen and stiff. It's often referred to as the "wear and tear" type of arthritis. However, there are additional consequences of being overweight beyond extra strain on joints.

Fat cells, especially those deep within your abdomen, send out hormones that increase inflammation in your body. Inflammation is your body's defense against infections and injuries, but when it lasts too long, (becomes chronic), it can have a negative effect on your health. Chronic inflammation not only affects your overall health but can also contribute to the development and progression of osteoarthritis.

But, there is good news! It's possible to reverse this trend by losing excess weight.

Reducing your weight to healthy levels not only reduces the forces on your joints, it can significantly decrease inflammation throughout your body.

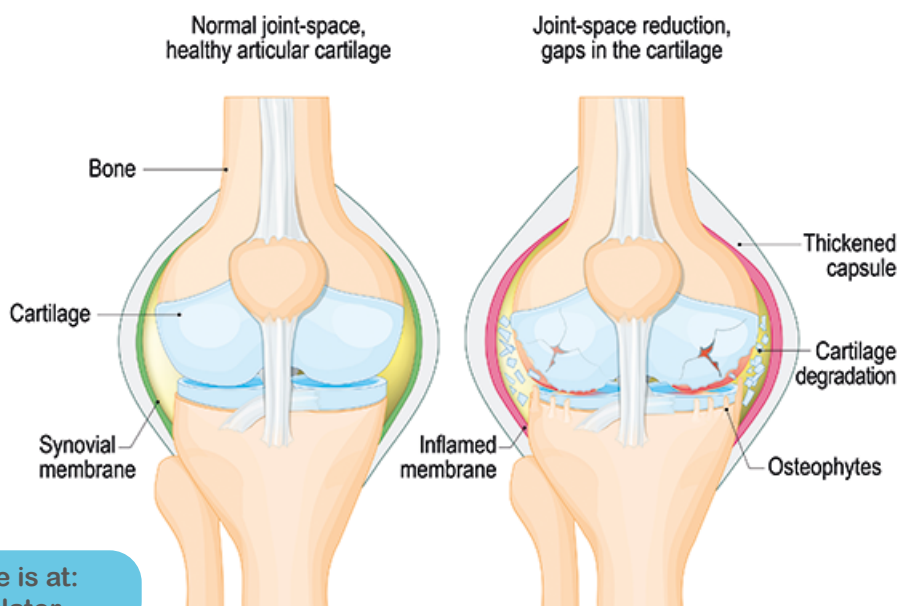
We understand it's not easy to lose weight, but following a sensible food plan can help you lose weight slowly and for the long-term. Many studies recommend a mostly plant-based, wholegrain diet. This should provide a healthy balance of lean protein, complex carbohydrates, and the high-quality fats found in oily fish and olive oil. Avoid excess alcohol, sugar, salt, highly processed foods, and saturated fats.

Regular exercise can help lower inflammation levels, promote weight loss, and strengthen the muscles around your joints, providing better support and stability.

It doesn't have to be intense – simply going for a walk, swimming, or cycling can do wonders for your joints and overall health.

The next time your joints are 'complaining'; consider whether shedding some excess kilos might provide some relief. Losing even a small amount can make a big difference in reducing the strain on your joints. If you're concerned you may have OA, or you're already experiencing joint pain, don't hesitate to seek medical advice.

By embracing healthy practices like maintaining a well-balanced diet and engaging in regular exercise, you can ease the burden on your joints and improve your well-being. Begin by adding small, positive changes to your diet and activity level, and you'll be on track towards better health!



Find out what your ideal weight range is at: [www.healthdirect.gov.au/bmi-calculator](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/bmi-calculator)

Answers can be found in this edition of Your Doctor

## CROSSWORD

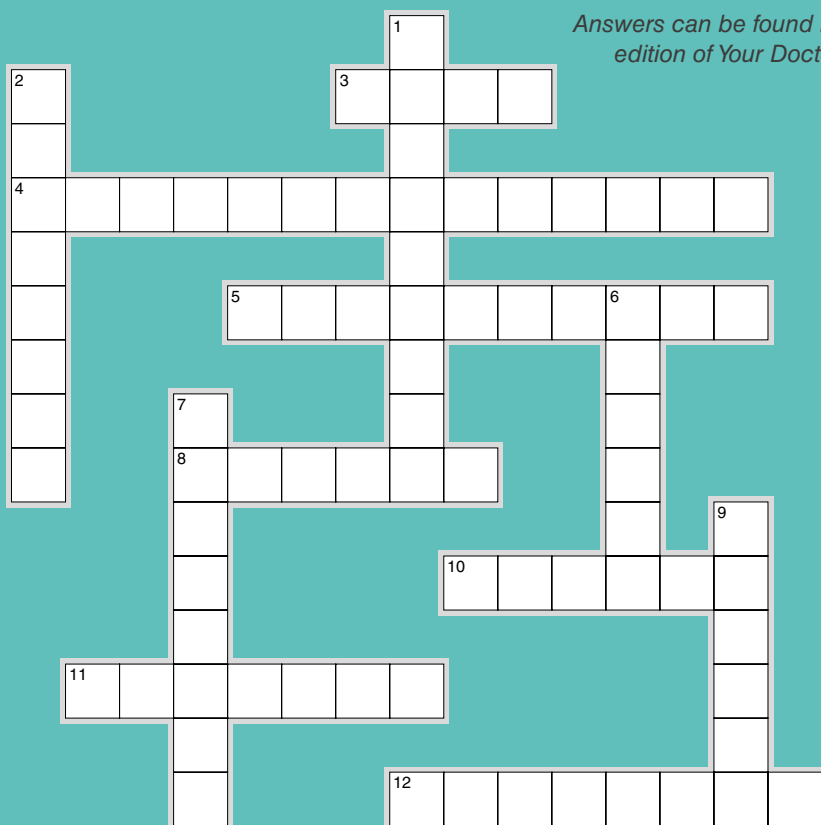
### ACROSS

3. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
4. This is often referred to as the "wear and tear" type of arthritis
5. Food containing whole unprocessed grains
8. A powdery substance produced by flowering plants
10. A large tropical fruit with yellow/orange flesh
11. Long-term (medical)
12. A nutrient that gives fruits their red colour

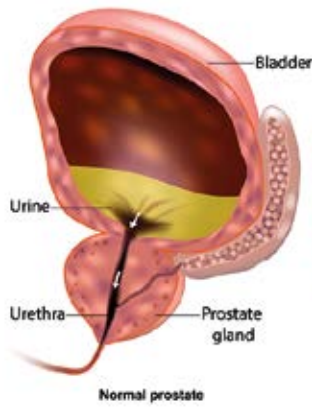
### DOWN

1. A tough tissue that acts as a shock absorber for our bones
2. A gland which is part of the male reproductive system
6. A condition that affects your airways causing breathing difficulties
7. Range or scale
9. An enzyme found in papaya which aids in digestion

Solution is on the back page



# Prostate problems



Problems related to the prostate gland are widespread, causing considerable worry for many individuals as they age. Understanding the common conditions that affect the prostate may help to alleviate concerns.

The prostate gland is part of the male reproductive system and plays a role in semen production. It's located below the bladder and surrounding the urethra – the tube that carries urine from the bladder through the penis. This is why one of the most common signs of prostate conditions is having problems passing urine.

There are three different conditions that can affect your prostate gland; let's break down the information for each:

**Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) or enlarged prostate** – the word 'benign' means that it's non-cancerous. BPH commonly develops after 50 and family history may contribute, but the exact genetic factors remain unclear. It usually requires treatment or management, as it can lead to bladder damage and infection.

**Prostatitis** – this is when your prostate is inflamed. Prostatitis can be acute (severe) or chronic (ongoing) and is usually caused by a bacterial infection, but can have no clear cause. Prostatitis can happen at any

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month is held throughout September. For more information go to [www.prostate.org.au](http://www.prostate.org.au)

age, but is more common in younger and middle-aged people. Treatment varies depending on the type of prostatitis and severity of the symptoms.

**Prostate cancer** – the chance of having prostate cancer increases with age, and rises rapidly after the age of 50. Additionally, having a family history of prostate cancer can increase the risk of developing it. There are different types and stages of prostate cancer, however many forms are slow-growing and have good treatment outcomes. Prostate cancer can spread to other parts of your body, so the sooner it's found the better the chance for a good outcome.

The symptoms experienced with any of the conditions affecting the prostate are similar – difficulty, frequency, pain or altered flow in urination are common. With prostate cancer or prostatitis there may be blood in your urine, or pain on urination or ejaculation. Pain can also be experienced in your scrotum, penis, testicles, rectum or pelvis.

Talk to your doctor about whether you should have your prostate gland checked and, if so, how often. Contact us urgently if you have any indications of prostate problems. Early diagnosis saves lives, and many prostate conditions can be easily managed with medical attention and support.

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a lifelong condition that can happen to people who were exposed to alcohol in the womb. It can affect the brain and body, leading to varying degrees of challenges in daily life. Let's learn more about it and how to support people living with FASD.

Drinking alcohol can have serious consequences for your unborn child at any point during your pregnancy. The level of harm depends on various factors, like the amount and frequency of alcohol consumed, and your physical and mental health and age.

No-one wants to harm their children, but some women may be unaware of their pregnancy in the early stages, lack knowledge about the effect of alcohol, or have complex issues that make it difficult to stop alcohol use. In all situations, support from partners, friends, family, and health professionals is crucial.

FASD is often called the 'invisible disability' as it can be overlooked, attributed to other conditions, blamed on 'bad' parenting, or conditions happening after the birth. Typical features within the spectrum of FASD are usually not noticeable at birth, but can become evident when children face behavioural and learning difficulties, especially during school-age.

People with FASD commonly experience cognitive, behavioural, developmental and other health issues throughout their lives. These include challenges with memory, attention, learning, reasoning, motor skills, and emotional and social issues.

It's important to remember that people with FASD are a valuable part of the community, and can live fulfilling and productive lives. FASD is just one aspect of their identity. Understanding the unique strengths and difficulties of individuals with FASD is essential to ensure they receive appropriate support and guidance to meet their needs.

Parents, caregivers and their families need to be informed and supported to make healthy choices for their child's well-being. Understanding and addressing the challenges associated with FASD can lead to positive outcomes for all involved.

**On 9 September, International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day (FASDAY) is held to raise awareness about FASD and the importance of an alcohol free pregnancy.**  
[www.nofasd.org.au](http://www.nofasd.org.au)

## Creamy, fresh and vibrant tropical papaya smoothie

When blended, papayas become incredibly creamy and smooth. They pair well with other fruit, and the ginger offers a refreshing and slightly spicy flavour. Enjoy!

### Ingredients

- 1 large ripe papaya
- 1½ cups coconut milk
- 1 cup pineapple, chopped
- 2cm piece of fresh ginger (peeled and finely grated)
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Ice cubes

### Instructions

1. Peel the papaya, cut in half lengthways, remove seeds and cut into cubes (makes about 4 cups).
2. Into the blender place the chopped fruit, coconut milk, grated ginger, honey and ice cubes, and blend until smooth and creamy.
3. Pour into glasses and serve immediately. Garnish with a mint leaf or slice of lime.

### Variations

- Replace pineapple with mango or banana.
- Use two Medjool dates or maple syrup instead of honey.
- Replace the ginger with mint leaves, or a tablespoon of lime juice.





# Exploring the powers of papaya!

In the quest for a healthier lifestyle, our diet plays a crucial role. Luckily, Australia has an incredible variety of fruits, each offering unique health benefits. One such tropical treasure is the papaya.

Papayas are large with a sweet flavour. The skin is green when unripe and yellow when ripe, while the flesh is yellow, orange or red with a soft, buttery texture.

Papaya is a nutrient powerhouse, rich in vitamins A, C, and E, along with an abundance of essential minerals such as potassium and magnesium. These nutrients are all vital for overall health.

## Immune function

The high vitamin C content in papaya strengthens your immune system, helping your body fight off infections and diseases. Eating foods high in vitamin C may also help reduce the duration and severity of illnesses.

## Heart health

Papaya is low in cholesterol and rich in antioxidants, including beta-carotene and lycopene. Lycopene is a nutrient that gives fruits their red colour; research shows that it may play an important role in preventing cardiovascular diseases. The fibre content in papaya also helps maintain healthy

cholesterol levels.

## Digestive health

Papaya contains an enzyme called papain, which aids digestion by breaking down proteins and helps absorption of nutrients. This enzyme can lessen symptoms experienced with indigestion like bloating and constipation. Papaya also contains a good amount of soluble and insoluble fibre, necessary for a healthy digestive system.

## Skin health

Papaya's rich vitamin C and E content, along with its hydrating properties, can work wonders for your skin. These nutrients help collagen production, promoting elasticity and reducing the appearance of wrinkles.

Australian papayas peak in spring and autumn but are available all year round. Ripe papaya can be eaten raw, but unripe papaya should be cooked. Papaya can be enjoyed on its own, with coconut, seafood, salads, chicken dishes, and other fruit like berries and passionfruit.

Small dietary changes can have a big impact on your overall wellbeing. Start your journey to a healthier you by enjoying papaya's irresistible taste and abundant health benefits.

Papaya may also have another surprising benefit: the leaves and seeds of the papaya plant show promise in reducing the severity of symptoms like fever, joint pain, and inflammation experienced by dengue fever patients.

## 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:

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

**DOWN**  
1. CARTILAGE 2. PROSTATE 6. ASTHMA 7. SPECTRUM  
9. PAPAINE

**ACROSS**  
3. FASD 4. OSTEOARTHRITIS 5. WHOLEGRAIN 8. POLLEN  
10. PAPAYA 11. CHRONIC 12. LYCOPENE

**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.

# PRACTICE INFORMATION

## SKIN CHECK CLINIC

Skin Check Clinic is available through Dr Harb at Tea Tree Surgery.

## DUTY DOCTOR CLINIC

Each weekday for our patients who need to be seen on that day but cannot get an appointment, can be seen by the Duty Doctor. An appointment is required. Private fee applies for all patients.

## 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.

Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.