

## 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**

**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.

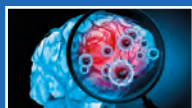
For urgent medical problems outside these hours, a duty doctor can be contacted on 8264 3333 (St Agnes Surgery) or 8264 4555 (Tea Tree Surgery). Follow the instructions on the recorded message.

You can now find us on the web at

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

## YOUR DOCTOR

MARCH 2024



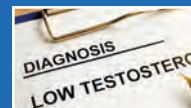
**MENINGITIS:  
A CLOSER LOOK**



**GET  
SALT SAVVY**



**BANISHING  
BUGS**



**LOW  
TESTOSTERONE**

*Compliments of your GP*

## Insights and tips to support your teen through adolescence

Adolescence, often referred to as the teenage years, is a significant phase of development marked by various physical, emotional, and psychological changes. It's a crucial period that shapes a child into an adult. Taking the time to learn what adolescence entails, and how to support your child, can make this transition smoother.

### What is adolescence?

Adolescence is the stage between childhood and adulthood, typically occurring between the ages of 10 to 19. It's a time of rapid growth and change, not only physically but also mentally and socially.

During adolescence, the body undergoes significant transformations. Puberty, a key aspect of this stage, involves the development of secondary sexual characteristics such as breast development and facial hair growth. Hormonal changes trigger growth spurts, leading to noticeable height and weight increases. These changes can sometimes lead to mood swings and emotional fluctuations.

During this phase, adolescents form patterns of behaviour, like their diet, exercise, drug use, socialising, and sexual activity. These habits can influence their current and future health, as well as the health of those around them.

### What is 'normal' behaviour?

It's important to recognise that mood swings, occasional rebellion, and the desire for independence are normal parts of adolescence. Experimenting with different identities, questioning authority, and seeking peer acceptance are common behaviours.

However, persistent signs of sadness, withdrawal, drastic changes in academic performance, or extreme behavioural changes might indicate underlying issues and should be addressed promptly.

### How to help them through this time

**Communicate:** Encourage open and honest discussions. Be a good listener and make them feel heard and valued. Create an environment where they can comfortably share their thoughts and concerns.

**Set boundaries:** While still allowing them

to be independent, establish clear and reasonable boundaries. Consistent rules and expectations provide a sense of stability during this period of uncertainty.

**Empathy:** By acknowledging and accepting their feelings and experiences, you show understanding and empathy. This fosters trust, makes them feel loved and supported, and helps them navigate their emotions well.

**Education and health:** Emphasise the importance of a balanced, healthy diet, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep. Adolescents need correct information, including health and sex education, and supportive environments for healthy growth.

**Promote self-esteem and skills:** Help them build a positive self-image. Encourage their interests and passions, and provide opportunities to develop life skills. Celebrate their achievements, no matter how small.

**Be patient:** Adolescence can be challenging for parents, caregivers and teenagers. Be patient, remember that this phase is temporary, and with your support, they will emerge stronger and more confident.

Adolescence is a period of transformation and self-discovery. By staying informed, maintaining communication, and providing unconditional support, you can help your teenager navigate these years with confidence and resilience, setting the foundation for a healthy and fulfilling adulthood.



**Adolescence is a unique stage of life and an important time for laying solid foundations for good health and wellbeing.**

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

## Get salt savvy and shake up your health habits

We often hear about the health risks of salt in our diet, but it can be tricky to know how much we should eat, and how to reduce it without losing flavour. Let's explore the reasons behind excessive salt intake and the health issues it can cause, along with some suggestions for ways to reduce it.

### What is salt?

Salt is a compound made up of sodium and chloride; it's commonly found in seawater, the earth's crust, and our bodies. It's present naturally in almost all foods, and has been used for centuries to add flavour and preserve food.

### What does salt do in your body?

Salt is essential for regulating blood pressure, maintaining fluid balance, and proper nerve and muscle function. However, excessive sodium intake can result in high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

### A look into our salt consumption

Imagine your chips without salt - it's just not the same, right? Surprisingly, it's not the salt we add to our food that leads to excessive sodium intake. It's the salt already present in processed and packaged foods. This includes not only fast food but also everyday items such as cereals, bread, sauces, and dressings. Even sweet biscuits often contain 'hidden' salt.

The Australian government recommends adults have less than 5g of sodium (about one teaspoon of salt) per day. However, on average, Australians are consuming at least double their recommended amount. For children this can create a lifelong preference for salty foods and increase the risk of health problems later in life.

#### QUICK TIPS

### Easy ways to reduce salt intake

Reducing salt intake doesn't mean losing flavour - here are some helpful tips:

- **Cook at home:** by preparing home-cooked meals, you can control the amount of salt. Use herbs, spices, and lemon juice for flavour. You can make your own healthy 'takeaways' like pizza and burgers.
- **Read labels:** check food labels for sodium content. Choose low, reduced, or salt-free options whenever possible.
- **Limit processed foods:** most foods like sauces, cereals, ready-made meals, processed meats like sausages, and snacks like crackers, are high in salt.
- **Snack healthily:** opt for unsalted nuts, fruits, or yogurt. Kids can enjoy veggies with hummus or homemade popcorn without added salt.
- **Educate children:** teach kids about the importance of a balanced diet, and how excess salt can affect their health. Involve them in meal preparation to make them more aware of what goes into their food.

## Banishing the bugs: a simple guide to head lice

As we settle into the school term, an age-old nuisance may be appearing on your child: head lice. These wingless insects are common amongst school-aged children, making it essential to know how to deal with them.

### Spotting the culprits

Head lice love to make a home in human hair, feeding on blood by biting the skin. They don't spread disease, but their bites can cause itching and skin irritation.

They're tricky to spot, but if you look closely you will see them scuttling around, or see their eggs (nits). These show as tiny white specks firmly attached to the hair, a sure sign of infestation.

### Sorting fact from fiction

Head lice spread mainly through head-to-head contact or by sharing personal items like hair brushes. Contrary to popular belief, lice don't care about hair cleanliness — they'll happily move in on any hair type or condition.

Head lice need warmth and blood to survive so they don't live long on things like furniture, clothing, or bedding.

### Treatment and prevention

Fortunately there are effective methods for dealing with lice. Wet combing, using conditioner and a special nit comb, is a budget-friendly, practical approach. The conditioner stuns the lice briefly, making it easier to trap and remove them. Another option is chemical removal, but finding the most suitable product might require some trial and error.

There's no foolproof way to prevent head lice, but regular hair checks can help. Using a nit comb regularly can also make a difference; teaching children about the importance of this, even when their heads aren't itchy, can prevent infestations.

By using simple preventative techniques, and sharing knowledge and resources between schools and communities, we can keep our hair lice-free.

## Carrot & walnut salad with citrus dressing

Elevate your salad game with this refreshing combination; serve as a side dish or a light and healthy snack.

### INGREDIENTS

#### Salad:

4 medium-sized carrots, grated  
1/2 cup dried fruit (currants, cranberries or goji berries)  
1/4 cup shredded coconut  
1/4 cup chopped walnuts

#### Dressing:

3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh mint  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger

#### Garnish:

Extra mint or parsley leaves, chopped

### INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large mixing bowl, combine all of the salad ingredients.
- Dressing: in a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, freshly grated ginger, honey and mint.
- Pour the dressing over the salad. Gently toss the salad until the ingredients are well coated with the dressing.
- Refrigerate the salad for about 30 minutes to bring out the flavours.

Just before serving, sprinkle chopped mint or parsley leaves over the top.





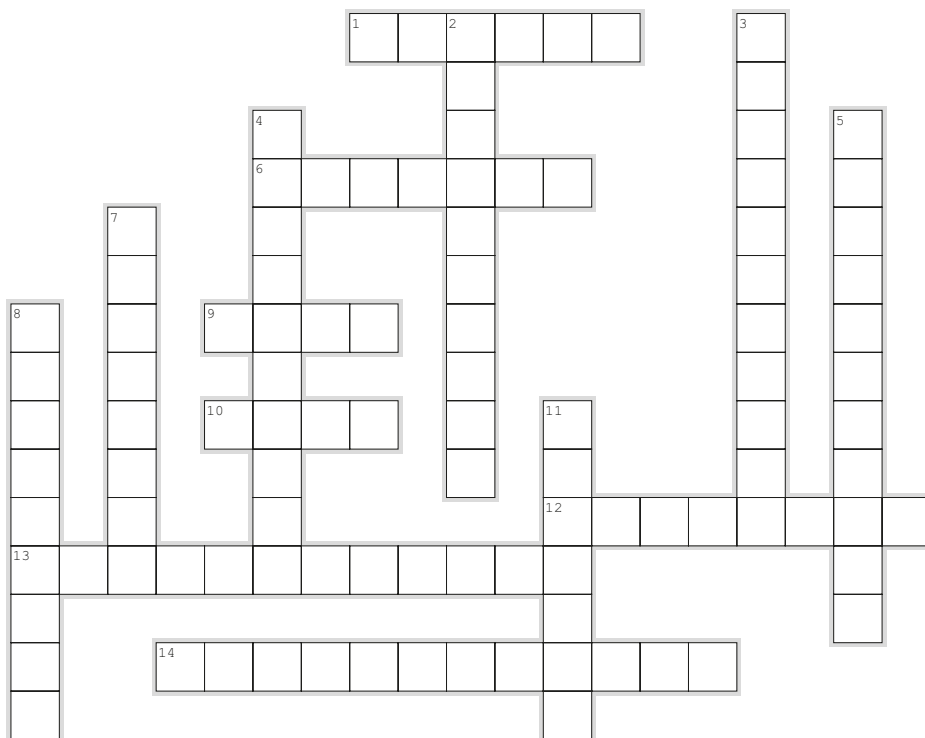
# CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

1. Creamy Middle Eastern dip made from chickpeas.
6. Excessive body weight, often linked to health concerns.
9. A compound made up of sodium and chloride.
10. The tiny eggs of head lice.
12. Microorganism responsible for many diseases.
13. A hormone essential for muscle and bone health, energy and sex drive.
14. Bodily response to injury or infection, often causing pain, redness and swelling.

## DOWN

2. An inflammation of the membranes surrounding your brain and spinal cord.
3. The teenage years or the stage between childhood and adulthood.
4. Able to be transmitted from person to person.
5. Widespread presence of pests, causing a nuisance or harm.
7. A medical condition affecting blood sugar levels.
8. A gland which helps produce testosterone.
11. The stage in human development when you become capable of sexual reproduction.



ANSWERS AT THE BACK

## What happens when your testosterone is low?

We all have testosterone in varying amounts, but some people may experience low levels, which can affect their overall well-being. Understanding more about this hormone is the first step to dealing with it effectively.

### Testosterone and its roles

Testosterone is a hormone present in everyone; however the levels vary based on factors like gender, age, and health. Typically, individuals assigned male at birth have higher testosterone levels, which play a crucial role in puberty-related changes. These include the growth of body hair, deeper voice, increased muscle strength, and genital development.

For everyone, think of it as essential fuel for your body, influencing and maintaining muscle mass, bone density, sexual health, mood, and energy levels.

### Low testosterone

Low testosterone isn't something to be embarrassed about. It can happen to

anyone. Sometimes, it's due to medical conditions like diabetes or obesity; or it can be because there's a problem with the testes or pituitary gland, which help produce testosterone. Low levels are also a natural part of aging.

The first physical changes that occur with low testosterone levels usually affect sexual function – a low libido (sex drive) and difficulty in getting or maintaining an erection are common early signs. More general signs can include fatigue, low mood, and poor concentration and memory.

These concerns can be distressing, and could also indicate other conditions, so it's important to seek medical advice.

### Can low levels be treated?

Now for the good news – low testosterone is treatable. First things first, maintain a healthy lifestyle. Exercise regularly, eat nutritious meals, and get enough quality sleep. These habits can naturally boost testosterone levels.

If your symptoms persist, consult a healthcare professional to get a proper diagnosis. If your testosterone levels are low, treatment may include: hormone replacement, medication or devices to improve erections, and counselling to lower stress, anxiety, or depression.

So there you have it – lifestyle changes combined with medical guidance can make a significant difference. With the right approach, you can boost your energy, mood, and overall quality of life.

**A healthy lifestyle can go a long way towards improving your testosterone levels, but if you find your symptoms concerning, don't hesitate to seek professional help.**

# Meningitis: a closer look

Many people fear meningitis - for good reason. It's crucial to understand this condition to keep ourselves well. Read on to learn some of the basic facts about meningitis and how we can protect ourselves.

## What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the meninges, the protective membranes surrounding your brain and spinal cord. These membranes can become infected, leading to a serious and potentially life-threatening condition if left untreated.

## Common types and causes

Meningitis is usually caused by an infection with certain bacteria and viruses. Bacterial meningitis is serious and there are various types; the most common include pneumococcal and meningococcal meningitis. Viral meningitis is generally less severe with a good recovery rate. These forms of meningitis are contagious and spread through close contact, including: sneezing, coughing, kissing, and sharing drinks and eating utensils.

## Symptoms of meningitis

Early recognition of symptoms is essential for prompt detection and immediate medical attention. However, diagnosing meningitis can be challenging, as the initial symptoms resemble those of common flu.

Meningitis usually begins with a high fever, severe headache, a stiff neck (although this isn't common in young children), and eyes may be sensitive to bright light. Vomiting and feeling drowsy often come next and

a purple-red skin rash can sometimes appear. Babies may also have a bulge in their fontanelle (the soft spot on top their head), and an unusually high cry.

**It's crucial to be aware that there are other signs, they can appear in any order, and that they can rapidly worsen, sometimes within just a few hours. You can learn more about these at:**

<https://meningitis.com.au>

## Who is at risk of meningitis?

Anyone can get meningitis, but certain groups are at a higher risk. Infants, young children, adolescents and young adults, people living in close or crowded living conditions, and those with weakened immune systems are more susceptible.

## Prevention and treatment

Preventing meningitis involves vaccination and practicing good hygiene. There are no vaccines for viral meningitis, but effective vaccines are available for the common types of bacterial meningitis. A healthy lifestyle, including a balanced diet, exercise and adequate sleep, can also support your immune function.

In cases of viral meningitis, treatment generally involves supportive care to ease symptoms. Bacterial meningitis, on the other hand, requires immediate medical action to prevent serious complications and death.

While meningitis is undoubtedly serious, knowledge and awareness combined with good hygiene, vaccinations, and a healthy lifestyle, can help us to protect ourselves.

# 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

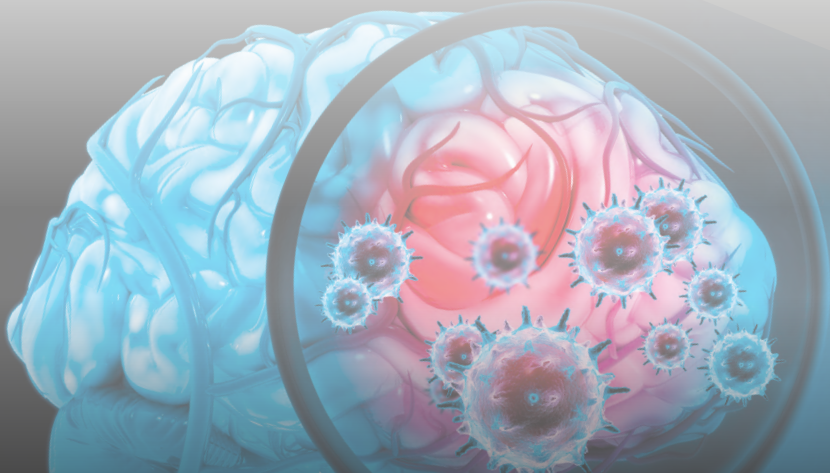
St Agnes Surgery provides a comprehensive health assessment for patients 75 years of age and over – the program involves a detailed functional and safety assessment conducted by our Nurse, followed by a medical check-up with your Doctor.

## PRACTICE ACCREDITATION

St Agnes Surgery and Tea Tree Surgery have achieved FULL ACCREDITATION until January 2027. 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.



**Meningitis is a medical emergency; don't wait for symptoms to worsen – go to your nearest emergency department or call for an ambulance.**

**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.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

1. HUMANS 2. MENINGITIS 3. ADOLESCENCE 4. CONTAGIOUS 5. INFESTATION 6. OBESITY 7. DIABETES 8. PITUITARY 9. SALT 10. NITS 11. PUBERTY 12. BACTERIA 13. TESTOSTERONE 14. INFLAMMATION

DOWN

ACROSS

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