

## OFFICE HOURS

**Monday – Friday** 8.00am–7pm  
**Saturday** 8.30am–  
12noon

### Dr Geoff Martin

MBBS Dip.(Obst.)RCOG FRACGP

Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
Tuesday – Nursing Home Visits

### Dr Sorayya Martin

MBBS Dip REpMed FAFPM FRACGP

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

### Dr Patrick Elton

MBBS FRACGP

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

### Dr Muzaffar Karimov

PhD FRACGP

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Friday when on call

### Dr Rebecca Jeanes

MBBS

Monday and Thursday afternoon

Tuesday morning

Wednesday morning (fortnightly)

Wednesday afternoon

### Dr Anne Cawley

MBBS FRACGP

Tuesday and Friday mornings

### Dr Eugene Buenviaje

BSc Psych MD FRACGP

Tuesday and Thursday afternoons

Wednesday and Friday

### Dr Ellen Lin

FRACGP

Currently on Maternity Leave

## OFFICE STAFF

**Practice Manager:** Jenny Lambert

**Finance and 2IC:** Kathryn

**Administration:**

Christine, Ashleigh and Jodie

**Practice Nurses:**

Jan McCrea, Mary Guerin  
and Catherine Byrnes-Duggan

## CONSULTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT

For after-hours emergencies – at night,  
weekends or public holidays – call  
8431 2799 to contact the duty doctor.

A reminder that our telephone (8431 2799)  
is answered 24 hours a day. The call will  
be directed to our on call duty doctor,  
one of our four partners, who will be able  
to give advice and organise appropriate  
treatment if necessary.

# YOUR DOCTOR

MARCH 2026



**THINK BEFORE  
YOU VAPE**



**TUMMY  
TROUBLES**



**AVOIDING THE  
“GASTRO” BUG**



**HORMONAL  
HARMONY**

*Compliments of your GP*

## Salt and children’s health: building healthy habits

**Many everyday foods contain more salt than we realise. While small amounts of salt are needed for growing bodies to function, too much over time can affect health. Helping children develop healthy eating habits early can support their wellbeing now and into adulthood.**

### What is salt?

Salt is made up of sodium and chloride. It’s found naturally in foods and widely used to add flavour or preserve food. We need small amounts to support normal muscle and nerve function and help maintain fluid balance. Most children already get enough to meet their needs — often more than enough — from their diet.

### Why salt matters for children

A high salt intake makes the body work harder to manage excess sodium. This can strain the kidneys, which help regulate fluid balance, and contribute to higher blood pressure. While these health effects are more obvious in adulthood, childhood blood pressure patterns can carry through later in life, increasing the risk of heart disease.

The good news is that reducing salt can help lower blood pressure and prevent a strong preference for salty foods, making healthy choices easier as children grow into adulthood. Including potassium-rich foods such as fruit, vegetables, beans, and dairy products can also help manage sodium levels more effectively.

### Does reducing salt affect iodine intake?

Babies and young children need iodine for growth and brain development. Reducing salty foods does not usually reduce iodine intake, but it’s important to make sure their diet still includes iodine-rich foods such as dairy, eggs, seafood, and bread made with iodised salt.

### Common sources of salt

Most excess salt doesn’t come from the salt shaker. It’s already added to many foods commonly eaten by children, such as:

- Bread and breakfast cereals
- Sauces, spreads, and dressings
- Processed meats (such as salami, ham and bacon)
- Snack foods like crackers and potato chips
- Some sweet foods may contain salt.

### Simple ways to reduce salt

Reducing salt doesn’t mean meals need to be bland. Small changes can help lower intake over time.

**Cook at home:** Preparing meals yourself means you can control the salt content and use fresh ingredients. Use herbs, spices, garlic, and lemon for flavour.

**Read food labels:** Compare sodium levels and choose lower-salt options. Small, positive changes can make a difference over time.

**Limit processed foods:** Try alternatives such as making healthy home-made versions of fast foods such as burgers and pizza.

**Choose lower-salt snacks:** Fruit, yoghurt, vegetable sticks with hummus, and homemade baking such as healthy muffins and vegetable savouries are good alternatives. (Try our recipe for mini green pancakes).

**Involve children:** Involving children in shopping and meal preparation can help them learn about food and encourage healthy eating habits.

Being mindful of salt intake is important for everyone. Small realistic changes made early in life can support lifelong healthy eating patterns.



**Letting children help shop and cook is a simple way to encourage healthy eating.**

*Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you*

# 4 Common clues to tummy troubles



**Our digestive system works hard every day to break down our food and keep us nourished. Sometimes, though, it sends signals that something isn't quite right. Many stomach issues are minor and temporary, but some can occasionally indicate a more serious problem.**

Here are four common clues your digestive system might be giving you — and when it's worth paying attention to them.

## 1 Bloating: more than just full

Feeling a little bloated after a large meal or fizzy drink is normal. But persistent or uncomfortable bloating may signal something else. Food intolerances, such as lactose intolerance or reactions to gluten, can cause swelling or discomfort. Conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) or constipation can also lead to ongoing bloating.

## 2 Heartburn: occasional vs frequent

Many people experience a burning sensation in their chest from time to time, often after spicy or fatty meals. Occasional heartburn is common, but frequent, persistent, or severe episodes may indicate gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD).

## 3 Changes in bowel habits

While some variation is normal, ongoing or unusual changes should be checked. Warning signs include blood in the stool, changes in stool shape or how often you go, persistent diarrhoea or constipation, or unexplained weight loss. These symptoms can be linked to a range of conditions, from infections and inflammatory bowel conditions to bowel (colorectal) cancer.

## 4 Stomach pain patterns

Not all stomach pain is the same. Pain or cramping that happens after eating, keeps you awake at night, or radiates to your back may point to conditions such as ulcers, gallstones, or pancreatitis.

### Listening to your body

Noticing changes such as frequent bloating, discomfort, persistent heartburn, or altered bowel habits can provide important clues about your digestive health. Writing down symptoms, what you eat, and when problems occur can help your GP spot patterns and identify possible causes more quickly.

Digestive issues are common, and many can be managed or improved with simple lifestyle and diet changes, or appropriate treatment. However, symptoms that are persistent, worsening, or interfering with daily life should be checked — early assessment can rule out more serious causes and help you get relief sooner.

**Did you know?**  
Up to 1 in 5 Australians experience symptoms of IBS, but many never talk to their doctor about it.

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

### FIND THESE WORDS:

- BALANCE
- DEHYDRATION
- DIARRHOEA
- GASTROENTERITIS
- GLUTEN
- GORD
- HEALTH
- IBS
- IODINE
- KIDNEYS
- LACTOSE
- MENOPAUSE
- MUSCLE
- NICOTINE
- PERIMENOPAUSE
- POTASSIUM
- REFLUX
- SODIUM
- VAPING
- WELLBEING

K	B	P	E	R	I	M	E	N	O	P	A	U	S	E	S	J	U
E	P	H	F	R	H	D	V	H	I	Q	J	C	Z	X	V	B	Y
C	L	E	F	R	V	Q	Q	L	G	L	U	T	E	N	S	M	R
H	K	A	H	K	S	I	O	D	I	N	E	V	Z	S	S	E	W
M	N	R	E	S	M	W	N	H	B	G	T	X	Z	W	O	X	E
L	D	T	A	Q	X	M	V	C	G	X	V	N	W	K	D	D	L
G	O	B	L	N	H	Z	A	V	Y	R	G	O	H	M	I	X	L
A	T	U	T	D	I	A	R	R	H	O	E	A	A	G	U	O	B
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N	S	B	N	O	I	T	A	R	D	Y	H	E	D	Y	C	E	O
E	S	E	D	W	L	Z	B	A	L	A	N	C	E	M	L	E	P
Y	L	D	Q	J	B	M	P	C	V	A	P	I	N	G	Q	E	M
S	L	D	R	O	G	E	S	U	A	P	O	N	E	M	R	T	Q

# Gastroenteritis: what you need to know



During the warmer months we often see more cases of gastroenteritis — commonly called “gastro”. It’s very common and usually mild, but can still make you feel unwell for a few days.

Large numbers of people can quickly become infected, but knowing the basics of gastro can help you recover safely and reduce the spread to others.

## What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis is an infection of the stomach and intestines — most often caused by a virus, but can also be due to bacteria or parasites. It spreads easily through close contact, contaminated food or water, or touching surfaces that carry the virus.

Outbreaks are more common in warm weather because heat helps germs multiply. People also tend to gather more, travel, and eat food prepared outdoors.

## Common symptoms

The main symptoms of gastro are diarrhoea and vomiting, but can also include:

- stomach pain or cramp
- feeling nauseous
- a high temperature (fever)
- Tiredness and muscle aches

**Good hygiene and safe food handling are your best defence against gastro.**

## Mini green pancakes (18 months+)

Made with oat flour, these mini pancakes provide fibre and slow-release energy, while green vegetables add key vitamins to support growing bodies.

### Ingredients

- ½ large head broccoli (approx. 1 cup finely chopped florets)
- 1 large handful baby spinach
- 2 free-range eggs
- ½ cup oat flour (or finely ground oats)
- Olive oil, for cooking

### Optional variation:

- 2–3 tbsp grated cheese or
- ½ small zucchini, grated (squeeze out excess moisture).

### Method

1. Cut broccoli into florets and steam until just tender.
2. Place broccoli, spinach, eggs and oat flour into a food processor and blend until smooth.
3. If using, fold in grated cheese or zucchini after processing.

## Why fluids matter

The biggest risk with gastroenteritis is dehydration, especially for those who are more vulnerable: babies, young children, older adults, and anyone with other health conditions. Vomiting and diarrhoea cause your body to lose fluid.

If your child has any of these signs of dehydration, get medical care urgently.

- dry mouth and tongue
- dark or little urine
- sunken eyes
- cold hands and feet
- being drowsy or difficult to wake.

## Caring for yourself and others

Drink plenty of water after each bout (avoiding sugary drinks), sip slowly and consider oral rehydration fluids. Avoid preparing food for others until at least 48 hours after symptoms stop. Wash hands well with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.

To help prevent spreading the infection, anyone who is unwell should stay home until fully recovered.

## When to contact your GP

Most cases of gastroenteritis settle on their own, but it’s important to seek medical advice if symptoms are severe, last more than a few days, or if there are signs of dehydration. If you are more at risk or feel particularly unwell, check in with your GP promptly.

Staying hydrated, resting, practising good hygiene, and avoiding contact with others makes recovery easier and reduces the chance of spreading the infection.

## Hormonal harmony: why natural changes can feel uncomfortable

Hormonal changes during perimenopause and menopause are normal, but they can cause physical and emotional changes that range from mild to disruptive. Understanding what’s going on can help these changes feel less confusing and easier to manage.

### What’s happening in your body

Perimenopause is the transition leading up to menopause, when periods become irregular and hormone levels, particularly oestrogen, fluctuate. Menopause is reached 12 months after your last period, when oestrogen levels remain consistently lower.

Oestrogen plays a role in many systems throughout the body, including temperature regulation, sleep, mood, brain function, joint health, and the tissues of the vagina and bladder. When levels fluctuate or decline, these systems can become less stable, leading to a wide range of symptoms.

### What you may experience

Some people notice only subtle changes, while others find they have a significant impact on daily life. These issues are well recognised and commonly experienced during perimenopause and menopause:

- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Poor sleep and increased tiredness
- Mood changes, including irritability or feeling “down”
- Difficulty concentrating or “brain fog”
- Joint and muscle aches
- Changes in periods before they stop entirely

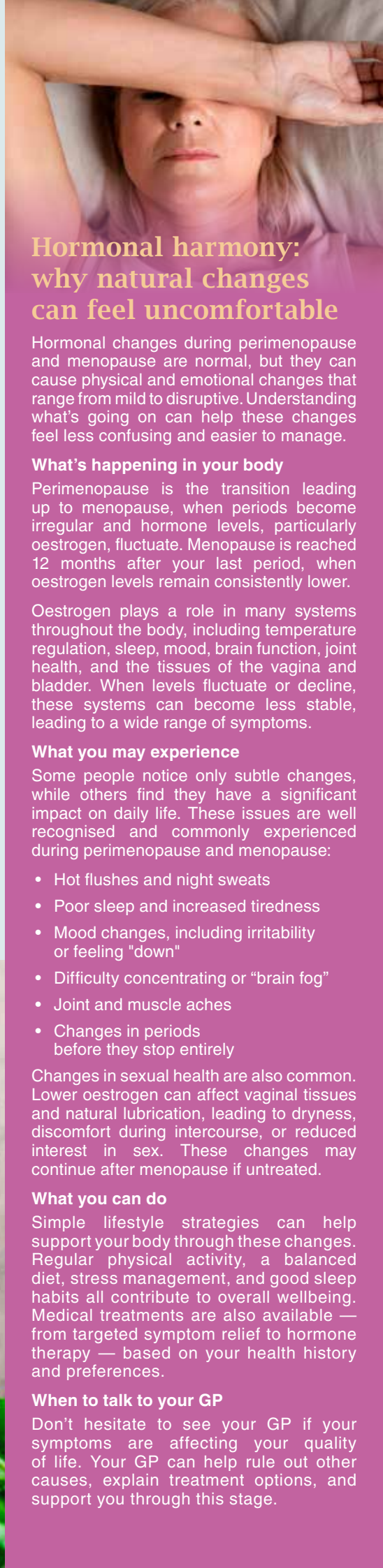
Changes in sexual health are also common. Lower oestrogen can affect vaginal tissues and natural lubrication, leading to dryness, discomfort during intercourse, or reduced interest in sex. These changes may continue after menopause if untreated.

### What you can do

Simple lifestyle strategies can help support your body through these changes. Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, stress management, and good sleep habits all contribute to overall wellbeing. Medical treatments are also available — from targeted symptom relief to hormone therapy — based on your health history and preferences.

### When to talk to your GP

Don’t hesitate to see your GP if your symptoms are affecting your quality of life. Your GP can help rule out other causes, explain treatment options, and support you through this stage.



# Vaping and young people: what's really going on?

Vaping (also called e-cigarettes) is often seen as a harmless habit, or “better than smoking”. But when we look closely, vaping carries real risks — especially for developing brains and habits. Understanding these risks can help families make informed choices.

## What is vaping?

Vaping is the use of an electronic device that heats a liquid to create an aerosol, which is inhaled. The liquid usually contains nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals. The aerosol is not just “water vapour”; it can contain substances that irritate the lungs and airways.

Vaping is considered less harmful than cigarette smoking, and is meant to help people quit smoking by providing fewer toxic chemicals than the ones that come from burning tobacco. Evidence of the effectiveness of this in the long term is mixed.



## Effects on the body

Vaping can irritate the airways and lungs, sometimes causing coughing, chest tightness, or shortness of breath. Some young people notice reduced fitness or feel more breathless during sport.

It can also affect sleep and mood. Many young people report feeling irritable, restless, or distracted when they haven't vaped, which can make school, work, sport and social activities more challenging.

Vaping is still relatively new, so the long-term effects in young people are uncertain — another reason to be cautious.

## Why nicotine is a problem

Young brains are still developing into the mid-20s, and nicotine can interfere with areas involved in attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

Nicotine is highly addictive and, while it doesn't cause the same diseases as tobacco smoke, it can create a strong habit that's hard to break.

We also know that during the teen years nicotine may increase the likelihood of developing other addictions and taking more risks. It can also affect mental health, mainly through dependence and withdrawal.

## Supporting healthier choices

Staying informed, encouraging healthy habits such as a balanced diet, regular exercise, good sleep, and time away from screens may all help reduce the appeal of vaping.

If you're concerned about the effects of vaping — for yourself or your child — a conversation with your GP is a good first step. Support and practical advice can make avoiding or quitting easier, especially when started early.

**Many vapes have sweet or fruity flavours, which may appeal to young people.**

## SPECIALIST REFERRALS

Medicare requires you to have a consultation with your treating doctor before you obtain a referral to a specialist.

For all ongoing specialist referrals Medicare require an up to date letter of referral to be written, which in most cases will require an appointment with your doctor.

Please note: Medicare does not permit retrospective referrals. If you have any questions about the referral process please speak to our reception team.

## SCRIPT REQUESTS

All script requests require at least 24 hours notice and attract a fee of \$15 for private patients and \$5 for pension and concession card holders.

Urgent prescriptions required on the same day will incur a charge of \$20 however this can vary depending on the complexity of the request and the discretion of the doctor.

It is practice policy that an appointment is required if a patient has not been seen for 6 months. This is in your interest for monitoring your ongoing health and medication management.

## SICK CERTIFICATES

Sick certificates will not be issued without a consultation by a doctor.

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

We understand that appointments can be overlooked from time to time, however if repeated appointments are missed without giving adequate notice, a non attendance fee will be charged.

## AFTER HOURS CARE

A reminder that our telephone (8431 2799) is answered 24 hours a day. When the surgery is closed your call will be directed to our on call duty doctor who will be able to give advice and organise the appropriate treatment.

## Questions to ask at your doctor's visit

Asking questions helps you get the care you need. To make the most of your visit, jot down anything you'd like to know about in the space below. Take this list with you so it's easy to remember what 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.

*Jenny Lambert*