

APRIL-MAY 2014

Your next appointment:

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> Inflamed Joints



> Overcoming Insomnia



> Eczema and the Skin Barrier



> Asthma



Enjoy this free newsletter

Please remember that decisions about medical care should be made in consultation with your health care provider so discuss with your doctor before acting on any of the information.

[www.healthnews.net.au](http://www.healthnews.net.au)

● PRACTICE DOCTORS

**Dr Malcolm Altson**

MBBS, DA, DipRACOG, FRACGP

**Dr David Kelly**

MBBS, Dipl Child Health RCP (Lond),  
Dipl RCOG (Lond), FACRRM

**Dr Jimmy Huang**

MBBS

**Dr Dong Dong**

MBBS

**Dr Wen Yu**

MBBS

**Dr Modise Modise**

MBBS

**Dr Frankson Cai**

MBBS

**Dr Pilate Nstuke**

MBBS

● PRACTICE STAFF

**Business Managers:**

Nicola Hornby-King & Kristy King

**Office Manager:** Julie McMillan

**Practice Nurses:** Maree Beadle, Ros Doxey, Pam Walker, Jan Sheargold & Breanna Mackrell

**Nurses:** Margaret Kerlin, Vanessa Williams, Carol Brett & Leah Wynd

**Reception:** Kate Williams, Hilary Ford, Joanne Woolcock, Jasmin Robison, Elsa Huang, Jeanette O'Connor & Nicole Saker

● SURGERY HOURS

Monday to Friday .....8.30am – 6.00pm

Saturday .....9.00am – 5.00pm

● AFTERHOURS & EMERGENCY

**Weekdays:**

Monday – Friday 8.30am – 6.00pm

**Weekends After Hours:**

**Sunday Emergency Clinic:**

**5795 0200**

**Euroa Hospital** 9am – 11am

**Shepparton Afterhours Clinic:**

**5831 8022**

**Mon – Fri** from 6.00pm

**Sat** 11.30am – 4.30pm

& 6.30pm – 10.30pm

**Sun** 9.00am – 2.00pm

& 4.30pm – 10.30pm

Costs between \$61–\$70.85, out of pocket \$40.

OR for **emergencies call the Ambulance on 000.**

Please see Rear Cover for more practice information.

● PRACTICE NEWS

Euroa Medical is excited to announce and **welcome the newest Doctor to join our medical team, Dr Pilate Nstuke!!!** Dr Pilate studied in Botswana as well as Australia. His long-term goals are to specialise in emergency and procedural medicine. Pilate enjoys working in regional, rural and remote communities within Australia. Dr Pilate and his family have recently moved to Euroa from Shepparton and will be seeing patients Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Please join us in welcoming Dr Pilate and his family to Euroa!

In addition, some exciting **new visiting services** have also been added to our practice over the past few months, and Euroa Medical is pleased to announce our two latest additions, Dr Simon Permezel, Optomologist and Dr Anthony Guiney, Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose & Throat).

All **appointment** can be made through Dr Simon Permezel room in Shepparton by calling 5831 3777. Appointments for Dr Anthony Guiney can be made by calling his rooms in Melbourne on 9375 2099.

The practice would also like to give a **warm welcome to Dietician Danni Irvine**. Danni will be joining Daniel Thompson as the clinic Dieticians. Danni will be seeing patients on Thursdays.

We would also like to remind you that Dr Allen Aylett is now taking part in the **new children's dental scheme**. If you would like to find out if your child is eligible for the service, please call the surgery Monday – Wednesday to discuss with Dr Aylett and his team. Dr Aylett has now also added an additional half day on Wednesdays. This now means **Dental services** will be available in Euroa, Mondays and Tuesdays 8:30am – 5pm and Wednesdays 8:30 – 12pm. All dental appointments can be made through reception at Euroa Medical.

**Community Education sessions** will also be continuing thanks to the support of all those who have been attending. This month Brian Moffatt will be giving a talk on Thursday, 24 April from 1-2pm on "4 Steps for Life", basic community information for "what to do" if someone collapse in front of you.

**Travel clinics** will also be continuing this month and will be running weekly. Please feel free to ring for information and to make your appointment.

Also, don't forget, **flu season** is upon us. In an effort to help our patients stay well this season we will be holding a **flu vaccination clinic** every Wednesday afternoon throughout April. Please speak with reception about booking an appointment.

In addition to flu season April also means it's time again for **Relay for Life**. This year the Euroa Medical staff will once again be teaming up to walk for this very importance cause.

You may have also recently noticed a **survey box and clipboard** at the front desk. This is part of our accreditation process and is a valuable tool in gaining feedback from patients so that we can continually improve our service to the community, so if you have time please grab a survey to fill out while you wait.

And finally, we are very excited to announce the **launch of our new Euroa Medical website!** By visiting our new website you will be able to access a variety of information regarding general practice information, a list of our visiting specialist and services as well as information about our current Doctors. So head over to [www.emfp.com.au](http://www.emfp.com.au) and check it out!



## Eczema and the Skin Barrier

For many years now, people have known eczema (or atopic dermatitis) tends to run in families, that is, the person's genes play a part. Exactly how this happens is becoming better understood. You can get inherited defects in the barrier function of the skin, mostly at the *stratum corneum*, which is the toughest scaliest outer layer of the skin.

This causes water loss, increased sensitivity to irritants as well as allergens and bacteria. The skin acid-base (or pH) balance changes.

Some of the inherited defects include *filaggrin gene* mutations, increased *serine protease* activity, and epidermal fat abnormalities.

Filaggrin mutations can lessen the skin's production of filaggrin, which is normally broken down into natural moisturising substances that help maintain skin pH and prevent bacterial infections.

It is thought that with the skin's natural barrier decreased, allergens such as pollens can penetrate the skin to provoke a response that brings on hay fever or asthma. (We know that one third of children with eczema later develop asthma, and two thirds develop hay fever.)

Other mechanisms are proposed. They all demonstrate the importance of general skin care measures such as avoiding soaps and applying emollients regularly, and ensuring steroid creams are used appropriately.

One confusing point is that inflammation (requiring steroid creams) and infection (requiring swabs then antibiotics) can exist together, and both often need to be treated. Decreasing bacteria on the skin can improve some children because the bacteria *Staph aureus* can produce 'superantigens'. Nasal ointment and 'bleach baths' (¼ cup of household bleach in a normal bath, together with a bland emollient bath oil) for 10 minutes 1-2 times per week, before rinsing off in the shower, can help.

## Inflamed Joints

Controlling inflammation is the key to relieving pain. The quickest ways to do this is with tablets (called NSAIDs) or steroid injections into the worst affected joints. The tablets tend to be less potent and can cause side effects, while steroids injections are limited by the skills of the doctor and the number of injections required.

Therefore, the easiest way to treat major joint inflammation is often steroid tablets. The metabolic complications you hear about (e.g. weight gain, diabetes, fragile skin, thinning of the bones) relate to long term use, so short courses of days to weeks are best. Anything over 10-14 days' use requires gradual drug withdrawal so your own body's 'steroid' has time to take over.

If it looks like your symptoms require regular steroid tablets at higher doses, then there are some other medications available that act as "steroid spacers". Ask your doctor.

To identify the cause of joint inflammation, your doctor can arrange a variety of blood tests, ultrasound or MRI imaging, and examination of fluid taken from a swollen joint (if this is possible). Causes include autoimmune disease (where by a 'mistake of Nature' the immune system attacks your own joints), viral infection (e.g. Ross River virus), and gout.

However, tests can be inconclusive and it is the family or personal medical background, and the person's 'picture of inflammation' that hints at the most likely cause.



Sun damaged eye

## Sunlight and the eye

Australia's famous sunlight carries harsh UV light that can damage the eye. Thankfully, wearing sunglasses blocks this and all on sale in Australia are Cancer Council approved.

Cataract is ageing of the native eye lens. This blocks or distorts vision and sunlight plays a significant part in cataract formation, as do age, trauma, steroid use, diet and some systemic diseases. About 100,000 operations for cataract removal are performed each year in Australia.

Macular degeneration affects the retina. It can age the macular suddenly or slowly, with reduced central vision. Age-related macular degeneration is becoming more frequent because sunlight and ultraviolet light contribute to free radical damage.

Pterygiums are non-cancerous growths on the nasal side of the cornea. They are common in Australia and are directly related to the amount of UV exposure. Constant irritation, visual disturbance and appearance can lead to removal under local anaesthetic (10% come back).

Sun caused tumours. Melanoma can occur in the eye as well as on the eyelid, where other tumours, including basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, are often found.

# Overcoming Insomnia

Lying awake at night can drive you mad! Often you can improve your sleep by following some simple "sleep habit" suggestions, after more serious causes of insomnia have been excluded by your doctor. Choose from this list the ideas that suit you best and try them for a few weeks (because it takes 4-6 weeks to change old sleeping habits).

- Worrying about lack of sleep will only make insomnia worse. Instead, tell yourself a sleepless night won't kill you and you can always catch up later!
- Only go to bed when you are sleepy. Everyone gets a 'wave of sleepiness' every 60-90 minutes. Try and recognise it and catch that wave - become a sleep surfer!
- If you are waking tired, go to bed 15 minutes earlier each night until you wake refreshed.
- Get up at a set time - use an alarm clock but don't have it facing you in bed.
- Avoid daytime naps unless you are desperate.
- Put at least a few hours between bedtime and your evening meal.
- Exercise regularly but avoid heavy exercise just before bed.
- If you are a worrier or under work pressure, make a list of things to do before bed, or keep pen and paper by the bedside so you can jot down the idea and go back to sleep.
- Before bed, avoid alcohol, sedatives, tobacco and excess liquids.
- No more than two cups of coffee or tea per day, and not before bed.
- Take a warm bath, relaxing walk or shower before bed. Include this in a regular evening routine such as cleaning your teeth, changing into nightwear and winding down.
- Limit radio and reading in bed (or only the dull and boring). No scary movies before bed!
- Try muscle relaxation techniques in bed or before going to bed. Play relaxing music. Get your partner to soothe you with a back rub, head rub or a cuddle. (Making love is a great 'sleeping pill' for some people.)
- If you can't sleep, get up and do something boring such as knitting, ironing or read a



magazine and return to bed when you feel sleepy (i.e. that sleepiness 'wave').

Sleeping tablets can help in the short term but are addictive if used continuously. Some medications can keep you awake so chat with your doctor about your medications and when is best to take them.

## Asthma



<http://www.nationalasthma.org.au>

Asthma is where the airways tighten and become inflamed, making it harder to breathe. Around one in ten or two million Australians have asthma, more so children than adults and more in Indigenous Australians than others.

Asthma varies between severe (there were 378 deaths in 2001) and mild, with rates dropping in children over the last decade. Symptoms include cough (worse at night or in cold air), a wheeze, shortness of breath and tightness in the chest.

Triggers for asthma are many, the most common being viral illnesses and airborne irritants (e.g.

smoke, dust, chemicals) and allergens (e.g. pollens, dust mites, animal fur). Some people wheeze when they exercise.

People with asthma are more likely to have hay fever or eczema. Symptoms nearly always come and go.

Diagnosis is based on the story and examination findings, although sometimes lung function tests or chest x-ray are required, to be certain.

Treatment is largely about prevention; this includes avoidable triggers and use of a regular preventer inhaler. Otherwise, a reliever inhaler may be all that is required. How much and which type of inhaler depends on severity - talk to your doctor about an Asthma Action Plan.



## Rabies - How to reduce your risk

Believe it or not, this virus kills 55,000 people each year, worldwide, usually from dogbite. The infection is inevitably fatal in someone who is not immune. Australia has no introduced animal rabies thanks to quarantine, but bats and flying foxes in Queensland carry the virus.

Mammals like dogs and monkeys can carry rabies, transmitted to humans through saliva in a bite or scratch. For this reason, some visitors to Bali and like

places in Indonesia (where rabies is endemic) have cut their trip short and come home for urgent treatment. This consists of injection of human immunoglobulin around the wound and a course of vaccination.

Prevention is the key, by not touching animals. If you do get scratched or bitten then immediately wash the wound with soap and water, then alcohol disinfectant and seek medical attention. The vaccine for rabies is expensive and has potential side effects, so a routine rabies shot before travel is not recommended.



[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-abvl-rabies.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-abvl-rabies.htm)

# WORD SEARCH

Asthma	Steroid
Triggers	Ultrasound
Prevention	Skin
Inhaler	Stratum
Eczema	Cream
Insomnia	Bacteria
Awake	Safe
Muscle	Doctor
Sleep	Allergen
Tests	Pollen
Rabies	Infection
Dogs	Scratch
Virus	Joint
Wash	Tablet
Fever	Weight
Breath	Drug

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



## Laughter the Best Medicine

### THE RAISE...

**Employee:** Excuse me sir, may I talk to you?

**Boss:** Sure, come on in... What can I do for you?

**Employee:** Well sir, as you know, I have been an employee of this prestigious firm for over ten years.

**Boss:** Yes.

**Employee:** I won't beat around the bush. Sir, I would like a raise. I currently have four companies after me and so I decided to talk to you first.

**Boss:** A raise? I would love to give you a raise, but this is just not the right time.

**Employee:** I understand your position, and I know that the current economic down turn has

had a negative impact on sales, but you must also take into consideration my hard work, pro-activeness and loyalty to this company for over a decade..

**Boss:** Taking into account these factors, and considering I don't want to start a brain drain, I'm willing to offer you a ten percent raise and an extra five days of vacation time. How does that sound?

**Employee:** Great! It's a deal Thank you, sir!

**Boss:** Before you go, just out of curiosity, what companies are after you?

**Employee:** Oh, the Electric Company, Gas Company, Water Company and the Mortgage Company!

## BAKED SALMON & TOMATO MEDLEY

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large Tasmanian salmon fillet
- 1 small lemon sliced thinly
- 400gm Cherry/Roma tomatoes
- 1 leek or small red onion - washed and sliced finely
- 2 tspns fennel seeds
- 1 tblspns Olive oil
- ¼ - ½ cup Verjuice

Preheat oven to 180C. Cut the tomatoes in half and place in a bowl. Add leek, fennel seeds & oil. Season. Place salmon on aluminium foil & baking paper and top with tomato mixture. Arrange lemon slices on top. Drizzle with wine. Fold the foil over to seal the salmon. Cook for 30-40 mins or until cooked. Place salmon on serving platter.

### CAPER SAUCE:

- 3 tblspns drained capers
- 2 tspns lemon zest (finely grated lemon rind)
- 50gms butter
- 1 tblspn Olive oil



Recipe 'Great for Easter'

Place butter & oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Cook until butter is foaming and add capers and lemon rind. Cook until capers are crisp (approx 5 mins). Season. Drizzle over salmon and garnish with chopped parsley. Serve.

**me**  
**euroa medical**

● **MELBOURNE PATHOLOGY**  
 Monday to Friday.. 8.30am – 4.45pm  
 All pathology visits require an appointment. For appointments phone **5795 2011**.

### ● **PRIVACY POLICY OF THE PRACTICE**

In the interests of providing quality health care this practice has developed a privacy policy that complies with the privacy legislation and the NPPs (National Privacy Principles). The Practice ensures the confidentiality of all patients' Personal Health Information according to the RACGP code of practice for the management of health information in General Practice. This means that a person must give consent before information about them is released.



## Healthful Hint

### CAFFEINE ADDICTION.

This natural substance is found in coffee, tea, cocoa, cola soft drinks, energy drinks, chocolate bars, energy bars and some cough syrups and slimming tablets. While it may give energy and brain power a boost, regular use builds tolerance, so that ever-greater doses are needed to achieve the same effect. Stopping caffeine suddenly can bring on tiredness, crankiness, a persistent headache, sweating and muscle pain. The easiest way to break caffeine dependence is to cut down gradually, giving your nervous system time to adapt.

### STAYING "SANE" WITH A BABY!

Make time for yourself - rest when your baby is asleep ( switch off the mobile). Get a babysitter your baby if possible, so you can have a break. If you are unsure or feeling down, seek help - talk to a family member or friend, a health professional you trust, a baby health nurse, or a phone help line.