

HEALTH HQ

“Quality Caring”

95 Nerang Street
Southport 4215

P: (07) 5526 4444

F: (07) 5531 3697

W: www.healthhq.com.au



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Health HQ



Dr Norman Hohl

MBBS, FRACGP, FAFPHM, DTM&H, CTH

Dr Simon Thatcher

MBBS, CTH

Dr Michael Read

MBBS

Dr Donna Armstrong

MBBS

Dr Neil Chorley

MBBS, FRACGP, FACCRM, FACSM

Dr Bill Cassimatis

MBBS

Dr Danika Fietz

MBBS, FRACGP, M.Med (Skin Cancer)

Dr Nora Cadman

MBBS, FRACGP, Cert FPA

Dr Sally Kervison

MBBS, MPH, GradDipFamMed, LLB

PRACTICE STAFF

Nicky McClelland (**Practice Manager**),
Kim Mirja, Kris, Viv, Margie, Kim C, Emily
and Marilyn (**RN**), Brenda (**AIN**), Ilana,
Dorothy, Rosalie, Heidi, Kirby and Leanne
(**Reception**), Janet (**Financial Assistant**)

HOURS AND SERVICES

Consultations by appointment.

If you need to be seen urgently or need
a long consultation, please ask when
you book. Home visits within 5km can be
arranged if necessary.

Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 8:30am–5:00pm

Thursday 8:30am–6:00pm

Saturday 8:30am–12:30pm

AFTER HOURS CARE

GP & Home Visits: Chevron After Hours
(07) 5532 8666

Hospital: Pindara Emergency Centre
(07) 5588 9000

In a serious emergency, call 000.

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www.travelmedicine.com.au

www.healthinsite.gov.au

YOUR DOCTOR

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TAKE ME HOME



SEPTEMBER 2017

Hay fever? ‘Friendly bacteria’ may help

With the arrival of spring, most of us are looking forward to spending more time enjoying the great outdoors. For some however, the arrival of spring heralds a season of misery.

The runny nose, itchy eyes and sneezing associated with hay fever – or seasonal allergic rhinitis – can range from being an inconvenience to, in some cases, debilitating enough to keep sufferers indoors. Pharmacy shelves abound with remedies, but side-effects such as drowsiness, dizziness or nausea are common and sufferers are welcoming alternative approaches to this recurrent problem.

Why some people are prone to hay fever whilst others go completely unaffected remains a mystery. Why different individuals are susceptible to pollen from different plants is also an unanswered question. We do understand that hay fever results from an ‘over-reaction’ of the immune system to certain triggers. This results in production of large numbers of antibodies (IgE) which attach to the trigger molecules and cause the release of histamine. It is the histamine which irritates the nose and eyes, causing the familiar symptoms.

Whilst hay fever (and other allergies such as asthma and eczema) tends to run in families, we know that growing up on a farm or in an environment with several triggers reduces the risk of developing it. This doesn’t answer all the questions though, and we are a long way from understanding all the things that influence our immune systems. One area currently being investigated is producing some very interesting results

around the role that our gut might have on our immunity. It seems strange to think that the bacteria living in our gut might have an effect on whether or not we develop hay fever – but researchers seem to be finding just that!

The results of a recent study from a group at the University of Florida found that taking a combination of the ‘friendly’ bacteria *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacteria* can reduce symptoms and improve quality of life for hay fever sufferers. The researchers asked a group of 173 hay fever sufferers to take either the ‘friendly’ bacteria or a placebo over eight weeks at the height of the spring hay fever season. They didn’t tell participants which medicine they were being given. When the participants completed symptom scores or quality of life questionnaires, those taking the bacteria reported significantly more positive results than the others.

We don’t yet know how this effect might be caused. In their paper, the researchers talk about ways in which these so-called probiotics might affect our immune system, but no-one is sure. Many of us are familiar with the form of probiotics found in ‘live’ or bio-yoghurts; and their health benefits are increasingly advertised. The investigators used a high dose of probiotics given as a tablet, but we don’t know whether a daily serving of bio-yoghurt could provide us with a high enough dose of the right type of bugs to help us fight off hay fever symptoms. It is clear that much work remains to be done, but this finding is certainly interesting and might open exciting new possibilities to reduce the seasonal misery for millions of hay fever sufferers.

Take me home and give our healthy **RECIPE** a go!

Does avoiding gluten make us healthier?

Gluten-free products are becoming increasingly prominent on our supermarket shelves and the number of people adopting a diet in which gluten is either reduced or absent is increasing.

In 2013 around 20% of people reported trying to decrease the amount of gluten they were eating. For some, avoiding gluten is a medical necessity. For those people diagnosed with coeliac disease, consumption of gluten leads to inflammation of the gut lining and a variety of symptoms such as abdominal pain and diarrhoea. Even without coeliac disease, some people may be gluten sensitive and experience clinical symptoms when they eat gluten. However, for healthy individuals, little is known about the long-term health effects of avoiding gluten.

Firstly, what is gluten and where is it found? Gluten is a protein found in many cereals. It exists in different forms in different grains.



For people with coeliac disease, and for most with gluten sensitivity, it is the gluten in wheat, barley and rye which causes the problem. These three grains are common in foods many of us take for granted – the wheat in regular bread, pastry and pasta being the most obvious. However, they are found in other foods too – for example the barley used in brewing beer contains gluten. Avoiding gluten completely is certainly possible, but takes considerable time, effort and cost, since many gluten-free alternatives are substantially more expensive than their regular counterparts.

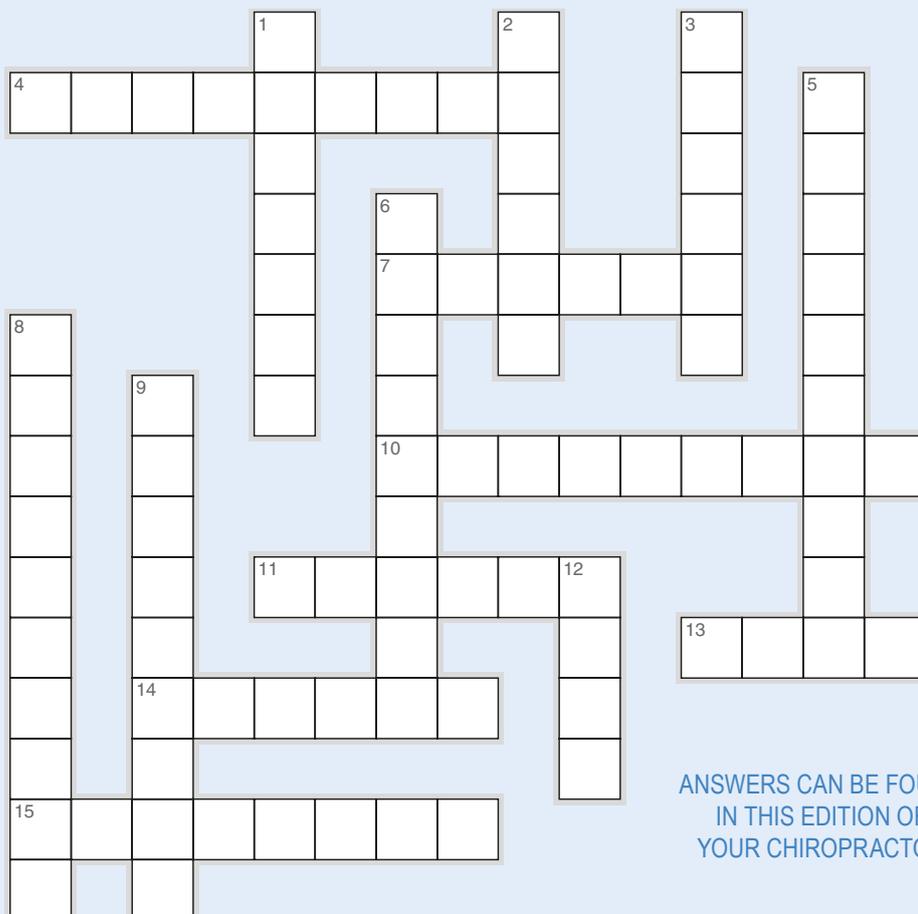
The idea of there being potential health benefits from avoiding gluten has arisen from a variety of sources. People with coeliac disease are known to have an increased risk of heart disease – a risk which is reduced when they follow a gluten-free diet. Foods containing gluten also tend to have a high glycaemic index; meaning they contain a lot of processed sugars and may be more likely to lead to diabetes if eaten in large amounts over a long time. This, along with concerns about intestinal bloating, have all contributed to the idea that a gluten-free diet is good for us.

But is this really true? Could cutting out gluten make us healthier; or is it just that people considering going 'gluten-free' are more likely to be thinking about what they eat and have a generally healthier diet anyway? This is a question which is extremely difficult to answer.



However, studies have been done which look at specific health questions to try and assess the benefits of gluten avoidance. For example, a recent study published in the British Medical Journal looked specifically at heart disease, and attempted to work out whether healthy individuals (without coeliac disease) who did not eat gluten reduced their risk of heart disease. By asking a large group of people to fill in food questionnaires every four years for 24 years, they could assess the amount of gluten eaten by people who suffered from heart disease (such as heart attacks and strokes). The report found there was no connection between the likelihood of heart disease and the amount of gluten in the diet. As gluten is found in cereals, avoiding gluten risks eliminating whole grains from our diet – and we know these are good for the heart.

So, this study suggests that for healthy people, avoiding gluten is not recommended. Instead, a healthy, balanced diet including gluten-containing whole grains is likely to be the best option.



Across

- 4. If this index is high, the food contains a lot of processed sugars.
- 7. Hay fever is an over-reaction of this system to certain triggers.
- 10. A major cause of death for people with autism.
- 11. These parts of the body are affected by rheumatoid arthritis.
- 13. Eating more of this can ease symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.
- 14. A protein found in many cereals.
- 15. Hay fever is also known as 'Seasonal Allergic -----'.

Down

- 1. Falling from these is a common cause of DIY injuries.
- 2. A disease that causes itchy skin.
- 3. A grain used in brewing beer.
- 5. Also known as 'friendly bacteria'.
- 6. The release of this substance causes hay fever symptoms.
- 8. When undertaking DIY projects, beware of risks to -----.
- 9. Lack of this protein has been found to cause skin irritation.
- 12. Learning to do this should be a high priority for children with autism.

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND
IN THIS EDITION OF
YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

SOLUTION IS ON THE BACK PAGE

Swimming lessons recommended for children with autism

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a communication disorder which is often diagnosed around the age of 2-3 years. It affects the way a person perceives and interacts with the world and other people in it.

ASD can be extremely challenging, both for the individual afflicted and their family: with a host of difficulties faced daily. Diagnoses of autism are increasing – currently around 1 in 100 children will have a diagnosis of ASD.

People with autism have a significantly shorter life expectancy than the general population, with accidents being one of the major causes of death. A recent study from America has looked into some of the data behind this and found some alarming information. Their study looked at 32 million death certificates, identifying that accidents accounted for 28% of deaths for people with autism (compared with just over 5% in the general population), and that suffocation and drowning were the most common types of accident causing death in autistic children.

From their data, the group calculated that a child with autism is 160 times more likely to die from drowning than other children.



There may be several reasons for this. The study's author suggests that children who are having difficulty communicating with the world may find a level of peace and isolation in the water. It may also be that communication disorders stop clear messages being transmitted regarding where the child is going or is allowed to go. Maybe swimming lessons are avoided or impossible as they require interaction with a large group of peers in a noisy environment. It may simply be that learning to swim gets 'lost' among the mass of other challenges to overcome in everyday living.

Whatever the reason, this report suggests that learning to swim should be a high priority for every child with a diagnosis of ASD. Helping children with ASD acquire this skill could help save lives by bringing the number of drownings down. Among the many difficulties faced by families with ASD, this may be one positive thing they can do to help keep their child safe and hopefully enjoy the water.

What you can do to prevent a DIY accident

With the start of spring, many of us start to think about home improvements.

For a huge number of people this means a trip to the hardware store, and undertaking some DIY. 'Do-It-Yourself' has many advantages: the most obvious being saving money, as well as the satisfaction of a job well done.

For a surprising number of people, the simple desire to do their own home maintenance and/or renovations can also result in a trip to the hospital; and occasionally it can have even more serious consequences. A recent publication from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that in 2013-2014 over 3,300 people over the age of 15 were hospitalised following injuries sustained when undertaking DIY. Perhaps unsurprisingly, more men are injured than women: men account for four out of five hospitalisations. Less predictable perhaps, is the finding that older people are more likely to be injured than the young. There will be many reasons for this. Elderly people may believe they are still able to carry out more challenging physical tasks; the need to save money might mean they are reluctant to employ professionals.

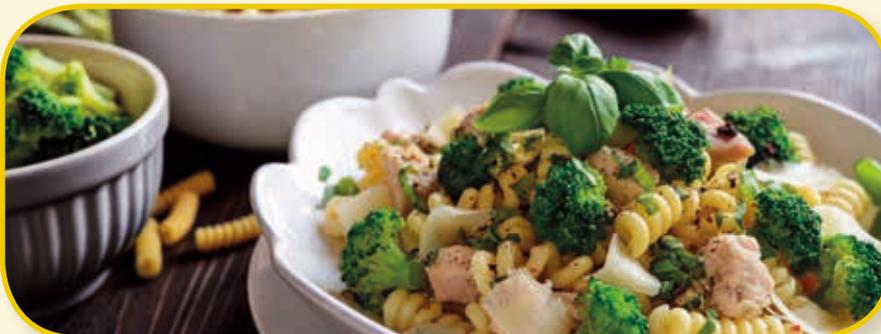
The most common cause of injury is falls from ladders, followed by injuries using power tools. As we might expect, falls tend to cause broken bones or head injuries, while machinery injuries cause lacerations and digits being cut off.

So, what can we do to reduce the risk and stop these injuries happening to us? The Accident Research Centre at Monash University has come up with four simple rules to keep in mind when undertaking any DIY tasks:

- Use the correct tools and personal protective equipment for the task at hand.
- Maintain safe work practices at all times.
- Read and follow instructions carefully.
- Be aware of risks to bystanders.

Whilst these might seem obvious and straightforward, accident statistics suggest we would all do well to remember them before launching enthusiastically into our next DIY job.

Spring pasta with tuna and broccoli



INGREDIENTS

Serves 4

- 350g pasta (spirals, penne or spaghetti)
- 300g broccoli, cut into small pieces
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp capers, drained
- 200g can tuna
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- Ground pepper (black or white)
- 90g pitted green olives, chopped (optional)

METHOD

Cook pasta according to directions on the packet. Add the broccoli for the final 3-4 mins.

In the meantime, mix all the other ingredients in a large bowl. Drain the pasta and broccoli, and add to the bowl. Mix well. Add ground pepper to taste.

SUGGESTIONS

Replace the tuna, spring onions and capers with cooked chicken, chopped fresh tomatoes and pesto. Season to taste with salt and pepper.



Do you suffer from rheumatoid arthritis?

Rheumatoid arthritis is an extremely painful condition where the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the joints.

Over time this can lead to destruction of joint surfaces and cartilage, meaning hands and feet become disfigured, difficult to use and ever more painful. There is no cure, and treatment is focused around controlling symptoms and trying to prevent 'flare-ups' of the disease. Often this involves the use of strong pain killers and drugs to suppress the immune system; many of which come with a long and difficult-to-manage list of side-effects.

Affecting around 1.5 million people in America and commonly starting at middle age, rheumatoid arthritis is a challenging problem. Researchers are constantly looking for new ways to try and reduce pain or slow down the progression of this distressing disease.

A new report from Harvard Medical School in the US has identified a simple diet change which they found significantly reduced symptoms in over 150 study participants – eating more fish. The study asked people how often they ate fish, and compared this to disease severity using a well-recognised



scoring system. They found that the arthritis in people who ate fish at least twice a week was significantly better controlled than in those who ate fish less than once a month. They also found that in this case more really is better – for each additional portion of fish consumed, the severity of symptoms dropped even further.

Eating fish has a wide range of health benefits – being low in fat and cholesterol, it can help ward off heart disease; with high omega 3 levels it is good for the brain; and it is packed with vitamins such as vitamin D for stronger bones. It seems we can add to this the fact that, for a specific group of patients, eating more fish can help in the control of a particularly painful joint condition, rheumatoid arthritis.

One step closer to cure for eczema

Eczema is a common and often distressing cause of itchy skin which can result in discomfort and sleepless nights for up to 10% of adults and 20% of children.

For those most severely affected, the breakdown of skin can lead to repeated infections and numerous courses of antibiotics. Despite being so common there is currently no cure.

Treatment centres around moisturising the skin to help keep it intact, thereby improving its effectiveness as a protective barrier; along with the cautious use of steroids to reduce inflammation and itchiness. Experience has shown that some people may respond to 'triggers', experiencing eczema flare-ups at times of stress or in response to some soaps or laundry powders. We also know that eczema tends to run in families, but the exact cause of the eczema remains unclear, meaning scientists are a long way from finding a cure.

New research has however, brought us one step closer to this elusive goal. Investigators from the UK have shown that when skin is lacking a specific protein, it develops changes which exactly mirror those seen in people



suffering from eczema. The group used a model of human skin which lacked 'filaggrin' and found that even without external triggers or irritants, the skin became red, inflamed and fragile – just like skin with eczema.

This important finding is a huge step towards a cure. Before this, doctors looked at ways to reduce the effects of eczema, but were in the dark when it came to understanding just why the condition developed in the first place. Now, doctors and scientists can focus on finding a way to increase filaggrin production in skin affected by eczema. They hope that doing this will allow skin to recover and perhaps make curing eczema a reality.

SERVICE

Our mission is to provide the highest quality care and service using evidence based medicine to ensure the health of our patients. "Quality caring" means we excel in our work, products, and environment and show concern for and interest in our patients' needs. Further information about our practice policies can be obtained by asking one of our friendly receptionists.

PRIVACY

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 staff members. You can make a request in writing for a copy of your records to be transferred to another GP.

COMMUNICATION

Information regarding appointments, investigations, results, scripts, referrals may be shared with your consent as required for your care. Patient requests requiring action are attended to promptly, based on level of urgency. You will be notified if there is any charge for the service.

FOLLOW-UP OF RESULTS

Your doctor will decide with you how to inform you of test results (e.g., phone call, follow-up appointment, etc.). All results are reviewed by the ordering doctor. For any results requiring urgent action, you will be phoned. If you have not been contacted regarding your results, call and ask.

FEEDBACK

Our goal is to provide a quality, caring service. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please let us know. We genuinely wish to hear from you. If we have not satisfied your concerns, please contact the Health Quality and Complaints Commission on 1800 077 308 or www.oho.qld.gov.au.

FEES

Consults \$65 gap. Welfare \$50 gap. Extra for Travel vaccines and medication. Skin checks for HCC/Pension card holders \$12 gap, New HCC/Pension Patients \$25 gap. DVA bulk-billed. Scripts and referral letters \$20 (bulk-billed if collected by patient). Saturday: No concessions. 3% surcharge for American Express and Diners Club payments.

SKIN HQ

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Dr Michael Read provides "no scalpel" vasectomies as permanent contraception for men. He also performs circumcisions for boys and men, as well as babies.

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A member of the Travel Medicine Alliance, The Travel Health Doctors at Health HQ receive daily updates from worldwide sources to give you accurate, personalised advice based on your itinerary. We carry almost all vaccines and other travel requirements. We work with your GP in caring for you in a specific area.

New Immunisation Schedule

Are you aware that 15-19 years olds are now eligible for a Meningococcal ACWY vaccine. Your child may be eligible for a free dose.

See your G.P for further details.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION
Down
1. LADDERS 2. ECZEMA 3. BARLEY 5. PROBIOTICS
6. HISTAMINE 8. BYSTANDERS 9. FILAGGRIN 12. SWIM
Across
4. GLYCAEMIC 7. IMMUNE 10. ACCIDENTS 11. JOINTS
13. FISH 14. GLUTEN 15. RHINITIS

Take me home to complete our PUZZLE – check inside!