health news

SANDRINGHAM MEDICAL CENTRE

Total Health Care

39 Bay Road
Sandringham
3191
Tel 9598 0444
Fax 9521 6861
www.sandringhammedical.com.au

APRIL - MAY 2026 EDITION

FREE TO TAKE HOME!

Flu Season in Australia

Seasonal Allergies

Boosting Immunity

Importance of Gut Health

YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT:

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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

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• PRACTICE DOCTORS

Dr Andrew Harris
Minor Surgery, Sports Medicine, Diving Medicine, Authorised Aviation Medicals

Dr Emma Pearce
Women's Health, Child Health

Dr Andrew Leaver
Family Medicine, Minor Surgery

Dr Katrina Denison
Family medicine, Obstetric shared care, Women's & Children's Health.
Speaks Czechoslovakian

Dr Grant Russell
Family Medicine, Child health, Minor Surgery

Dr Jack Yu
Managing complex medical issues, Chronic Disease management, Care of the elderly, Preventive health & Minor procedures including Implanon insertion and removal

Dr Genevieve Ryan
Women's Health, Preventative Care, and complex medical issues.

• PRACTICE STAFF

Practice Manager:
Cecilia Troncoso

Practice Nurses:
Charmaine, Karen, Enya & Anne

Receptionists:
Helen, Lucy, Mariah, Susan & Georgie

• SURGERY HOURS

Monday to Friday
8.00 am to 6.30 pm

Saturday
8.30 am to 4.30 pm

Sunday
CLOSED

All Public Holidays
CLOSED

• AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY

Please phone the locum service on **9429 5677** for the doctor on call.

Dial **000** and ask for an ambulance in case of a medical emergency.

• SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Welcome. Sandringham Medical is very excited to welcome **Dr Genevieve** who specialises in women's health, preventative care, and complex medical issues.

Travel Vaccinations and Advice. We are accredited to offer full travel health advice and a full vaccination service at your convenience

Fibreglass Plasters. Our clinic is able to offer you the convenience of fibreglass plastering for your uncomplicated fractures. Please make an appointment to discuss this service.

Referrals. Doctors in this practice are competent at handling common health problems. When necessary, they can use opinions from specialists. You can discuss this openly with your doctor.

Telephone advice. Most problems are best dealt with in consultation. A doctor is available during normal surgery hours for emergency advice. Our staff are experienced in deciding the appropriate response to any phone request.

Reminder system. Because our practice is committed to preventive care, we may send you an occasional reminder regarding health services appropriate to your care. If you wish to opt out of this, please let us know.

Test results. To obtain the results of any tests, please make a further appointment with your Doctor. Please ask the doctor at the time of your appointment how long it will take for these results to be received by the clinic so that a convenient appointment time can be made. To maintain confidentiality, results will not be given over the phone except in special circumstances.

• BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

We are a private billing practice. Children 12 and under are bulk billed (Monday-Friday).

Information about our fees and services are available at reception.

Payment at the time of consultation is required. Payment can be made by cash, credit card or EFTPOS.

• APPOINTMENTS

Consultation is by appointment. Urgent cases are seen on the day.

Home Visits. If you require a home visit for special reasons, please request this first thing in the morning. Visits are at the doctor's discretion for patients within a 5 km radius.

Booking a long appointment is important for more complex problems – insurance medical, health review, counselling, a second opinion, etc. This may involve a longer wait. Please bring all relevant information.

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▷ ***Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.***

Flu Season in Australia and the Importance of Vaccination

Influenza (flu) season in Australia typically occurs between May and September, peaking during the colder winter months. The flu is far more than a bad cold — it is a highly contagious viral infection that can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia, worsening of chronic medical conditions, hospitalisation, and even death, particularly among vulnerable groups.

Young children, pregnant women, older adults (65+), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and those with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are at greatest risk. However, healthy adults can also experience severe illness and contribute to spreading the virus to others.

Annual vaccination is the most effective way to protect yourself and your community. Because influenza viruses constantly change, the vaccine is updated each year to target the strains most likely to circulate that season. Immunity develops about two weeks after vaccination, which is why health authorities recommend getting vaccinated from April onward, before flu activity increases.

The flu vaccine not only reduces your risk of catching influenza but also lowers the severity of illness if you do become infected. Importantly, widespread vaccination helps protect vulnerable people through community immunity, reducing overall transmission.

In Australia, the flu vaccine is free under the National Immunisation Program for high-risk groups and widely available through GPs, pharmacies, and community clinics.

Alongside vaccination, good hygiene — including handwashing, covering coughs, staying home when sick, and wearing a mask if symptomatic — helps limit spread.

Getting your flu shot each year is a simple, safe step that protects both your health and the wider community. Speak to your GP to book your vaccination.

Managing Seasonal Allergies in Autumn

While many people associate allergies with spring, autumn can also trigger troublesome symptoms. During this season in Australia, falling leaves, increased mould spores, dust mites, and lingering pollen can provoke allergic rhinitis (hay fever) and asthma flare-ups. Common symptoms include sneezing, a runny or blocked nose, itchy eyes, throat irritation, coughing, and fatigue, which can affect sleep, concentration, and daily comfort.

Mould is a major autumn trigger, thriving in damp environments created by cooler temperatures and increased rainfall. Raking leaves, gardening, or spending time around compost can release mould spores into the air. Indoor allergens may also worsen as people spend more time inside with windows closed, allowing dust mites to accumulate.

Practical steps can significantly reduce symptoms. Check daily pollen and mould forecasts where available, and limit outdoor activities on high-count days. Wearing sunglasses and a mask while gardening can help reduce exposure. Showering and changing clothes after being outdoors prevents allergens from spreading inside the home.

Indoors, keep humidity low by ventilating rooms when possible, using exhaust fans, or running a dehumidifier. Wash bedding weekly in hot water to control dust mites, vacuum regularly with a HEPA filter, and consider an air purifier in bedrooms.

Medications such as non-drowsy antihistamines, saline nasal sprays, or corticosteroid nasal sprays can be effective when used correctly. People with persistent or severe symptoms, or those with asthma, should consult their GP for personalised advice and management plans.

With awareness and simple preventive measures, most people can keep autumn allergies under control and enjoy the season more comfortably.

Boosting Immunity Before Winter

As winter approaches in Australia, colds, flu, and other respiratory infections become more common. Strengthening your immune system ahead of the colder months can help reduce your risk of illness and support faster recovery if you do get sick. While no supplement can "supercharge" immunity overnight, consistent healthy habits make a significant difference.

Nutrition plays a key role. Aim for a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats. Nutrients such as vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, and iron support immune function. Foods like citrus fruits, berries, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, eggs, fish, and legumes are excellent choices. Staying well hydrated is equally important, even when the weather is cooler.

Quality sleep is one of the most powerful immune boosters. Adults should aim for 7–9 hours per night, as poor sleep can reduce the body's ability to fight infections. Regular physical activity also supports immune health, circulation, and mood — even moderate exercise like walking most days is beneficial.

Managing stress is often overlooked. Chronic stress can weaken immune responses, so practices such as mindfulness, relaxation, social connection, and time outdoors are valuable.

Finally, staying up to date with recommended vaccinations, including the annual flu shot, provides targeted protection during winter.

By building these habits in autumn, you give your immune system the best chance to keep you well throughout winter.

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The Importance of Gut Health

Gut health has become a major focus in modern healthcare — and for good reason. Your gut is home to trillions of microorganisms, collectively known as the gut microbiome, which play a vital role in digestion, immunity, metabolism, and even mental wellbeing. A balanced microbiome helps break down food, absorb nutrients, produce essential vitamins, and protect against harmful bacteria.

Poor gut health has been linked to a range of issues, including bloating, constipation, diarrhoea, fatigue, skin conditions, weakened immunity, and mood disturbances such as anxiety and depression. Diet, stress, sleep, medications (especially antibiotics), and lifestyle habits all influence your gut health.

Supporting your gut starts with what you eat. A diet rich in fibre from vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds feeds beneficial bacteria. Fermented foods such as yoghurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, and miso provide natural probiotics that help maintain microbial balance. Limiting ultra-processed foods, excess sugar, and alcohol can also reduce inflammation and support digestive health.

Other helpful habits include staying hydrated, managing stress, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.

A healthy gut contributes to overall wellbeing, from stronger immunity to improved energy and mood. By making simple lifestyle and dietary changes, you can nurture your gut microbiome and support long-term health from the inside out.

If you have any concerns about your gut health, speak with your GP.

Enjoying Easter Without Overindulging

Easter is a time for celebration, family gatherings, and, of course, chocolate. While it's perfectly fine to enjoy festive treats, it's easy to overindulge, leaving you feeling sluggish, bloated, or guilty afterwards. The key is balance — enjoying your favourite foods mindfully while maintaining healthy habits.

Start by choosing quality over quantity. Instead of grazing on multiple sweets throughout the day, select a small portion of chocolate you truly enjoy and savour it slowly. Eating mindfully — paying attention to taste, texture, and satisfaction — can help prevent the urge to keep reaching for more.

Avoid arriving at celebrations overly hungry, as this often leads to overeating. Having a balanced meal or healthy snack beforehand, such as yoghurt, fruit, or nuts, can stabilise blood sugar and appetite. Staying hydrated is also important, as thirst can sometimes be mistaken for hunger.

Try to keep to a regular meal schedule and include nourishing foods like vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. This helps maintain energy levels and prevents the "sugar crash" that often follows excessive sweets. Keeping active over the long weekend — whether through walks, outdoor games, or family activities — also supports both physical and mental wellbeing.

Remember, one day of indulgence won't harm your health, but moderation will help you enjoy Easter without discomfort. By focusing on balance rather than restriction, you can celebrate fully while still feeling your best.

EASTER CHOCOLATE & BERRY HOT CROSS BUN PUDDING

This warm, comforting dessert is a perfect way to use leftover hot cross buns after Easter while creating a crowd-pleasing treat for family gatherings.

Ingredients (Serves 6–8):

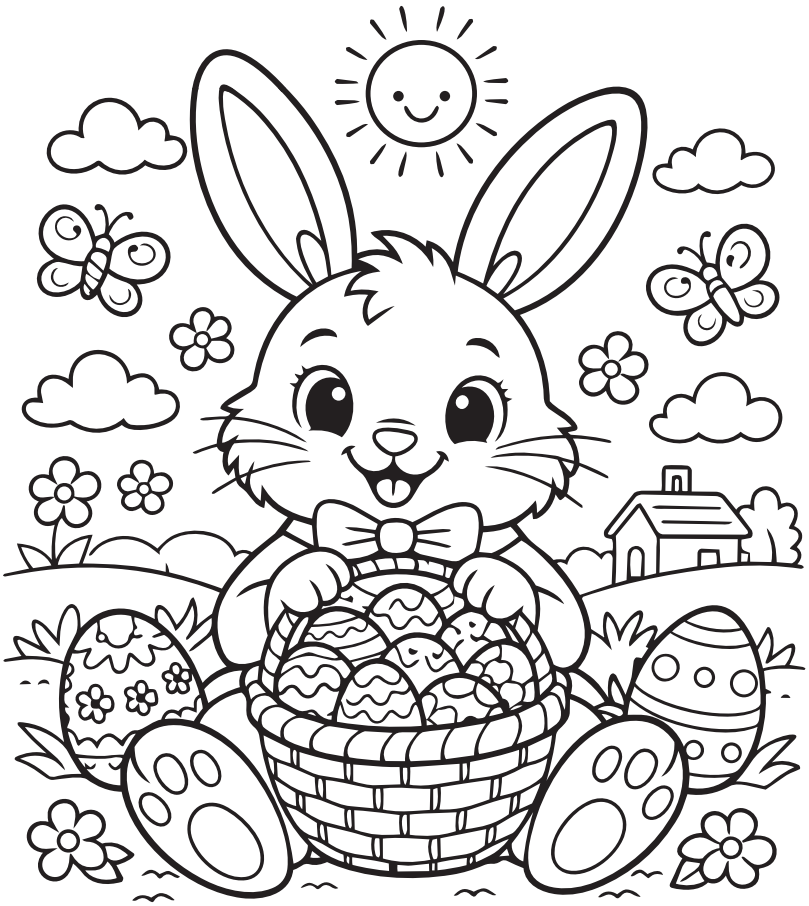
- 6 hot cross buns, sliced in half
- 1 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen)
- 100 g dark or milk chocolate, chopped
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- ½ cup thickened cream
- ⅓ cup caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Butter for greasing
- Icing sugar or extra berries to serve

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Lightly grease a baking dish.
2. Arrange sliced hot cross buns in the dish, overlapping slightly. Sprinkle the berries and chopped chocolate evenly between the layers.
3. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, cream, sugar, and vanilla until well combined.
4. Pour the custard mixture slowly over the buns, pressing gently so they absorb the liquid. Allow to stand for 10 minutes.
5. Bake for 35–40 minutes, or until golden on top and the custard is set.
6. Let cool slightly before serving. Dust with icing sugar or top with extra berries

Serve warm with yoghurt, custard, or a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

This indulgent yet comforting dessert captures the flavours of Easter while reducing food waste — making it both festive and practical but remember in moderation!



EASTER FUN!

SANDRINGHAM MEDICAL CENTRE
Total Health Care

- **OTHER SERVICES**

- **4Cyte Pathology**
  Mon-Fri.....8.30am till 4.00pm
  Saturday.....9.00am till 12.00pm
- **Nursing home and hospital visits**

Practice professionals are experienced in the broad range of health problems affecting all age groups. The practice is fully accredited to national standards.

- **SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES**

Medical record confidentiality. This practice protects your personal health information to ensure it is only available to authorised staff members for the intended purposes and to comply with the Privacy Act. Please read our Confidentiality Statement and make sure we have your signature scanned into your Medical File.

Your comments on our medical services are always welcome. We strive to improve for your benefit.

Please direct any queries or complaints to the Practice Manager. manager@sandringhammedical.com.au
If you wish, you can register your complaint with the Health Services Commissioner T: (61 3) 8601 5200, Email:hsc@health.vic.gov.au, 30th Floor, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

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