



Independent
Pharmacies
Australia

TRANSITION INTO SPRING

Combatting seasonal
allergies and hay fever
p.4

ASK A PHARMACIST

[with Katie Carney]
Trusted guidance
for better health
p.14

HACK THE COMFORT FOOD SYSTEM

Swapping hibernation
for healthy habits
p.16

A Better You

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2026

Spring
into Health

Growing up with

TYPE 1 DIABETES

How to create a
diabetes support team
at home, school and in
healthcare settings

p.21

Here for good

YOUR GOOD HEALTH GUIDE

As we transition through winter into spring, this issue of *A Better You* focuses on keeping you and your family happy and healthy. Whether you're interested in ways to support your child's physical and mental health, say goodbye to stubborn allergy symptoms, manage sleep and brain health or learn how to stay fit during colder months, this issue will be your guide to getting yourself spring-ready. Let us provide support for caring for yourself and others holistically this season.

Here's what you'll find in this July-September issue:

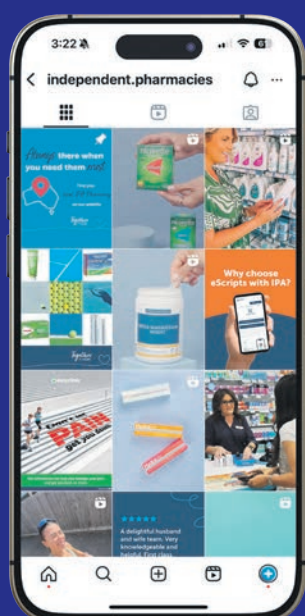
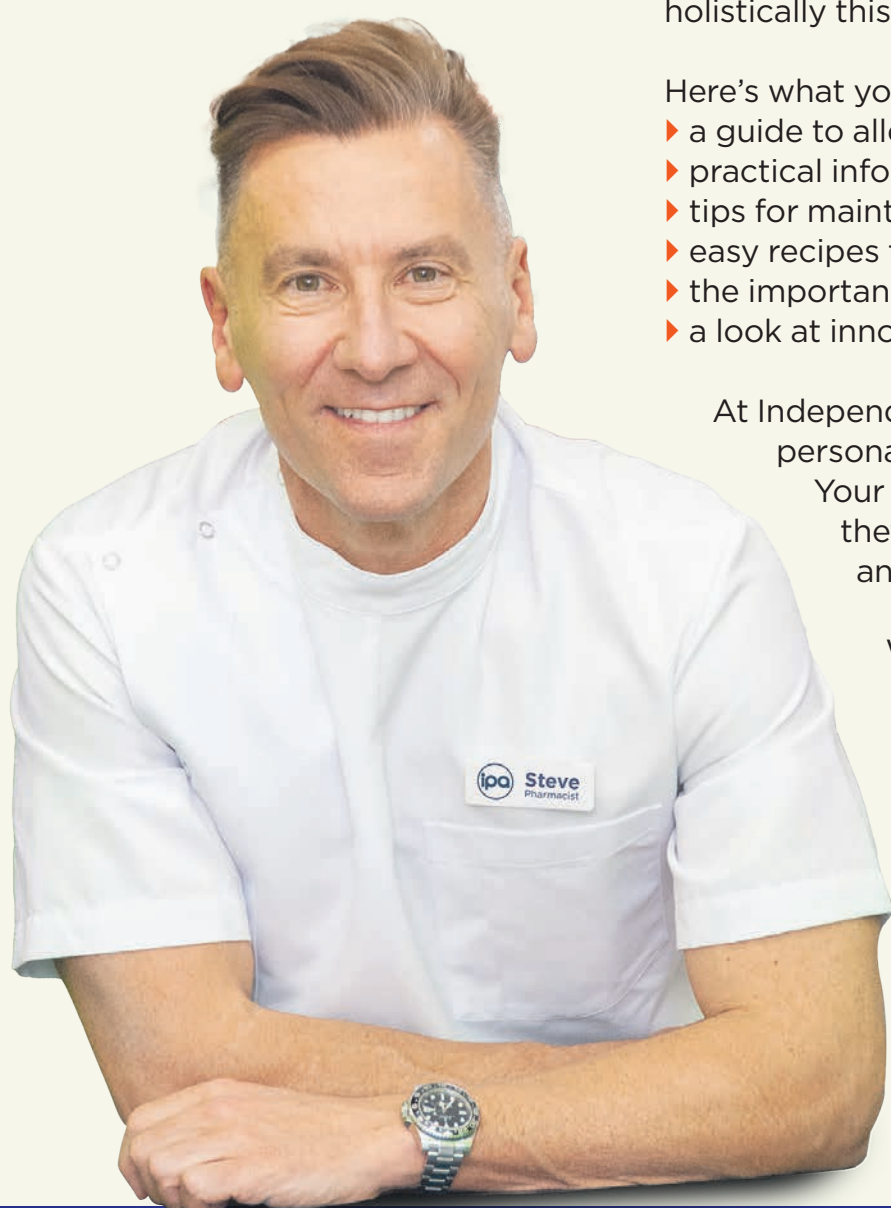
- ▶ a guide to allergies and hay fever
- ▶ practical information on childhood vaccinations, mental health and diabetes
- ▶ tips for maintaining brain health with age
- ▶ easy recipes for satisfying and healthy at-home cooking
- ▶ the importance of sleep for good health
- ▶ a look at innovative technology in women's healthcare

At Independent Pharmacies Australia, we believe healthcare should feel personal, accessible and connected to the community around you. Your local pharmacist is more than a healthcare professional; they're someone who understands your family, your health journey and the needs of your local community.

Whether you need advice, reassurance, support managing ongoing health conditions or help finding the right treatment, our pharmacists are here to care for you every step of the way.

Thank you for supporting your local independent pharmacy—proudly here for your health, your family and your community.

Steven Kastrinakis
Founder | Pharmacist



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latest health advice!**

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them most*



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CONTENTS

VOLUME 3 | NUMBER 3
July-September 2026

4

YOUR BODY ON SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Magnifying the
immune response



8

MAINTAINING THE BRAIN AS WE AGE

How to leverage
nutrition and lifestyle
science to slow brain
ageing



10

COLD HEART FACTS

Myths and truths
about cardiovascular
disease

10

MAKING UP FOR LOST SLEEP

The healing power of
zzzs and the impact
of counting sheep



12

ARE YOUR CHILDREN MENTALLY PREPPED?

Build the foundation
for mental wellness

12

CHILDHOOD VACCINATION

Top tips for parents



4



16



17



14

ASK A PHARMACIST

A local pharmacist
weighs in on your
health questions

16

WHY WINTER IS THE BEST TIME TO GET IN SHAPE

Swap hibernation for
healthy habits

17

FAVOURITE HOMEMADE TAKEAWAYS

- One Pan Beef Pie
- Crispy Chicken Burgers



20

WALK YOUR WAY TO DIABETES PREVENTION

Should your doctor
prescribe you a pair
of walking shoes?

21

GROWING UP WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

A family support
guide



22

THE WORLD OF FEMTECH

Supporting more
personalised care

The immune system mistakenly reacts to harmless substances like pollen, treating them as if they were dangerous



LIFESTYLE TIPS TO REDUCE SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Shower and change clothes after being outside.
- ▶ Try saline nasal rinses to clear allergens from your nose.
- ▶ Keep windows closed during high pollen days.
- ▶ Clean bedding, curtains and carpets regularly.
- ▶ Mop floors frequently.
- ▶ Use air purifiers with HEPA filters.
- ▶ Reduce indoor mould where possible.

If you're unsure which treatment is right for you, **Speak to your pharmacist.** They're here to help you breathe easier all year round.

Magnifying the immune response

Your body on SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Why your immune system overreacts

Seasonal allergies, often called hay fever, can be frustrating and disruptive. They may affect your sleep, concentration and day-to-day activities. For some people, allergies can increase the risk of other conditions, such as asthma or sinus problems. If you've ever wondered why you're affected, it comes down to how your immune system responds.

Understanding your immune system

Your immune system works hard every day to protect you.



Your pharmacist can help assess your symptoms and offer advice for treatment options

It helps fight infections, controls inflammation and keeps your body in balance. It also learns to ignore harmless substances like food and environmental particles.

This immune tolerance is important. But in people with seasonal allergies, the immune system mistakenly reacts to harmless substances like pollen, treating them as if they were dangerous.

What is allergic rhinitis?

Allergic rhinitis happens when your immune system reacts to allergens in the air, causing inflammation in your nose. Common symptoms include

nasal congestion, runny nose, sneezing and itchy nose and eyes. It often occurs alongside other conditions like asthma or conjunctivitis and can result from both seasonal and perennial allergies.

Seasonal allergies can happen at certain times of the year, usually when pollen levels are high. Common triggers include grass pollen, tree pollen or mould spores.

Perennial (year-round) allergies can occur at any time. Some triggers include pet dander and dust mites.

Treatment options

If allergies are affecting you, don't hesitate to ask for help.

Your pharmacist can:

- ▶ help identify your symptoms and triggers
- ▶ recommend suitable treatment options
- ▶ guide you on how to use medications correctly

Common treatments include:

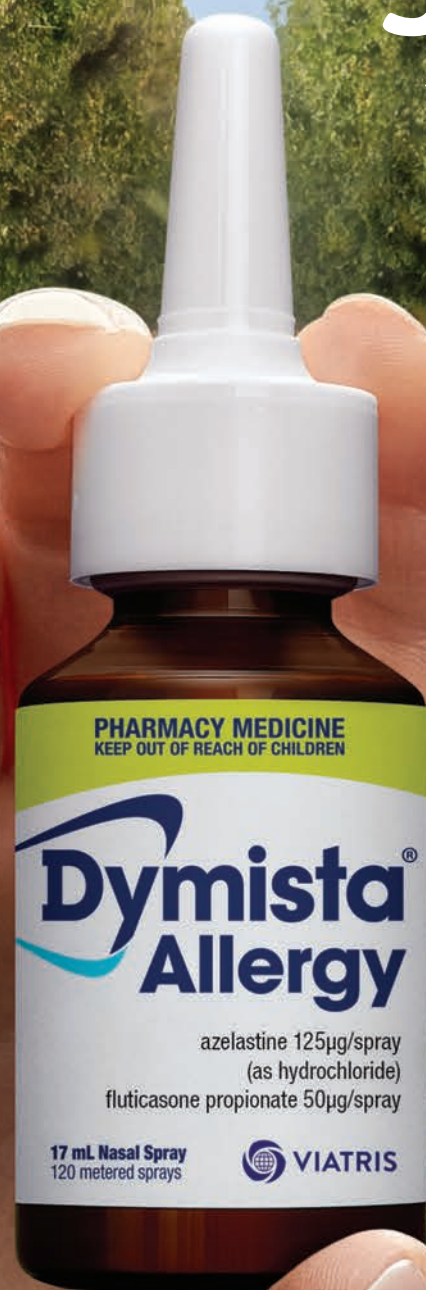
- ▶ antihistamines (tablets, nasal sprays or eye drops)
- ▶ corticosteroid nasal sprays
- ▶ combination treatments

For ongoing or severe symptoms, speak to your doctor. ■

TOP, CLOCKWISE: NEW AFRICA/SHUTTERSTOCK; IMPACT PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK; PEOPLE IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

RELIEVES hayfever from 5 MINUTES^{*1,2}

*Rapid nasal symptom relief



Always read the label and follow the directions for use. | Treats moderate to severe hayfever symptoms.

References: 1. Bousquet J et al. *J Allergy Clin Immunol Pract* 2018;6(5): 1726-1732. (Funded by MEDA Pharma GmbH & Co. KG). 2. Dymista® Allergy Product Information. Dymista® is a Viatris company trademark. Copyright © 2026 Viatris Inc. All rights reserved. AU-DTC-2026-00022. DH. DYM-005802-00. Date Prepared: April 2026.



Fight back against the allergy season

Your allergy relief starts at
your local Independent Pharmacy

Sneezing?



Red, watery eyes?



Dry, irritated skin?



Congestion?



Always read the label and follow the directions for use. Not all products are stocked in all participating pharmacies.

Find **relief**
with trusted
allergy solutions.

Powered by



Independent
Pharmacies
Australia

Find your local IPA Pharmacy here



Claratyne®

Your day doesn't stop for **dust and mould** - neither should your allergy relief.

Dust mites and mould can trigger allergy symptoms **all year round** – especially in warm, humid homes where they thrive, and may not always be visible.



Did you know?

Dust mites live year-round in homes and can produce up to 2,000 allergen particles during their lifetime, which can trigger allergic rhinitis symptoms.

Mould releases tiny airborne spores and outdoor mould spores can be 100 to 1,000 times more common than pollen, making them a powerful allergy trigger.

Fast-acting. Non-drowsy. 24-hour relief.

Claratyne helps you break free from allergies and live life on your terms.



Fast relief



Non drowsy



24 hour relief



Always read the label and follow the directions for use.

Maintaining the BRAIN

How to leverage
nutrition and
lifestyle science to
slow brain ageing

as we age

THERE IS A STRONG connection between healthy brain ageing and good nutrition. A 2024 brain-imaging study in older adults compared intake measures of key nutrients with signs of brain health, identifying the foods and nutrients most strongly associated with slower brain ageing.

Omega-3 fatty acids

Individuals who demonstrated signs of delayed brain ageing tended to have higher bodily concentrations of the anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid).

EPA and DHA are found in fatty fish like salmon, sardines and trout, while ALA is found in flaxseed, hempseed, chia seed, soy-based foods and walnuts.

Carotenoids

Carotenoids are antioxidants known to concentrate in areas of the brain and eyes. Oxidative stress, which carotenoids help to combat, is considered another hallmark of brain ageing. It's unsurprising that a high carotenoid intake was associated with better brain health.

Carotenoid sources include spinach, kale, capsicum, tomato, watermelon, broccoli, carrots, grapefruit and rockmelon.

Vitamin E and choline

Multiple studies have demonstrated that having higher bodily levels of vitamin E, another antioxidant, is associated with better cognitive health. Vitamin E is found primarily in nuts, seeds, leafy greens and fish.

Choline populates brain cell membranes and regulates the release of various neurotransmitters required for optimal brain function. Choline is found in foods including eggs, edamame, cauliflower, beef, chicken, peas, pork, broccoli and milk.

Polyphenols—the gut-brain connectors

Polyphenols are a family of plant-based compounds known to encourage gut bacteria to produce beneficial short chain fatty acids.

In 2018, *Neurology* published a study involving 1,329 older adults followed over 12 years that found those in the highest consumption

category of polyphenols had a 50 per cent lower risk of dementia than those in the lowest consumption category.

While this type of study shows an association rather than a direct cause-and-effect relationship, the findings offer a compelling reason to favour polyphenol-rich foods, which may be beneficial for overall health in any case.

Easy ways to boost your dietary exposure to polyphenols include cocoa powder, ground flaxseed, artichoke, blueberries and culinary herbs and spices.

Life synergy

Beyond nutrition, lifestyle matters: protect eight good-quality hours of sleep and prioritise 30 minutes of movement daily. Remember it doesn't need to be fancy, walking counts. ■

ADDITIONAL NUTRIENTS OF INTEREST

NUTRIENT	KEY FOODS
iron	red meat, legumes, nuts and whole grains (plant-based iron is absorbed better when paired with high-vitamin C fruits/veggies)
potassium	banana, avocado, leafy greens, fish and legumes
calcium	dairy, fortified dairy alternatives, soy, leafy greens, legumes and canned fish (with bones)
magnesium	leafy greens, legumes, whole grains and nuts

High intakes of
carotenoids have been
associated with better
brain health



TOP TO BOTTOM: TATIANA BAIBAKOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK; OPOLJA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Knocked out by the flu?

Your Health in Your Hands



Chemists' Own®

Always read the label and follow the directions for use.

COLD HEART Facts

Myths and truths about cardiovascular disease

THINK YOU'VE GOT heart health all figured out? Small misconceptions can have big impacts on your cardiovascular system.

MYTH #1 I would know if I had high blood pressure or cholesterol.

FACT High blood pressure (hypertension) and high cholesterol (hypercholesterolemia) may not have any outward symptoms until you suffer a heart attack. You may not have any idea that your cholesterol or blood pressure are a concern until they are measured.

ACTION PLAN See your local pharmacist or healthcare practitioner to have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked every year and discuss your personal risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

MYTH #2 I eat a low-fat diet, so I don't need to worry about heart disease.

FACT Recent studies suggest that a low-fat diet will not do your heart any favours. While reducing trans fats and moderating all your macronutrients, including fat, is advised, be careful of reducing fat, especially using carbohydrate-rich foods such as refined grains and sugars to replace fat-containing ones.

ACTION PLAN Continue to eat fat as part of a varied diet that also emphasises protein, vegetables and whole grains. Avoid hydrogenated margarines, commercially prepared baked goods and fried foods.

MYTH #3 I go to the gym, so it doesn't matter if I don't move all day at work.

FACT Sedentary behaviour puts your heart at risk whether or not you are active outside of work. While exercising for heart health may seem like a no-brainer, the impact of not moving for long stretches is evident.

ACTION PLAN Get up and walk around every 30 minutes. Can you stand instead of sit? Could you have a walking meeting instead of booking the boardroom? Small shifts toward movement can have big effects on your cardiac health. ■

SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

Not all of these signs need to be present during a cardiac episode; however, common signs include the following:

- ▶ chest pain
- ▶ discomfort in upper body (jaw, shoulder, arm, stomach, back)
- ▶ nausea
- ▶ sweating
- ▶ feeling faint
- ▶ shortness of breath

Remember that heart attack signs are not always severe and sudden, especially in women. Call 000 in an emergency or even if you are not completely sure these symptoms are of a heart attack. You won't get in trouble if you call in good faith.

For more information, visit heartfoundation.org.au.



NENAD CAVOSKI/SHUTTERSTOCK

Making up for LOST SLEEP

The healing power of zzzs and the impact of counting sheep

WHILE THE MENTAL AND physical symptoms of acute sleep loss may subside once proper sleep duration has been restored, it's harder for the body to recover if sleep loss becomes chronic.

Chronic sleep loss can contribute to systemic low-grade inflammation, which is involved in the development of conditions like diabetes, atherosclerosis and neurodegeneration. Research shows that sleep disturbance increases the risk of infectious

disease and contributes to the development of cardiovascular disease, cancer and depression.

SLEEP

Sleep allows the body to rest and repair, the effects of which are crucial for daytime functioning and overall health.

MOOD

Sleep is vital for emotional processing and memory consolidation. Sleep loss impairs long-term memory and attention and can lead to increased anger, frustration and anxiety.

PERFORMANCE

Sleep loss impairs the speed and accuracy of task performance, decision-making and exercise recovery.

HORMONES

Sleep drives the synthesis of reproductive hormones. Sleep deprivation is associated with infertility.

IMMUNITY

Sleep promotes balance in the immune system by regulating inflammatory mediators known as cytokines. Short sleep duration

and shift work are associated with increased upper respiratory infections and chest colds.

METABOLISM

Sleep may play a role in staving off diabetes, weight gain and obesity. Chronic sleep loss increases the risk of metabolic dysfunction and loss of muscle mass. Insufficient sleep leads to increased eating and weight gain in women, whereas restoring adequate sleep decreases caloric intake, particularly from fats and carbohydrates.

REM

Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep is the stage in which we dream, process emotions and prepare for next day emotional and social functions. During REM sleep, we consolidate learning and memory.

Emotional brain processing depends upon a regular sleep-wake rhythm, which tends to be disturbed among those with depression. Changes in serotonin may also contribute to REM sleep abnormalities in depression. ■

PHARMACY SUPPORTS

melatonin	exerts positive effects on sleep quality (only available behind the counter after a consultation with a pharmacist)
iron	improves restless legs syndrome, sleep quality and fatigue among those with iron deficiency
ear plugs	may improve sleep quality and daytime sleepiness
eye mask	may improve sleep quality and daytime sleepiness

BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

Blood Pressure Monitor⁵

**Around 1 in 3[#] Australians
have high blood pressure⁸
*and many don't know it***

High blood pressure often has no symptoms, warning signs or obvious indicators, yet it significantly increases the risk of a range of serious health complications.

OMRON has a wide range of blood pressure monitors. A quick reading at home can help pick up the problems early.



CLINICALLY
VALIDATED



Always read the label and follow the directions for use.

⁵ IQVIA Sell-Out Service, Blood Pressure Monitor category, Unit sales and Value sales, Oct 2025 MAT.

[#] Source: AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2019) High blood pressure 2019, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 27 March 2026.

⁸ For people with high blood pressure. Consult your doctor to evaluate the readings. Check your device periodically for accuracy.

ARE YOUR CHILDREN *Mentally* PREPPED?

Build the foundation for mental wellness

IN AUSTRALIA, 1 IN 10 KIDS aged 4 to 11 have a mental health disorder. While environment and relationships can't negate mental health concerns altogether, parents and guardians can support mental wellness in these science-backed ways.

If you're concerned about your child's mental health, consult your healthcare practitioner. For more information, visit healthdirect.gov.au/kids-mental-health.

3 TO 6 YEARS

At this stage, children feel everything and need to express it.

Foster independence

- ▶ Talk openly at this stage about safety and other important topics.
- ▶ Engage with your child through creativity.
- ▶ Allow for connection and separation when appropriate.

Help them regulate emotions

- ▶ Try some breathing exercises with your child to lower stress and relax the brain.
- ▶ Engage in physical exercise to help manage stress and build confidence.
- ▶ Read books that teach them about feelings so they learn to express their emotions constructively.

6 TO 12 YEARS

At this stage, children are often spending more time away from primary caregivers and are developing friendships and independence.

Foster independence while staying connected

- ▶ Reassure your child that you are there, keeping them safe, even from a distance.
- ▶ Communicate about subjects that are relevant to them, including technology, online safety and relationships.



Maintain cohesive family time

- ▶ Keep traditions and spend time as a family.
- ▶ Limit extracurricular activities to one a day and schedule a full day off each week.

13 TO 18 YEARS

At this stage of brain development, teens may become more self-conscious and might engage in risky behaviours. Connection is crucial but can be tricky, as teens often question and rebel.

Stay involved

- ▶ Open up topics and listen. If it's never been mentioned, they will think it's taboo.
- ▶ Offer freedom and a secure home base that invites discussion and safety while independence is growing. ■

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

- ▶ lack of engagement/limited eye contact in infancy
- ▶ abrupt changes in behaviour and/or communication
- ▶ changes in body image and eating habits
- ▶ self-harm; beginning or increased use of alcohol or drugs; talk of suicide
- ▶ physical complaints, such as head or stomach aches, sleep or food issues
- ▶ problems coping with daily activities

NEW AFRICA/SHUTTERSTOCK

CHILDHOOD VACCINATION

Top tips for parents

CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION

protects babies and children from serious, preventable diseases. Pharmacists play a key role in supporting parents with reliable information, preparation advice and after vaccination care.

Why childhood immunisation matters

Immunisation is one of the most effective public health measures available. In Australia, high childhood vaccination coverage has significantly reduced serious diseases such as measles, polio and diphtheria. The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides recommended vaccines from birth through adolescence, helping protect individual children and the wider community, including those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

Key childhood immunisations

Under the NIP, children are routinely vaccinated against diseases including hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, pneumococcal disease, rotavirus, meningococcal disease and chickenpox. Vaccines are scheduled at specific ages to provide protection as early and safely as possible. Keeping vaccinations up to date and on time ensures the best level of protection. Delaying vaccination can increase the risk of the child catching an infection.

Where to look for trusted immunisation information

Parents are encouraged to use reliable, evidence-based Australian sources when seeking information about childhood immunisation.

healthdirect, the Australian Government funded consumer health website, provides clear, plain language information on childhood vaccines, expected side effects and when to seek medical advice. Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation (SKAI) is a national, evidence-based initiative designed to support parents in making informed decisions about vaccination by addressing common questions and concerns in a balanced and respectful way.

Helping children through vaccination: practical tips for parents

Parents can take simple steps to make vaccination visits easier:

- ▶ Prepare your child with honest, age-appropriate explanations.
- ▶ Bring comfort items such as a favourite toy or blanket.
- ▶ Get to know your pharmacist and involve your child to build trust and rapport well before vaccination time.
- ▶ Use distractions, including books, singing or videos.

- ▶ Stay calm and reassuring, as children often mirror parental behaviour.
- ▶ Dress children in easy-access clothing to reduce stress during the appointment.
- ▶ Avoid routine pain relief beforehand unless advised by a health professional.
- ▶ Talk to the pharmacist vaccinator about hesitancy before the appointment if it is present in your child.
- ▶ Encourage gentle movement of the arm or leg afterwards to reduce stiffness.
- ▶ Plan something positive after the visit, especially for older children.
- ▶ Know what side effects are normal: mild fever, redness or soreness usually settle within a day or two. Seek medical advice if symptoms are severe or persistent.

Childhood immunisation is a safe and effective way to protect children and the broader community. Pharmacists are well placed to answer questions, guide parents to trusted Australian resources and provide practical advice before and after vaccination. ■

NEED EFFECTIVE FAMILY RELIEF FROM
COLD OR

ALLERGY?



NEW



symptoms for usually
UNDER 2 weeks



symptoms for usually
OVER 2 weeks

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Ask a PHARMACIST

A local pharmacist weighs in on your health questions

Six years after having shingles on my face, I still have severe itching around and above my eye and forehead. Is there anything to ease or stop it?

—from Bob, NSW

Katie: Persistent itching following shingles is known as postherpetic pruritus, a form of nerve-related itching that develops after the rash has healed. This condition is closely related to postherpetic neuralgia, a complication of shingles in which damaged nerve fibres continue sending abnormal signals to the brain. Sometimes, these abnormal nerve signals are experienced as itching rather than pain.

Because the underlying cause is nerve irritation rather than a primary skin condition, traditional anti-itch creams or antihistamines often only provide limited relief. However, several treatments may help manage symptoms. Topical products containing capsaicin may reduce abnormal nerve signalling over time, while topical anaesthetics such as lidocaine creams or patches may

provide temporary numbing of the affected area. Some people also find relief from cool compresses or fragrance-free moisturisers that help protect and soothe sensitive skin.

If symptoms are severe or persistent, as in your case, it's important to speak with your pharmacist or GP. Because the itching is located near the eye, it's crucial to get professional guidance when using topical products.

Every season my hay fever flares up badly, even when I take antihistamines. Are there other treatments available from the pharmacy?

—from Colleen, QLD

Katie: You're definitely not alone; many people find that standard oral antihistamines don't fully control seasonal allergic rhinitis (hay fever), especially when pollen counts are high. Fortunately, there are several options available from pharmacists that can be used alone or in combination to help reduce symptoms.

Nasal corticosteroid sprays such as fluticasone or budesonide are widely recommended as

a first-line treatment for moderate to severe hay fever because they reduce inflammation in the nasal passages. When used regularly during the allergy season, these sprays often provide better overall symptom control than antihistamines alone.

Antihistamine nasal sprays (such as azelastine) target histamine release directly in the nose and can be used alongside oral antihistamines if needed.

Nasal saline rinses or sprays help flush out pollen and allergens from the nasal passages, improving overall comfort. Meanwhile, non-sedating antihistamine eye drops can help relieve itchy, red and watery eyes.

Pharmacists can also recommend combination products that pair an antihistamine with a decongestant for temporary relief of sinus pressure, though these should be used cautiously if you have high blood pressure or glaucoma.

If symptoms are severe, persistent or affecting sleep or daily activities, it's worth discussing a review of your allergy management plan with your pharmacist or GP.

My blood sugar levels sometimes spike after meals. Are there foods, supplements or lifestyle changes that pharmacists commonly recommend to help manage post-meal glucose levels?

—from Henry, VIC

Katie: For post-meal glucose spikes, we typically recommend simple, evidence-based strategies that focus on *how* and *what* you eat.

Start with fibre and protein. Eating vegetables or protein *before* carbohydrates can significantly blunt glucose spikes by slowing digestion and improving insulin response.

KATIE CARNEY

Cessnock Day Night Pharmacy

Katie is a dedicated pharmacist with a passion for achieving the best health outcomes for her community. She has a particular interest in supporting diverse groups, with a focus on the needs of the ageing population.

After graduating from Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, Katie has devoted her career to improving access to reliable health information and services. She is committed to staying at the forefront of clinical practice and is currently undertaking a Graduate Certificate to expand her scope of care.

Katie believes that everyone should have access to high-quality health services, regardless of their location or financial circumstances. Through her work, she strives to make a meaningful difference in the wellbeing of her community.

Choosing low-glycaemic index foods such as legumes and whole grains also helps reduce spikes.

A small amount of vinegar (such as what you'd use in a salad dressing) with higher-carb meals may modestly reduce post-meal glucose by slowing carbohydrate absorption.

Lifestyle matters too. A short walk after meals can improve glucose levels, while consistent sleep and stress management support insulin sensitivity.

I would also recommend that you speak to your GP about a referral to your local dietician and diabetes educator.

My blood pressure readings at the pharmacy are sometimes higher than the ones I get at home. Is this normal, and what's the most accurate way to track blood pressure?

—from Kylie, WA

Katie: Absolutely; what you're noticing is very common and has a name: "white coat effect" or "white coat hypertension." Blood pressure measured in a clinical setting, including pharmacies, can be higher due to anxiety or stress. This doesn't necessarily mean your overall blood pressure is uncontrolled; however, a meta-analysis found that people who experience untreated white coat hypertension have a higher risk of developing heart disease, so being aware of it is important.

To track blood pressure most accurately, we often recommend home monitoring using a validated automatic upper-arm cuff. Take

readings at the same time each day, seated comfortably with back support, feet flat on the floor and after resting for five minutes. Record multiple readings over several days to get an average rather than relying on a single measurement.

Lifestyle factors, such as not smoking, limiting alcohol intake and making changes to diet and exercise regimens can benefit people experiencing white coat hypertension.

If your readings are consistently high at home or you notice sudden spikes, discuss it with your pharmacist or GP. Home monitoring combined with professional guidance gives the clearest picture of your cardiovascular health.

I often lie awake for hours before falling asleep. Are sleep aids safe to use regularly and what non-medication strategies might help improve sleep?

—from Ashley, QLD

Katie: Struggling to settle at night is common, but regular use of sleep-inducing medicines isn't usually the best long-term answer.

Short-term sleep aids, such as melatonin, valerian or antihistamine-based products, may help occasionally, but tolerance can develop quickly, and side effects (including daytime drowsiness, dizziness or interactions with other medicines) are possible. They're usually recommended for occasional use only and under the supervision of a health professional.

Lifestyle strategies often work better to improve sleep in the long run. These include keeping a consistent bedtime and wake-up

time, avoiding caffeine and alcohol before bed, winding down with relaxing activities (such as reading or gentle breathing exercises) and limiting screen use in the hour before sleep.

If you still struggle night after night, your pharmacist or GP can help tailor a gentle plan, or you may want to consider strategies such as cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia.

I'm starting to experience perimenopause symptoms such as hot flushes and sleep problems. Are there over-the-counter treatments or supplements that may help manage these symptoms?

—from Sophie, SA

Katie: As women move through perimenopause, it's common to notice changes such as hot flushes, night sweats or sleep disturbances. The good news is that there are gentle ways to manage these symptoms.

Lifestyle strategies often help: keeping cool at night, enjoying regular exercise and practising good sleep routines can make a noticeable difference.

Some women find relief from hot flushes with phytoestrogens such as soy or red clover. Other over-the-counter options such as black cohosh may relieve menopausal symptoms, including hot flushes, while magnesium or vitamin D may also help. Occasional use of melatonin may improve sleep and mood.

Since supplements can interact with other medications, it's wise to check with your pharmacist before starting any new regimen so you feel your best during this transition. ■

**Ask a
PHARMACIST**

Have a health question but not sure how to ask?

Scan this QR code to submit it!

One of our community pharmacists may answer your question in the next Ask a Pharmacist column!

At Independent Pharmacies Australia, our pharmacists are here to help!



WHY WINTER IS THE *Best Time* TO GET IN SHAPE

Swap hibernation for healthy habits

BY **SAM WOOD**

WHEN WINTER HITS, it's easy to fall into that "hibernate" mindset. Colder mornings, darker nights... and suddenly, comfort food feels like the only option.



But here's the thing. You don't have to give up flavour or satisfying meals to reach your goals. In fact, some of the best transformations I've seen have happened during winter. There are fewer social plans, stricter routines and more opportunities to build consistency. The biggest hurdle is simply getting started when it's cold, dark and raining.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

That's where at-home workouts make all the difference. No travel, no set-up. Just roll out of bed, press play and get it done. You'll feel better for it every single time.

And when you do get a chance to get outside, keep it simple. It doesn't have to be a full workout. Walk where you can. Swap a short drive for a walk to the shops, get

off a stop earlier, take a quick lap around the block between tasks. It all adds up. You'll get fresh air, a hit of vitamin D, a clear head and your steps up without overthinking it. Those small pockets of movement build momentum, which keeps you consistent.

SMART SWAPS

Of course, winter cravings are real: pies, sausage rolls, all the classics. But you don't need to cut them out. It's about making smart swaps so you can still enjoy those hearty, comforting meals, just in a way that supports your goals.

Here are some winter favourites you love, with swaps that fit into your health goals without sacrificing taste.

And when Friday night rolls around and takeaway is calling your name, here's another way to look at it. You can recreate your favourites at home with our homemade takeaway recipes. Same comfort, same flavour, just made better for you.

No extra fees, no waiting around, no food turning up cold. Just fresh, satisfying meals made with ingredients you know and trust.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Remember this. Action doesn't come from motivation. Motivation comes from action.

Find simple movement habits that you can do three to four times a week and watch that internal motivation burn all winter long. ■



If you're needing a reset and guidance, my next 8-week challenge starts this Monday, 6th of July. JOIN ME!





BY **SAM WOOD**

FAVOURITE HOMEMADE TAKEAWAYS

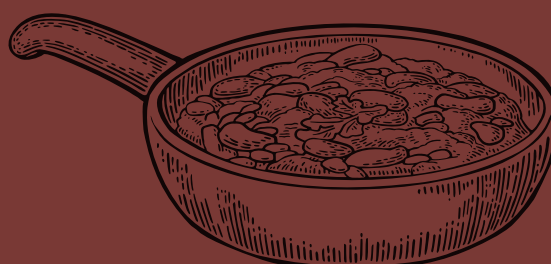
Same comfort, same flavour, just made better for you

To hear more from Sam or to join **28 by Sam Wood's** next 8-week challenge, head to 28bysamwood.com—or scan the QR code below.

28



One Pan Beef Pie



Lunch, Dinner | Serves: 4 | Prep: 00:20 Cook: 00:20

INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 3 celery stalks
- ▶ 2 carrots
- ▶ 1 brown onion, diced
- ▶ 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ▶ 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- ▶ 1 kg beef mince
- ▶ 1/4 tsp salt
- ▶ 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- ▶ 1 tbsp flour
- ▶ 2 tbsp tomato paste
- ▶ 1/2 cup chicken stock (or use bone broth or gluten free alternative)
- ▶ 1 cube vegetable stock (or gluten free alternative)
- ▶ 1/2 tbsp dried mixed herbs
- ▶ 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce (or use tamari or gluten free option)
- ▶ 1/3 cup frozen green peas
- ▶ 1 sheet puff pastry (or gluten free alternative)
- ▶ 1 free-range egg, for washing the pastry
- ▶ 1 tsp sesame seeds (optional)

METHOD

- 1 Preheat oven to 180° C.
- 2 Either finely chop the celery and carrot or place in a blender on high speed until well blended. Drain excess liquid and set aside.
- 3 Place an oven-safe saucepan over medium-high heat and sauté onion and garlic in olive oil until fragrant.
- 4 Cook celery and carrot for a few minutes before adding in beef mince. Break up mince with a spatula and cook until it begins to caramelise (around 5 minutes). Season with salt and pepper.
- 5 Add in flour, tomato paste, stock, stock cube, dried herbs and Worcestershire sauce. Mix until well combined. Turn the heat down and simmer for 5 minutes.
- 6 Stir in peas and allow your pie mixture to cool down for around 5 to 10 minutes.
- 7 Place 1 sheet of puff pastry on top of pie mixture, fold the sides and brush with a little egg wash. Top with sesame seeds, if desired.
- 8 Place in the oven and bake for 20 minutes, or until golden brown.
- 9 Serve with your favourite salad and enjoy!

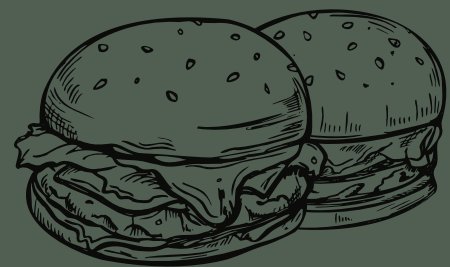
NUTRITIONALS

Energy	2036.0 kj
Calories	509.0 cal
Protein	40.0 g
Fibre	6.0 g
Fat	25.0 g
Saturated Fat	8.0 g
Carbs	34.0 g
Sugar	7.0 g



Crispy Chicken Burgers

Lunch, Dinner | Serves: 4 | Prep: 00:15 Cook: 00:15



INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 2 tsp onion powder
- ▶ 2 tsp garlic powder
- ▶ 2 tsp paprika
- ▶ 2 tsp chilli flakes
- ▶ 2 tsp oregano
- ▶ 4 tsp salt and pepper
- ▶ 1 1/3 chicken breast, approx. 400 g
- ▶ 1 free-range egg
- ▶ 1 cup cornflakes
- ▶ 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- ▶ 4 tsp lemon juice
- ▶ 4 tsp sriracha (optional)
- ▶ 4 sourdough (or gluten free) bread rolls
- ▶ 1 cup iceberg lettuce

METHOD

- 1 Preheat oven or air fryer to 200° C and line a baking tray.
- 2 Mix all the spices together in a bowl. Coat the chicken in half the spice mix and set remainder aside.
- 3 Whisk the egg in a shallow dish and place the crushed cornflakes in another. Add the remaining spice mix to the cornflakes, mix well.
- 4 Dip the seasoned chicken into the egg, then toss it in the cornflakes. Place onto a lined baking tray or air fryer basket. Optionally, lightly spray with olive oil.
- 5 Bake for 20 minutes or air fry for 15 minutes, flipping halfway.
- 6 Meanwhile, mix the sauce ingredients (mayonnaise, lemon juice and if using, sriracha) together in a bowl and spread over the burger buns (optional to warm/toast).
- 7 Assemble the burgers with the lettuce and crumbed chicken and enjoy!

NUTRITIONALS

Energy	1820.0 kj
Calories	435.0 cal
Protein	30.1 g
Fibre	2.8 g
Fat	14.5 g
Saturated Fat	2.5 g
Carbs	35.6 g
Sugar	9.7 g

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Walk your way to DIABETES PREVENTION

Should your doctor prescribe you a pair of walking shoes?

DIABETES IS ONE of the fastest-growing health concerns in the world. Roughly 1.2 million Australians have type 2 diabetes. Research reveals a powerful prescription to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes: a good pair of walking shoes.

Before you start: if you're new to exercise or have other health conditions, check in with your GP first. They can make sure any plan you follow is safe for you and may refer you to a physiotherapist if needed.

DIABETES 101

Your body needs insulin to metabolise the sugar in your bloodstream. Diabetes occurs when you're unable to effectively regulate your blood sugar:

- ▶ Type 1 diabetes materialises when you can't produce insulin.
- ▶ Type 2 diabetes happens when you lose the ability to produce enough insulin or when your body stops being able to use the insulin it still produces.

Type 2 diabetes is typically associated with older age, obesity, a sedentary lifestyle and a diet high in sugar.

However, type 2 diabetes is increasingly being diagnosed in younger people; experts attribute this rise to our lifestyle choices. That's where walking plays a role.

GO FOR A WALK

A lot of diabetes risks can be reduced with simple actions:

- ▶ getting enough physical activity
- ▶ managing a healthy weight
- ▶ eating enough fruits and vegetables

In a systematic review of 10 different studies, research reported that the risk of type

Walking regulates blood sugar levels by increasing your body's use of glucose for energy

2 diabetes decreased significantly when people simply added a daily walk to their routine:

- ▶ Walking at a relaxed rate of 4 kilometres an hour reduced type 2 diabetes risks by 15 per cent.
- ▶ Walking at 5.6 km/h reduced risks by 24 per cent.
- ▶ Walking at 6.4 km/h, or faster, cut risks by 39 per cent.

But what if you already have diabetes?

Walking can also be an excellent management tool, as it moderates blood glucose. Regular walks also reduce your overall cardiovascular

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND



LOOK AFTER YOUR FEET.

Always wear supportive, well-fitting footwear and take a moment to check your feet before and after exercise for any redness, blisters or sore spots. The NDSS has a helpful fact sheet on foot care if you'd like more guidance.



KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE.

This is especially important if you take a medication that can increase your risk of hypoglycaemic episodes (hypos). Checking your levels before, during and after exercise helps you stay safe and make any adjustments needed. A diabetes educator can help you work out the best approach for your situation.



STAY HYDRATED.

Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise to avoid dehydration.

risks (people with diabetes are three times more likely to die from heart disease) and alleviate stress.

WALK THE TALK

For diabetes prevention and management, have a daily goal of 30 minutes of brisk walking. You can even break this into shorter sessions, such as three 10-minute walks.

Some walking is always better than no walking at all, so don't underestimate how micro habits can make a significant impact over time. ■

Encouraging children to be involved in finger pricks, injections, insulin pumps, CGM use or food choices from a safe, early age can help build their confidence



Growing up with TYPE 1 DIABETES

A family
support
guide

RECEIVING A DIAGNOSIS OF

childhood type 1 diabetes sends a shockwave through the whole family.

But with the right support systems, tools and resources, the entire family can develop skills and behaviours that can change the trajectory of their physical and mental health for years to come.

TYPE 1 DIABETES IN CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition involving the destruction of the pancreatic beta cells which produce insulin. Hampered insulin production impairs glucose control, which can cause life-threatening hypoglycaemic events and long-term complications.

Type 1 diabetes is the most common endocrine disorder among children; its yearly incidence is rapidly rising. Considering the severity of the condition, good management is top of mind for parents with children who are newly diagnosed.

Encourage their involvement as early as possible. Depending on age, your child's ability to perform daily diabetes tasks can widely vary. Encouraging children to be involved in finger pricks, injections, insulin pumps, CGM use or food choices from a safe, early age can help build their confidence and sense of independence in managing their own health.

A TEAM EFFORT

Build a diabetes support team at home, school and in healthcare settings.

Home

Diabetes-related lifestyle changes implemented as a family encourage the maintenance of healthy behaviours. Facilitate conversations with family on what diabetes is, how your child will be managing their health and how to help them when needed (for example, recognising and treating low blood sugar). Involve their siblings by showing them how to inject insulin or check blood sugar in emergencies.

School

Work with your child's school to create an individual care plan at the start of every school year (or upon initial diagnosis), outlining the roles and responsibilities of school personnel, parents and the child.

Healthcare

A multidisciplinary approach to type 1 diabetes management includes medical and psychosocial professionals, such as social workers, nurses, counsellors and dietitians. Keep lines of communication open and encourage your child to ask their own questions to promote early self-advocacy.

Tools and Resources

Make use of apps like MySugr and Glucose Buddy, which allow you to track glucose levels, insulin doses, medications, food intake and activity levels.

To learn more about monitoring blood glucose, visit healthdirect.gov.au/diabetes-testing-and-monitoring.

SPOT THE SYMPTOMS EARLY

Seek medical care straight away if your child displays any of these early signs and symptoms of type 1 diabetes:

- ▶ excessive thirst
- ▶ increased urination
- ▶ increased hunger
- ▶ weight loss
- ▶ fatigue

The world of FEMTECH



Supporting
more
personalised
care

MANY NEW HEALTH technologies are designed specifically for women, helping them feel more informed and in control of their health. Some apps can be used either to help prevent pregnancy or to support fertility when trying to conceive.

“Femtech” refers to technology designed to support women’s health and wellbeing. It includes apps, devices and home tests that give women more choice, privacy and control over their healthcare.

Many of these tools are designed with women’s specific needs in mind, helping you better understand your body and empowering you to make informed decisions.

including some sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as human papillomavirus (HPV), the leading cause of cervical cancer. These allow you to collect samples yourself in a private setting, which can feel more convenient and less stressful.

Fertility tracking apps are another popular option. Depending on your goals, they can be used to help identify fertile days when trying to conceive or track cycles as a form of natural contraception. Some technologies are also using artificial intelligence (AI) to support fertility treatments like IVF.

Period care

Menstrual tracking apps make it simple for women to log their periods. Some apps also track period pain and heaviness of flow.

Tracking your cycle over time can help you notice patterns or changes. The long-term health impact of heavy menstrual periods, particularly the risk of anaemia, often goes unrecognised. Menstrual tracking apps available on iOS and Android devices can provide some insight into what’s happening in women’s cycles, making it easier to discuss concerns with your healthcare practitioner.

Some newer technologies include wearable devices, such as temperature-tracking rings, that monitor changes in your body to help predict your cycle.

For pain relief, devices such as **TENS machines** (which use gentle electrical pulses) may help manage period pain or other chronic pain conditions.

Reproductive health

Some women feel anxious or uncomfortable about gynaecological exams. New designs are being developed to make these procedures more comfortable.

There are also now **at-home test kits** for certain conditions,

Menopause and midlife

As women get older, their health priorities can change. New technologies are being developed to support:

- ▶ Breast health, including innovative early detection tests currently being researched
- ▶ Menopause symptoms, such as wearable devices designed to help manage hot flashes

These tools aim to make this stage of life more manageable and comfortable.

Thinking about trying Femtech?

Femtech is a fast-growing area, with many new products still being tested. If you’re considering using a health app, device or home test, consider the following:

- ▶ Choose reputable, evidence-based products.
- ▶ Speak to your pharmacist or GP for advice.
- ▶ Use these tools as a support, not a replacement, for professional care.

Your pharmacist can help guide you on safe and effective options to support your health. ■

SUDOKU

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Fill in the empty boxes so that every row across, every column down and every 9-box square contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Difficulty: MEDIUM

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DRAZEN ZIGIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

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