



# BLACKBURN CLINIC FAMILY GENERAL PRACTICE

## SUMMER 2020/2021

An independent association of medical practitioners.

**BLACKBURN CLINIC**  
5/195 Whitehorse Rd, Blackburn  
[www.blackburnclinic.com.au](http://www.blackburnclinic.com.au)

**HOURS** (open 365 days of the year)  
Monday to Thursday 8 am - 7 pm  
Friday 8 am - 6 pm  
Sat-Sun 8 am - 12 noon  
Public Hols 8 am - 12 noon  
Good Fri, Xmas Day 9 am - 11 am

Dr Suzanne ASHDOWN  
Dr Grant CONNOLEY  
Dr Sean DAS  
Dr Ann DONAGHY  
Dr Scott GARDINER  
Dr Melanie HATTOTUWA  
Dr Janice KRELTSZHEIM  
Dr Kazunori NAKAJIMA  
Dr Peter LOVASS  
Dr Andrew RAWLIN  
Dr Claire St JOHN  
Dr Jasdeep SANDHU  
Dr Adrian TANG  
Dr Aaron ZHANG



2/195 Whitehorse Rd, Blackburn  
[www.blackburnspecialistcentre.com.au](http://www.blackburnspecialistcentre.com.au)

**HOURS**  
Monday to Friday 8 am - 5 pm  
Hours extend past 5pm some days, dependent on GP availability.  
Weekend/Pub Hols Closed

Dr Andrew BROAD  
Dr Peter ELLIOTT  
Dr Yeganeh KHAVAR  
Dr Praba RATNARAJAH  
Dr Terence TING

**General enquiries: 9875 1111**  
**Appointments: 9875 1123**

**BOOK ONLINE AT:**  
[www.blackburnclinic.com.au](http://www.blackburnclinic.com.au)

## How to spot skin cancer

### What is skin cancer?

Most skin cancer is caused by exposure to UV (ultra violet) radiation in sunlight. UV radiation damages the DNA (genes) in your skin cells, which can turn them into cancer cells.

This damage occurs when you get sunburnt, but also just from tanning. So minimising UV radiation is the best prevention – including sunscreen and wearing protective clothing and hats.

There are three main types of skin cancer cells:

- **Melanoma:** Least common, but most dangerous. If left untreated it can spread quickly to other parts of your body.
- **Basal cell carcinoma and Squamous cell carcinoma;** Together called 'non-melanoma skin cancer', they're most common, but less dangerous.

Skin cancer is usually treated by removing the cancer cells. Methods include: radiation therapy, ointments, surgery, scraping (curettage), freezing (cryotherapy) and burning (cautery).

### How to spot skin cancer

People with skin cancer, or people they live with, are usually the first to notice it. But rather than waiting to find it by chance, it's recommended that you be proactive and regularly check for new spots and changes to existing skin moles.

Your GP can discuss the available methods for spotting skin cancer. For example, a method that's been successfully used for many years to detect melanoma is the ABCD Rule for identifying changes to the appearance of a skin mole:

#### Asymmetry

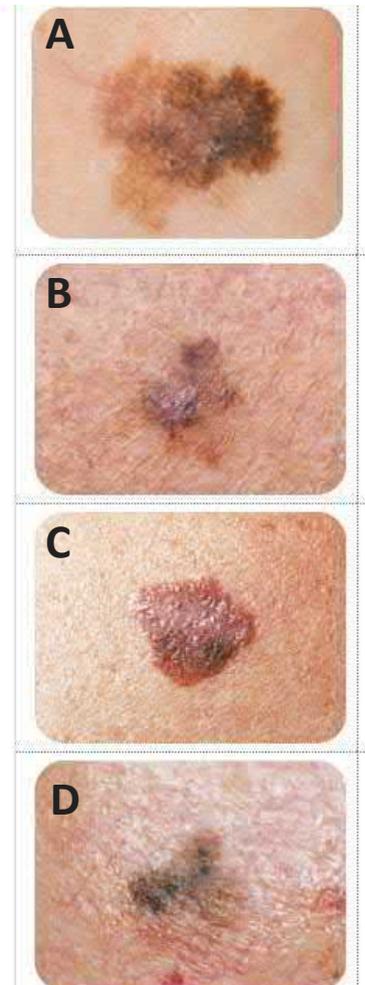
#### Border irregularity (spreading or irregular edge)

#### Colour variation (blotchy multi-colour spots)

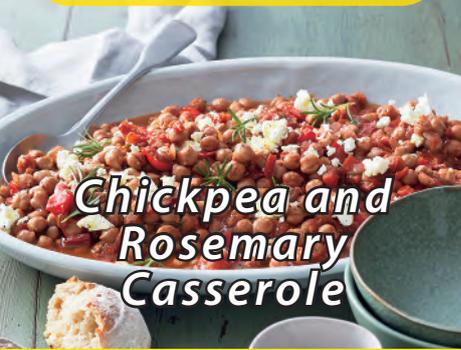
#### Diameter larger than 5 mm or getting bigger

However, the ABCD rule cannot always be relied on and there's also a type of melanoma called 'nodular melanoma' that doesn't fit well with the ABCD Rule. It may be better detected with the EFG Rule, which is 'Elevated, Firm and Growing for more than a month.'

For more information speak with your GP.



## Recipe



### Chickpea and Rosemary Casserole

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes  
**Cooking time:** 25 minutes  
**Serves:** 4

### Ingredients

- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 1 small red chilli, halved, deseeded and
- Finely chopped or pinch chilli flakes 2 garlic cloves, finely diced
- 1 red capsicum, deseeded and diced
- 3 x 400 g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) red wine
- 2–3 rosemary sprigs, leaves picked and chopped, plus extra to serve
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 x 400 g tin crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups (500 ml) boiling water
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 30 g feta, crumbled

### Instructions

1. Heat the olive oil in a large heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat and sauté the onion and chilli until the onion is softened and translucent.
2. Add the garlic, capsicum, chickpeas and red wine and simmer until the alcohol has mostly evaporated.
3. Add the rosemary and cinnamon to the pan and stir through.
4. Add the tomatoes and boiling water, then simmer for 10–15 minutes, or until the mixture thickens.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Serve, topped with the extra rosemary and crumbled feta.

Extracted from The Heart Health Guide by Dr Catherine Itsiopoulos, published by Pan Macmillan Australia, available now.

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# The Health Benefits of Laughter

**Y**ou probably recognise that you feel pretty satisfied after a good belly laugh. But did you know that laughing is good for your health?

While more research is needed, studies show that laughing can:

- Reduce levels of stress hormones
- Improve mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Increase the production of endorphins ('feel-good' hormones)
- Increase pain tolerance
- Lower blood pressure
- Boost your immune system by increasing the activity of natural killer cells
- Improve blood vessel function
- Reduce the rise in blood glucose levels after a meal in people with type 2 diabetes
- Reduce agitation in people with dementia

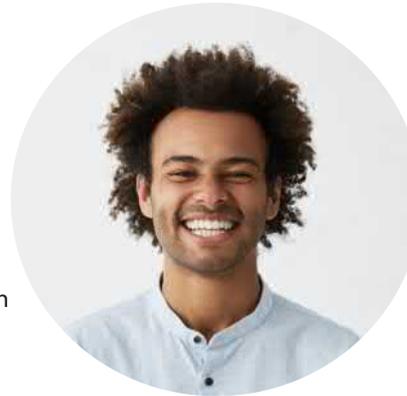
Importantly, laughter is also free, easily accessible and without any negative side effects!

While the optimal duration, frequency and intensity of laughter needed to provide health benefits is still unclear, current research suggests that benefits may be seen with 30–60 minutes, once per week. So, just like exercise, schedule

yourself some laughter therapy each week, whether it's watching a funny movie, spending time with people who make you laugh or joining a laughter club.

Here are a few ways to help you to laugh more:

- Practice smiling and laughing every day
- Work out what makes you laugh and make time to do these things
- Spend time with people who make you smile and laugh
- Share jokes with family and friends
- Watch a funny movie or television show, or attend a comedy show
- Spend time playing with young children
- Join a laughter club - run by trained leaders, they are designed to help you to gain the benefits of laughter for no reason,



helping you to practice laughing until it becomes more natural.

To find your nearest laughter club, or participate online, visit [laughteryoga-australia.org/laughter-club/](http://laughteryoga-australia.org/laughter-club/)

# The Facts About Weight Loss Surgery

**T**he number of Australian's undergoing weight loss (bariatric) surgery is increasing each year.

There are three main types of weight loss surgery performed in Australia:

**Gastric banding** involves placing an adjustable silicon band around the top of the stomach by keyhole surgery. The band reduces the amount of food you need to feel full and prevents you from overeating. It requires major changes to your eating – you will need to eat much smaller amounts, eat slowly, chew food well and some foods may not be tolerated.

**Gastric sleeve surgery**, also called sleeve gastrectomy, involves permanent removal of a portion of stomach, reducing its capacity by about 80% and lowering levels of appetite hormones. Following this surgery, you need to change your eating habits to include small frequent meals across the day and be careful to stop eating as soon as you feel full.

**Gastric bypass surgery** also known as Roux-en-Y, involves creating a small stomach pouch (to reduce the volume of the stomach). The food you eat then bypasses most of your stomach and the

first section of your small intestine that normally absorb food. Gastric bypass surgery usually leads to more weight loss than other types of surgery. However, there is a high risk of developing nutritional deficiencies.

Weight loss surgery is generally only recommended in those who are carrying significant amounts of excess weight and who have been unable to lose weight despite lifestyle changes. It carries several risks including the risk of infection, slippage and erosion of the band (with gastric banding), nutritional deficiencies, worsening of reflux (with gastric sleeve surgery) and the possibility of developing a condition called 'dumping syndrome' (with gastric bypass) where undigested food moves too rapidly into the small intestine and causes symptoms such as abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea, flushing, palpitations, sweating and feeling faint after meals. You will also need to make permanent changes to the way you eat, including the quantity, frequency and types of foods you eat.

If you are considering weight loss surgery, speak with your GP, who can help you to determine whether this is the right option for you, and refer you to a specialist bariatric surgeon for more information.

# Women's Health: Caring For Your Pelvic Floor

Pelvic floor muscles are the group of muscles in your pelvis which stretch from the pubic bone (at the front) to the coccyx or tail-bone (at the back). In women, they support the bladder, bowel and uterus, helping to maintain bladder and bowel control and playing an important role in sexual sensation and function.

The health of your pelvic floor muscles can be affected by:

- Not keeping them active or overworking them
- Being pregnant and giving birth
- Having chronic constipation and straining to empty the bowels
- Carrying excess weight
- Heavy lifting
- Having a chronic cough or sneeze
- Injuries to the pelvic region
- Age

You may not be able to see them, but just like other muscles, your pelvic floor muscles will become stronger with regular exercise. All women should do regular pelvic floor exercises – ideally daily. Maintaining strong pelvic floor muscles can help to reduce the risk of incontinence and prolapse.

Pelvic floor muscle exercises (also known as 'kegels' or 'kegel exercises') can be done anywhere. However, some women find them hard to do, as it can be difficult to isolate these muscles. If you can't feel anything happening when you exercise your muscles, or doing the exercises yourself doesn't help with pelvic floor problems, consider getting help from a pelvic floor physiotherapist.

While the exercises can be done anywhere, it is best to start with sitting or lying down and then progress to doing the exercises while standing and then walking. Aim to exercise your pelvic floor muscles at least once per day but you might start with a few shorter sessions when first getting started.

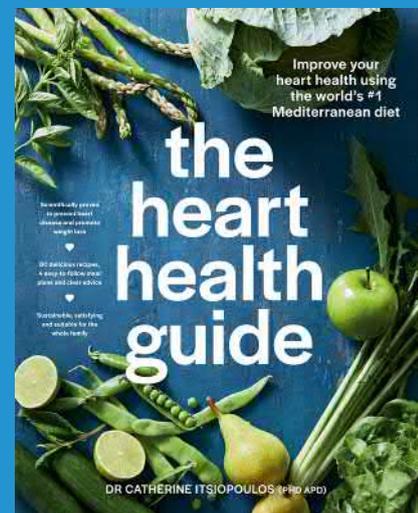
For exercises to strengthen your pelvic floor, including videos and apps, visit [www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au](http://www.pelvicfloorfirst.org.au). Or listen to this Jean Hailes podcast on Pelvic Floor exercises [soundcloud.com/jean-hailes/pelvic-floor-exercises-with-janetta-webb](https://www.soundcloud.com/jean-hailes/pelvic-floor-exercises-with-janetta-webb)

If you are experiencing problems with bladder or bowel control, speak to your GP or call the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 or email [helpline@continence.org.au](mailto:helpline@continence.org.au)

Dr. LoL:)



## COMPETITION



Win a copy of **THE HEART HEALTH GUIDE** courtesy of **Pan Macmillan**.

The Mediterranean diet is the most researched, effective and accessible diet for dealing with a range of lifestyle diseases including cardiovascular disease (CVD).

In *The Heart Health Guide*, Catherine provides practical advice, based on up-to-the-minute research, that will help readers understand their condition and improve their health via diet, along with input from leading doctors.

Recipe and information extracted from *The Heart Health Guide* by Dr Catherine Itsiopoulos, published by Pan Macmillan Australia, available now.

To enter visit us online at [win.yourhealth.net.au](http://win.yourhealth.net.au)

Competition opens 1st December 2020. The winning entry will be selected on 1st March 2021 and notified by email.

# Men's Health: Male Infertility Explained

Around 15–20% of couples find it difficult to conceive. In about 30% of cases, this is due to fertility problems in the man, and in another 20% of cases, both partners have problems contributing to their difficulties falling pregnant.

Male fertility depends mainly on the quantity and quality of sperm. If the number of sperm produced is low or the sperm are of poor quality, this can make getting pregnant difficult, or in some cases not possible.

There can also be problems with how the sperm travel. Other, less common causes include certain hormonal problems and genetic causes.

If a couple has had regular, unprotected sex, for at least 12 months without conceiving and haven't managed to fall pregnant, it's worth visiting the doctor to have investigations for infertility.

For men, this may involve:

- Taking your medical history
- Having a physical examination
- Arranging a semen analysis to check the number, shape and movement of your sperm
- Having blood tests to measure hormone levels and/or for genetic testing
- Undergoing a testicular biopsy to check if the tubes within the testicles contain any sperm

- Having an ultrasound of the reproductive organs, such as the prostate gland

In many cases, the cause of the infertility can be treated and couples can conceive naturally. In other cases, assisted reproductive treatment, such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF) may be recommended.

For men considering pregnancy in the future, there are many things you can do to help improve your fertility. These include:

- Not smoking cigarettes
- Avoiding excess alcohol
- Protecting yourself against sexually transmitted diseases
- Wearing loose fitting underwear to avoid heat stress
- Not using anabolic steroids (often taken for body-building or sporting purposes)
- Wearing protective clothing and following all occupational health and safety guidelines if your work has the potential to affect your fertility
- Avoid exposure to harmful chemicals

For more information on male infertility visit [www.healthymale.org.au/mens-health/male-infertility](http://www.healthymale.org.au/mens-health/male-infertility)

To find out more about the factors affecting fertility and what you can do to increase your chances of conceiving Visit the Your Fertility website [www.yourfertility.org.au](http://www.yourfertility.org.au)

# Six steps to reduce your cancer risk

In 2016 it was estimated that more than 130,000 Australians were diagnosed with cancer. It's the leading cause of death, accounting for around 3 in 10 deaths in Australia. The good news is that at least one in three cases of cancer are preventable and many cancer deaths could be prevented with the right lifestyle habits and regular screening. According to Cancer Council Australia more than 130,00 cancer deaths each year are due to smoking, sun exposure, poor diet, alcohol, physical inactivity or being overweight.

- 1. Quit smoking.** Tobacco smoke contains more than 70 cancer-causing chemicals. Quitting is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your cancer risk. If you need help, talk to your doctor, call the Quitline on 13 78 48 (13 QUIT) or visit [www.quitbecauseyoucan.org.au](http://www.quitbecauseyoucan.org.au)
- 2. Eat a healthy diet.** According to the World Cancer Research Fund, this means eating more plant foods (a variety of different coloured vegetables and fruit, wholegrains and legumes) limiting red meat and avoiding processed meats. Limiting salt, salty processed foods, sugary drinks, fast foods and energy dense foods (those that provide a lot of calories but little nutrition) is also important.
- 3. Move more.** Be physically active (for example brisk walking) for at least 30 minutes each day and reduce sedentary time, such as television watching.
- 4. Maintain a healthy weight.** Carrying extra weight, particularly around the middle, increases the risks of many types of cancer. This means that preventing weight gain and losing weight if you are overweight, is an important step in reducing your cancer risk. You can do this through moving more and eating right.
- 5. Be Sun Smart.** Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia and we have the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. But it's largely preventable. When the UV level is 3 or above (you can find out at [www.bom.gov.au/uv](http://www.bom.gov.au/uv)) the Cancer Council Australia recommend being Sun Smart – slip on sun protective clothing, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade and slide on some sunnies.
- 6. Avoid or limit alcohol.** There's strong evidence that alcohol increases the risk of six types of cancer – breast, bowel, liver, mouth/throat, esophageal and stomach. For this reason it's best not to drink to avoid cancer, but if you do, limit alcoholic drinks to no more than 2 standard drinks per day and try one or two alcohol-free days each week.

**For more information:** TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR, or phone the Cancer Council on 13 11 20 or visit [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)

## WHEN WE ARE CLOSED

Phone the clinic after hours on 9875 1111 and your call will automatically be transferred to the Blackburn Clinic After Hours Service (up to 11:00pm Mon-Fri, staffed by the Principal Doctors of Blackburn Clinic) and to our Home Doctor Service (Ph 13 74 25) at all other times. There is a fee for the Blackburn Clinic After Hours Service, details available to all callers. Box Hill, Maroondah and Knox Private Hospitals all have emergency departments.

## APPOINTMENTS

Appointments should be made to see the doctor of your choice. Urgent problems are always seen quickly – please notify the receptionist. Book online at: [www.blackburnclinic.com.au](http://www.blackburnclinic.com.au)

## BILLING POLICY

We are a private billing clinic. Fees are payable at the time of consultation and full payment on the day will attract a discount. Fees are subject to regular review. Current fees and changes to fees are displayed in the waiting room and our website. Veterans Affairs gold card holders will be bulk-billed. If you have difficulty paying our fees at any time, please discuss this with your doctor.

## DIABETES CLINIC

Education and information about use of devices, healthy eating, and strategies to help manage your condition to avoid complications. Our Diabetes Clinic will keep you up to date with the latest approaches. Ask your doctor for a referral.

## SKIN CANCER CHECKS

Most patients should have a skin cancer check once per year. Please ask your doctor for a specific appointment for this, and to send you a reminder when your next SKIN CHECK is due

## IRON INFUSIONS

We can treat iron deficiency anaemia on-site, where medically appropriate, at considerable savings compared to the traditional day-surgery model. Please see your doctor for advice.

## HOME VISITS

On weekdays we do home visits for our patients in the local area if necessary. Where possible we ask that you ring before 10:00am to arrange this. Sometimes demand for this service will exceed our ability to respond and a locum visit may need to be arranged. Fees will apply for all home visits.

## MELBOURNE PATHOLOGY

Blackburn Clinic patients are able to access Melbourne Pathology services within Blackburn Clinic, from 8.00am - 1.00pm, Mon - Fri. Please take a number at reception and wait in our reception waiting area to be called.