

GWINGANNA BIRCHER MUESLI

5 CUPS (500G) ROLLED OATS

3/4 CUP (100G) SUNFLOWER SEEDS

1/2 CUP (50G) PEPITAS—PUMPKIN SEEDS

4 CUPS (50G) LINSEEDS - hard to get in Alice (I use LSA 1/2 - 1 CUP as an alternative)

1/2 CUP SULTANAS OR RAISINS (I always use more)

1/2 tbsp cinnamon

Mix all dry ingredients in a large bowl and soak in water overnight (1L for 500g oats). Add seasonal fruit, natural yoghurt to taste.

Oats have a soothing effect on the central nervous system and a great source of B vitamins. The muesli is easy to digest as it has been soaked and it contains essential fats and zinc, vital dietary components for keeping our blood cholesterol levels balanced. You can also sprinkle a teaspoon of psyllium husk over each individual serve (this amount seems to last 8—10 serves depending on sizing of serve). Give it a try!!! I like to add the following depending on how organised I am.

STEWED RHUBARB

5 medium rhubarb stalks, cut into 2 cm pieces

1 large granny smith apple cut into wedges

1 cinnamon stick

5 whole cloves, 3 strips of orange rind

2tbsp honey and 250ml water

Place all ingredients into large saucepan, bring to the boil—simmer only 2-3mins as rhubarb softens quickly. Serve warm or cold, and I often enjoy with the bircher muesli for brekky.

BAKED PEAR SLIVERS

5 firm but ripe pears and 2 tbsp cinnamon (I just sprinkle on top and do not measure!!)

Cut pears into 1/2cm slices, scatter them on a baking tray, sprinkle with cinnamon and bake at 150C for approx 15 min

WE DO NOT BULK BILL

Since we opened our practice in September 2006 we have been a fee paying clinic and this policy has not changed. There have been increasing number of new patients who seem to be assuming that because they ask, we should be obliged to bulk bill. This is not the case—and has never been that way. Unfortunately the Australian Government (current and past) do not believe the medicare rebate needs to be adjusted to the Consumer Price Index and over the last 20 + years this gap continues to widen between what medicare rebates pay and what it costs to run a medical clinic. Your local government member would be the best person to direct any concerns regarding the gap payments.

It is at the doctor's discretion to bulk-bill occasionally—but ASFMC is providing a service, just like any other business. We have overhead costs—outgoing expenses, wages, power bills etc and no other business that I am aware of in Alice Springs would let you purchase a product and not pay for it. As other businesses may state "Do not ask for credit" please be mindful that is what patients are doing when they arrive for an appointment without wallets, or credit cards etc. To the best of our knowledge no medical clinics routinely bulk bill in Alice Springs.

ASFMC has been bulk-billing aged pensioners since early last year as a courtesy in these difficult economic times. We do not bulk-bill health care card holders. Some patients feel it is their right to tell us how "immoral or unjust" our billing procedures are—please remember the standard fee of \$62 does not go directly to the GP but to pay all our other bills including a wage to the GP, reception staff, power and water bills, internet and phone bills, mortgage payments etc

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**ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY
MEDICAL CENTRE**

NEWSLETTER 10/09

How amazing is time?? As we approach arguably the best time of year for living in Alice Springs (at least in my opinion) and the weather cools down, but the sun continues to shine, it is easier to "get out and about".

Our practice profile continues to grow and we now have 3 full-time equivalent GPs working at ASFMC.

This newsletter is an opportunity to discuss health topics that may have been mentioned in various media lately as well as keep you up to date with any clinic policy changes.

Please take a moment to enjoy our native garden, as the flowers bloom. I have every intention to win out over the buffel grass and spend some time over the next few weekends asserting my dominance over the weeds!!!

Please respect the no smoking policy on the entire grounds of the clinic. I am sick of picking up butts!! We can see you smoking through the windows and it is extremely rude to ignore all the obvious signage.



Proud to be working with the community
to improve Central Australian Health

**17 Stuart Highway
Entrance off Kekwick Ave
Parking at rear
Phone 08 8952 7774 ALL HOURS**

CHANGE TO HOURS OF OPERATION

Unfortunately ASFMC is once again recruiting for a new part-time receptionist (for the 8th time) and due to unrealistic pressure on our practice manager / practice nurse Susie to cover reception as well, we will no longer be offering extended consulting hours on a Monday or Wednesday evening from mid May 2009.

Depending on demand and our ability to staff it at a later date the evening sessions may return. Stay tuned!! The medicare rebates did change back in Nov 2008 so that fees for appointments starting at 6pm are dramatically different than a standard consult— but the out of pocket expense will remain the same. We would apply that fee change if we recommence the later nights.

NEW PRACTICE NURSE

Fiona Nash will be joining the ASFMC team on Thursday 28th May 2009 in a part-time capacity to lessen the load on Susie our long standing, and “suffering” practice nurse and practice manager. She will only be working on a Thursday and for the next few weeks—months ECGs, spirometry and routine medicals will only be offered on a Thursday. We apologise for any inconvenience but ASFMC management needs to be proactive in protecting Susie’s sanity!!!

ASFMC has had 3 full time equivalent GPs since February 2009, which has dramatically increased our capacity for appointments. Routine immunisations that were previously able to be done with the practice nurse to take the pressure off solo GP Dr Mitchell have to now return to the GP consult (either 3 GPs) until our practice nurse roster changes.

No other clinic in town has a full time practice nurse and ASFMC is hopeful that in the future that role can continue to be expanded. Often the cost of the immunisation and the consult with a GP are legitimately tax deductible if work related so keep all receipts.

THE FACTS ABOUT MENINGITIS

Meningitis means inflammation of the membranes “meninges” lining the brain. There are many types of meningitis and while the symptoms are often similar, the causes, treatments and outcomes can vary greatly. The organisms that usually cause meningitis include bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi.

Bacterial meningitis is the most common life-threatening type of meningitis and can cause death within hours. Most cases in children and adults are caused by meningococcal or pneumococcal bacteria. In the past haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) meningitis was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in children but Hib has almost been eliminated since vaccines were introduced in Australia in 1993.

Death occurs in about 5—15% of cases of bacterial meningitis and in addition about 20% of patients are left with a permanent disability including cerebral palsy, limb amputation, deafness or learning difficulty. The bacteria that cause meningitis are very common and are spread from person-to-person by respiratory secretions.

Fortunately these bacteria rarely cause illness. Bacteria that cause meningitis die very quickly outside the body and cannot be picked up by drinking water or touching environmental surfaces.

Signs and symptoms of meningitis in babies:

- Fever
- Rapid breathing
- Rash
- Vomiting
- Irritability
- Drowsiness
- Pallor

Most cases of meningitis start with a fever, a severe headache and neck stiffness, followed by vomiting and altered consciousness. A spotty unblanching red/purple rash sometimes occurs, most commonly with meningococcal meningitis and it is an important sign that the patient must see a doctor urgently.

IF YOU SUSPECT MENINGITIS SEEK URGENT MEDICAL ADVICE—DO NOT WAIT FOR A RASH TO APPEAR. If your GP is not immediately available (unfortunately more usual in Alice Springs due to high demands) go straight to the Emergency department at Alice Springs Hospital. Remember meningitis can progress rapidly.

www.meningitis.com.au Freecall 1800 250 223

OVARIAN CANCER

Can you name any symptom of ovarian cancer?

- Abdominal bloating
- Abdominal or back pain
- Appetite loss or feeling full quickly
- Changes in toilet habit
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Indigestion or heartburn
- Fatigue

Research shows that 1 in 5 Australian women cannot name one symptom of ovarian cancer. If any of the above symptoms above are UNUSUAL for you and they PERSIST, please see your GP.

This year in Australia, 1300 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Most women with ovarian cancer experience at least one symptom of the disease in the year prior to their diagnosis. There is no screening test for ovarian cancer. The best thing you can do is to know your body and be aware of the symptoms of the disease.

A pap test does not detect ovarian cancer—it is designed to detect cervical cancer. But a pap test is a unique opportunity for the GP to also do a pelvic examination to feel your uterus and ovaries and here at ASFMC we would routinely offer a pelvic examination and swabs as part of every pap test.

The recent advertisement on TV by the “National Breast and Ovarian Cancer Centre” has highlighted how vague and similar these symptoms can be to many other conditions that can be part of everyday life.

But if any of these symptoms are UNUSUAL and they PERSIST, PLEASE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ONE OF THE GPs here at ASFMC.

www.nbocc.org.au