



Telehealth



Connecting teenagers



Colds & flu



How to manage stress

YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT:

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

● AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY

In case of a medical emergency call '000' and ask for an ambulance immediately.

For all other After hours medical enquiries, after Stawell Medical Centre has closed, on weekends or public holidays, please call **5358 1410** and your call will put through to our after hours service for advice.

● PRACTICE DOCTORS

- Dr Andrew Cunningham** MBBS
- Dr Eleazer Okwor-Ojwang** MBBS, FRACGP
- Dr Venkateshwar Komerelly** MBBS, FRACGP
- Dr Swetha Bandaru** MBBS, FRACGP
- Dr Adnan Rasheed** MBBS, FRACGP
- Dr Catherine Pye** MBBS, FACRRM
- Dr Christian Ezeobi** MBBS

Dr Marcus Wilcox MBBS

Dr Miguel Dajao MBBS

Dr Kannan Ramanathan MBBS

Dr Michael Forster BM,BS, FACRRM, DRANZCOG,
M GP Psych, Dip Prac Derm(Cardiff), Dip Adv Hypn

● VISITING SURGEONS

Mr Ahmed Naqeeb FRACS, FRCS, MBChB
Practice doctors are experienced in the broad range of general practice problems and the treatment of all age groups.

● PRIVATE PSYCHOLOGIST

Krystal Browne

● PRACTICE STAFF

Practice Manager:

Kim Hinkley

Administration Staff:

Kerryn, Jess, Tina, Rebecca, Melissa, Deb & Leah

Nursing Staff:

Pam, Vicki, Jan, Belinda & Crystal

● SURGERY HOURS

Monday – Friday

8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday, Sunday &

Public Holidays

(By appointment by the doctor at *Urgent Care Centre*, Stawell Regional Health - Urgent patients only)

All attendances at Stawell Regional Health Urgent Care Centre WILL incur an out of pocket fee of \$50.00

● BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

All patients are required to pay in full at the time of appointment. Medicare refunds can be processed immediately via TYRO terminal and deposited directly back into your account. Payment can be made by cash, credit card or EFTPOS. If you would like to know more please ask to speak to our accounts team.

Fees as of 1st July 2019:

Standard consult

Private \$75.00

Health Care Card Holder \$64.00

Pension Card Holder \$57.50

All patients under 16 and over 75 years of age

will be bulk billed for appointments at Stawell

Medical Centre Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm only.

After Hours fees apply to EVERYONE seen by a Doctor at Stawell Regional Health Urgent Care Centre:

Standard consult - Regular Hours

Saturday \$87.05

Sunday \$99.00

All attendances at Stawell Regional Health Urgent Care Centre WILL incur an out of pocket fee of \$50.00

● APPOINTMENTS

Consultation is by appointment. We have appointments available for urgent cases on the day.

Please let reception staff know if you would like a longer appointment, for a medical report, TAC or Workcover form or if you have several things you wish to discuss.

Home Visits. These are available on request. Please speak to reception if you would like further information.

If **more than one person** from your family would like to see the doctor, please ensure that a separate appointment is made for each person otherwise they may not be seen.

Time is valuable to all of us. If you are **unable to attend a booked appointment**, please let the practice know at least 2 hours prior. If you **fail to attend** a booked appointment without warning or explanation you may be charged a non-attendance fee. We may not be able to offer you booked appointments in the future either.

● SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

Stawell Medical Centres Values and Mission align with those of Stawell Regional Health;

Stawell Regional Health Mission

In partnership with our community, Stawell Regional Health will deliver high quality care and improve health outcomes by providing safe, accessible and integrated services.

Stawell Regional Health Vision

Caring for our community.

Despite our best intentions, we sometimes run late! This is because someone has needed unexpected or urgent medical attention. Be assured that when it comes to your appointment, your doctor will give your consult the time that it deserves. We thank you for your understanding and consideration.

▶ Please see the Rear Cover for more practice information.





Telehealth

The term telehealth has generally not been used outside medical circles. It applies to use of technology (video or phone) to deliver medical services.

In response to the Covid-19 situation the federal government has, for the first time, allowed Medicare funding to support consultations with your doctor that are not in person. Consultations can be done through video conference or telephone. Currently this is set to continue till September 30. It may be extended.

The Chief Medical Officer has highlighted that ongoing medical conditions have not disappeared and need ongoing attention. High blood pressure, diabetes, depression and a host of other medical conditions continue to need treatment and monitoring.

New health concerns also need to be dealt with.

Telehealth consultations can be booked in a similar way to regular appointments. Ask your practice staff about their procedures. If needed prescriptions can be picked up or sent directly to a nominated chemist. Referrals can also be collected or sent directly.

There are limitations as to what can be done when a patient is not in the same room as the doctor. For example, one cannot listen to the lungs. One of the requirements of a telehealth consultation is that you understand that it may be necessary to follow up with a clinic visit.

Surgeries are right on top of social distancing and hygiene requirements so the risk in attending remains low.

This is a new world for everyone so there may be some glitches or teething problems. Be understanding of this.

The most critical point is do not ignore your general health at this time.

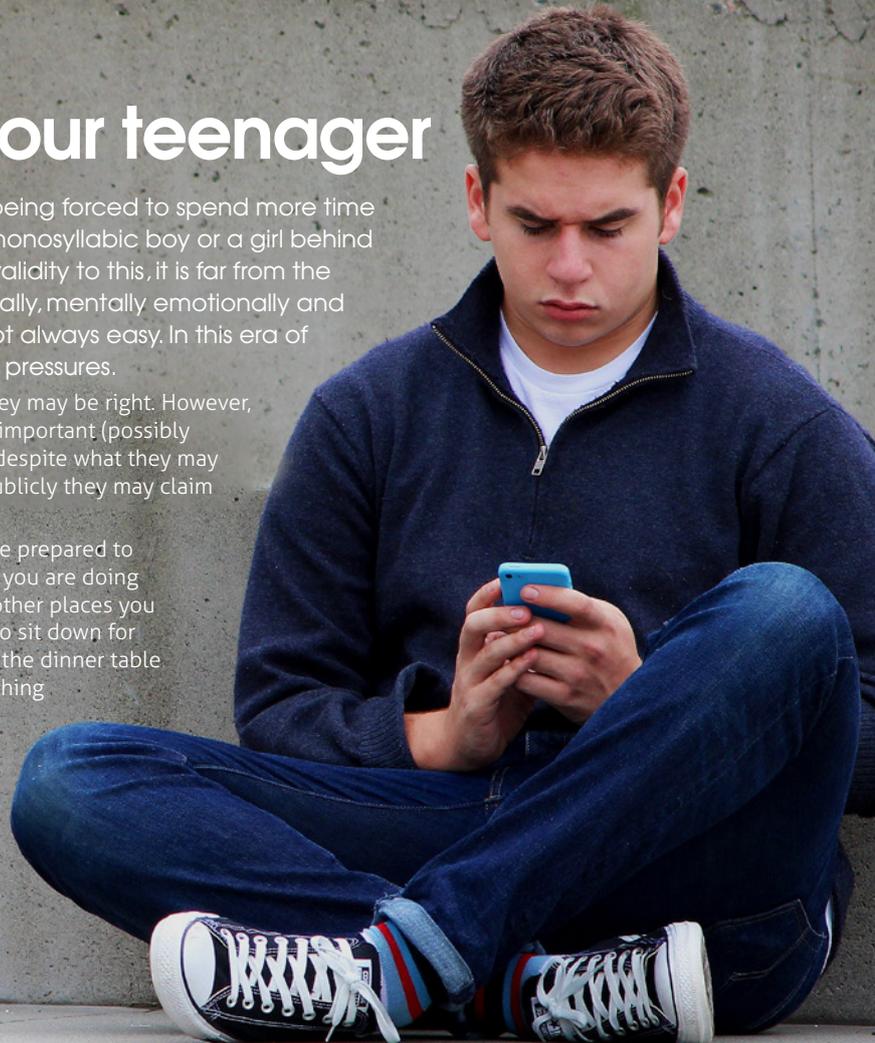
Connecting with your teenager

Social distancing has meant parents and teens are being forced to spend more time together. The stereotype of the teenager is either a monosyllabic boy or a girl behind a slammed shut bedroom door. Whilst there is some validity to this, it is far from the whole story. Adolescence is a time of change, physically, mentally emotionally and socially. The transition from being a child to adult is not always easy. In this era of social media and smart phones, there are additional pressures.

Parents often lament that their teenagers do not listen, and they may be right. However, communication is a two-way street. This means listening is as important (possibly more so) than talking to your teens. We know that teenagers (despite what they may say) are still wanting guidance and parental support. Whilst publicly they may claim to know it all, deep down there is still insecurity.

Look for common interests. Talk about topics that they raise. Be prepared to talk when they are ready to open up about a situation (even if you are doing something else). Be opportunistic. When driving to school or other places you have a captive audience. This can be a good time to talk. Aim to sit down for dinner with your teen at least a few times a week. Talk around the dinner table can be revealing. No matter how many times the answer is nothing much, ask each day how was school or what happened in your day?

Communication is the key to connecting. Ask your own parents how they coped with you. Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have about your teenager.



Dry Eye

The eyes need constant lubrication which is provided by the tear glands.

Eyes become dry for two main reasons. Firstly, tears can evaporate too quickly. This can be on planes, in air conditioning, in dry air or smoky conditions. It is temporary and improved by use of lubricant drops and removing yourself (where possible) from the situation. Secondly it can be due to reduced tear production. This can be with advancing age, various medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, lupus Sjogren's syndrome scleroderma), certain medications (e.g. antihistamines, antidepressants, blood pressure tablets), and tear gland damage through trauma.

Other risk factors include being female, use of contact lenses and having low vitamin A levels. Symptoms are a burning itching stinging or dry feeling in the eye. The eyes may become red and sensitive to light. Blurry vision can follow.

Diagnosis is largely on symptoms and a thorough eye examination. Blood tests would be done to rule out underlying conditions. You may be referred to an ophthalmologist.



Complications include eye infections and damage to the eye surface. Fortunately, these can be largely avoided.

Treatment depends on cause. In most cases you will be recommended eye drops to keep the eyes moist. These may be used multiple times a day. Avoiding situations where

dryness would be aggravated is important (where practical). Try to stay inside on windy days or when there is smoke in the air and wear sunglasses when outside. Take breaks when using screens for long periods of time and position your screen below eye level so you tend to look downwards. This can reduce evaporation.

 <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/dry-eye>



Prevent the spread of colds & flu

Despite Covid19, "normal winter cold and flu viruses have not disappeared.

There are various theories around why they are usually more prevalent in winter, but nobody really knows. There is much we can do to reduce the spread. Viruses are spread by airborne droplets. Covering your mouth when you cough makes a big difference as does sneezing into a hanky or tissue. Wash your hands. Sanitiser is not essential. Soap and water are fine.

Typically, people try to soldier on with a virus on board. Covid19 has changed that. Those not working at home need to stay home when unwell. This not only helps you get better quicker, but more importantly it makes it less likely you will pass it on to others. Air-conditioned offices make our work life more comfortable but are a great ally to viruses wanting to spread so stay home when sick!

There are no force fields but many ways you can make it less likely you will catch a virus. Regular exercise has been shown to strengthen the immune system, but it is wise to cease or at least reduce exercise while unwell. Eating a healthy diet with adequate fruits and vegetables and getting enough sleep also helps. Managing stress (e.g. meditation guided relaxation herbal teas) has been shown to benefit immunity as does having adequate vitamin D levels.

Going forward the importance of preventing spread, including staying away from others when not well will hopefully stay with us.



Oral Thrush

Caused by the fungus *Candida albicans*, thrush can affect different parts of the body, most commonly the genitals and the mouth and throat.

Oral thrush will typically cause white plaques in the mouth and throat. There may be surrounding redness. They are not painful. Risk factors include having diabetes, being on steroids (including asthma sprays containing steroid) and having dentures. It is also more common after chemotherapy or radiotherapy and sometimes after courses of antibiotics. Interestingly it is estimated that the fungus may sit dormant (not causing any symptoms) in 75% of the world's population.

Treatment is with antifungal drops or lozenges. Rinsing the mouth with salty water can be helpful in some cases. For those who have asthma, gargling with salty water after using inhalers can help prevent oral thrush.

Many mouthwashes kill off the good bacteria in the mouth enabling thrush to grow. Beware of excessive use of these.

 https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/178864#risk_factor_oral_thrush



Stawell Medical Centre
A division of Stawell Regional Health

● **SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES**

SMS reminders are sent to all registered mobile phones. Phone reminders are also available should you require this.

Electronic Communication.

Although most problems are best dealt with in a consultation with your doctor, our staff are experienced in helping you decide whether the matter requires an appointment, return phone call or urgent advice.

You are able to **contact the practice by email** as well should you need to. We do advise that this is not the most secure method of communication.

We have a **recall system** in place for all test results and chronic disease management.

Patient Health Information.

To obtain a copy of your health record or to obtain a copy of Stawell Regional Health "Protection and use of your health information" brochure or to view the Stawell Regional Health privacy policy, please ask to see our Practice Manager or Privacy Officer.

If you prefer you can contact the Health Services Commissioner Complaints and Information on; Telephone: 1300 582 113 or email: hsc@dhs.vic.gov.au.

Patient Feedback. We welcome your feedback and invite you to fill out a "Compliment, Complaint and Feedback form". These are located near the entrance to the practice, in the reception area. You can also ask to speak to the Practice manager or your GP.

Test Results. Results are viewed by our doctors and acted upon in a timely manner, always with your health as a priority. Please make sure you have made an appointment with your doctor to review any results as they will not be given over the phone.

● **SPECIALIST SERVICES**

Stawell Regional Health has a large number of other Medical Services and Visiting Specialist's available. Our doctors have extensive knowledge of these and can advise you about whether a referral is appropriate and arrange for this to occur if needed.

Dr
Dr

Prac



How to manage stress

Stress is claimed to be the scourge of the 21st century. Covid 19 has added to this as has the economic impacts we are seeing. Even in normal circumstances it doesn't seem to matter who you talk to; everyone feels stressed at some stage.

Relationships, money and work are usually shown in polling to be the big three. Our body reacts to stress today like it did in caveman days. It goes into fight or flight mode with the release hormones like adrenalin and cortisol which were very helpful when the threat had a physical solution and would be over soon (for better or worse). It is not so helpful with the type of stressors we face today.

However, there is much we can do to manage stress. Regular exercise is a great stress beater. It can be as simple as going for a walk. Listening to calming music, doing slow deep breathing or guided meditations can be helpful to. There are many apps which are designed to help

people deal with stress and many are free. Drinking herbal tea helps some people as does keeping a journal or writing things down. Drink mainly water and do not drink alcohol to excess. Try to minimise sugar in your diet. Taking a short break, if possible, may help.

Ultimately dealing with the source of the stress is paramount. Remember you don't always have to do this alone. For many chatting with your GP or a counsellor (which can be done online or via phone) can be beneficial, as can talking with trusted friends or family. Others may see solutions that you don't.

Stress can lead to mental health problems so see your GP if you have any concerns.

 <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/staying-well/reducing-stress>

WORD SEARCH

Z	I	L	B	D	C	O	F	L	F	U	E	G	Q	U
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