



Flu Season in Australia



Seasonal Allergies



Boosting Immunity



Importance of Gut Health

● PRACTICE DOCTORS

**Dr Russell Pearson**

MBBS, FRACGP, FACRRM, Clinical Assoc. Prof.  
UOW GSM  
Tuesday & Thursday

**Dr Ann Schippers**

MBBS, FRACGP, Dip Paediatrics, DAME,  
Clinical Senior Lecturer UOW GSM  
Monday, Tuesday & Friday

**Dr Jackie Sloan**

MBBS, FRACGP, Dip Paediatrics,  
Clinical Senior Lecturer UOW GSM  
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

**Dr Mark Burgess**

MBBS, FRACGP, Clinical Senior Lecturer  
UOW GSM  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday  
(skin session)

**Dr Eunjung (Angela) Kim**

MD, FRACGP  
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

**Dr Sarah Park**

MD  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

**Dr Stephen Yang**

MD, ARANZCOG (Cert), FRACGP  
Clinical Tutor UOW GSM  
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri

**Dr Samantha Conroy**

MD, FRACGP  
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

**Dr Karyssa Lao**

MBChB (Hong Kong)  
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

*Practice doctors are experienced in the broad range of health problems affecting all age groups.*

● PRACTICE MANAGER

Louise Jackson

● PRACTICE NURSES

Rachel, Abbie & Denita

● RECEPTION STAFF

Amanda, Bonnie, Bronte, Jenny, Alissa & Stacey (Medical Practice Assistant)

● SURGERY HOURS

Monday to Friday.....8am to 6pm  
(phones off from 5.30pm)  
Saturday 8am to noon. Higher fees apply (no bulk-billing).  
*Phone on the day for urgent problems.*

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

● AFTER HOURS & EMERGENCY

Phone 000 for extreme emergencies.

If you need general medical advice after hours, phone the After Hours GP Helpline on 1800 022 222. If you still feel you need to see a GP urgently, phone 4234 1399 and you will be transferred to the after hours answering service.

● SPECIAL PRACTICE NOTES

We provide a comprehensive family medical service, with high quality care in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. We are committed to providing our patients with a caring, and competent medical service.

**APPOINTMENTS:** Consultation is by appointment only. You can book online via our website, or phone. We reserve a limited number of appointments each day for urgent cases but please phone ahead. 'Walk-in' appointments cannot be guaranteed and are discouraged, particularly when our reception team need to screen for symptoms. For continuity of care, please request your preferred GP. Our standard appointments are 15-20 minutes. If you require a longer appointment for more complex issues or medicals, please let us know. **Telehealth** (telephone or video) appointments are available where appropriate. **Home Visits** are available in some circumstances. Please phone as early as possible to arrange this.

**ONLINE BOOKINGS MADE EASY:** Booking your appointment is now simpler than ever with our online system, HotDoc. You can schedule appointments for yourself or your family anytime—day or night—via our website at [www.gerringonggp.com.au](http://www.gerringonggp.com.au) or through the HotDoc app. Prefer reminders? Just opt in through the app to receive notifications straight to your phone.

**BILLING ARRANGEMENTS:** We are a private billing practice and payment is required at the time of your consultation. Payment can be made by cash, cheque, credit card or EFTPOS. We can send your Medicare claim electronically. If you have a debit card, you can obtain an instant Medicare rebate. Children under the age of 15 with a valid Medicare card are bulk-billed (except for Saturday mornings and after-hours). Information about our fees and services is available at reception and on our website.

**REFERRALS:** Doctors in this practice are competent at handling common health problems. When necessary, they may refer you to a specialist. You can discuss this openly with your doctor. You also have the right to seek a second opinion.

**MEDICAL RECORD CONFIDENTIALITY:** We protect your personal health information to ensure it is only available to authorized staff members for the intended purposes, and to comply with the Privacy Act. You may request a brochure detailing our privacy policy from reception.

**REMINDERS:** Because we are committed to preventive care, we may send you an occasional reminder regarding health services appropriate to your care. If you wish to opt out of this, please let us know. Please also let us know if you do not wish to receive notifications via SMS.

**TEST RESULTS:** Our GPs will routinely discuss how investigation results will be communicated to you. This will generally be in one of the following ways: follow-up appointment, telehealth (phone or video) consultation, a call from our nurse or an SMS message. Where no arrangement is made, normal or acceptable results are generally not communicated to the patient. Please phone after 11am for test results.

**TELEPHONE/EMAIL ADVICE:** Most problems are best dealt with in a consultation. If urgent we can assist by putting you through to a member of our clinical team. You can leave a message for your doctor with our reception team, and it is at the discretion of the doctor whether they return your call or ask a member of the practice team to contact you. For the security of your personal information, we rarely communicate with patients by email. If you do need to email us, you will be contacted to verify your details before any information is provided.

**TEACHING PRACTICE:** We are committed to ongoing medical education and are proudly associated with the University of Wollongong. You may be asked if you are willing to be seen by a medical student in conjunction with your doctor.

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](http://www.healthnews.net.au)

# Flu Season in Australia and the Importance of Vaccination

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Managing Seasonal Allergies in Autumn

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Boosting Immunity Before Winter

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

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

Quality sleep is one of the most powerful immune boosters. Adults should aim for 7–9 hours per night, as poor sleep can reduce the body’s ability to fight infections. Regular physical activity also supports immune health,

circulation, and mood — even moderate exercise like walking most days is beneficial.

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

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

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



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



## The Importance of Gut Health

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Enjoying Easter Without Overindulging

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

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

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

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

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



## EASTER CHOCOLATE & BERRY HOT CROSS BUN PUDDING

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

### Ingredients (Serves 6–8):

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

### Method:

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

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

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



**EASTER FUN!**

### Our services include:

- o Family care
- o Childhood immunisations
- o Men's health
- o Women's health
- o Family planning
- o Mirena and Implanon insertions
- o Mental health
- o Iron infusions
- o Shared antenatal care
- o Aged care
- o Palliative care
- o Travel medicine including Yellow Fever
- o ECGs
- o Lung function tests
- o Skin cancer checks and minor surgery
- o Diabetic care
- o Chronic disease management
- o Health assessments
- o Pre-employment and insurance medicals
- o Aviation medicals with Dr Ann Schippers (DAME)
- o Microsuction ear clinic
- o Acute care and emergencies



## Gerringong SKIN CANCER CLINIC

**Skin Checks** – Are you at risk? Do you have a changing skin lesion? If you or your family have had skin cancers or you have fair skin, moles, a history of sunburns or extensive sun exposure with work or play, are immunosuppressed or you have used solariums, then its important you get a skin check. We do these every day of the week and perform procedures in our clinic on Tuesdays and Fridays.

**Dermatology** – A difficult rash? A problematic wart, eczema or acne? We can also help you with rashes, warts, rosacea, acne, eczema, dermatitis, cysts, ingrown toenails, tinea and fungal skin conditions, psoriasis and scabies. We can take biopsies to help identify difficult to treat skin conditions.

### ● FEEDBACK

Your comments on our medical services are always welcome and we strive to improve for your benefit. Please direct any queries or complaints to the Practice Manager. If you are not satisfied or your complaint cannot be resolved within the practice, you may wish to contact the Health Care Complaints Commission – Locked Mail Bag 18, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

### ● INTERPRETER

If you need an interpreter, phone 131 450. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact the National Relay Service- visit their website [relayservice.gov.au](http://relayservice.gov.au) or call the Helpdesk on 1800 555 660 (TTY 1800 555 630).