



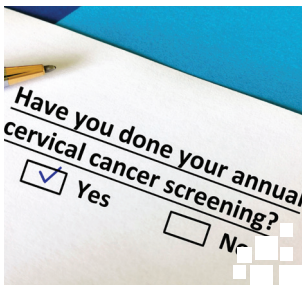
Shingles Vaccination



Christmas Kilos



Back-to-School Health



Cervical Cancer Screening

● **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 David Hassell**

MBBS

**Wednesday 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.*

● **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)



# Shingles Vaccination (Shingrix) & Dementia: What We Know

Shingrix is one of the leading shingles (herpes zoster) vaccines in Australia and is recommended for older adults to prevent shingles and its complications. Shingles is caused by reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, which remains dormant in the body after childhood chickenpox. While shingles is best known for causing a painful rash, growing research suggests it may also have broader impacts on long-term brain health.

Recent international studies have observed an association between shingles infection and an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Chronic inflammation and viral effects on the nervous system are thought to play a role. Interestingly, emerging evidence indicates that people who receive a shingles vaccine, particularly Shingrix, may have a lower risk of developing dementia compared with those who are unvaccinated. While this research does not yet prove direct cause and effect, the findings are encouraging.

Shingrix works by boosting the immune system's ability to keep the virus suppressed, reducing the chance of shingles occurring in the first place. By preventing shingles and the inflammation it can cause, vaccination may indirectly support long-term brain health.

Importantly, Shingrix is already recommended because it is highly effective at preventing shingles and post-herpetic neuralgia. Any potential added benefit for dementia prevention is an added reason to discuss vaccination with your GP.

If you are aged 65 years and over or 50 and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders then speak with your GP about your eligibility for a free vaccine.

## Shedding the Christmas Kilos



The festive season is a time for celebration, good food, and relaxation, but it can also lead to a few extra kilos. The good news is that shedding Christmas weight doesn't require extreme dieting or intense exercise. Small, consistent changes can make a big difference.

Start by getting back into regular movement. Walking, swimming, cycling, or light gym sessions are excellent ways to burn calories and boost energy, especially during the warmer summer months. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.

Next, focus on balanced eating rather than restriction. Fill your plate with vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and fresh fruit. Reducing portion sizes, limiting sugary drinks, and cutting back on alcohol can significantly lower calorie intake without feeling deprived.

Hydration is also key. Drinking plenty of water helps control appetite and supports metabolism. Finally, be patient with yourself. Healthy weight loss takes time, and sustainable habits are far more effective than quick fixes.

By easing back into routine and making mindful choices, those Christmas kilos will gradually disappear.

# Back-to-School Health & Immunity

As February marks the return to school across Australia, many families notice a familiar pattern: busy mornings, close contact with classmates, and the spread of common colds and bugs. Supporting children's health and immunity at the start of the school year can help reduce illness and keep them feeling their best.

A strong immune system starts with the basics. Adequate sleep is essential, particularly as children adjust back into school routines. Establishing consistent bedtimes helps support immune function, concentration, and mood. Nutrition also plays a key role. Balanced meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy provide important vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, zinc, and iron, which support immune health. Packing a nutritious lunchbox can make a big difference to energy levels throughout the day.

Good hygiene habits are another crucial line of defence. Encouraging regular hand washing with soap and water—

especially before eating and after using the bathroom—helps limit the spread of germs. Teaching children to cover coughs and sneezes and to avoid sharing drink bottles can further reduce transmission of illness.

Staying physically active supports overall health and immunity, but it's equally important to allow time for rest. After-school downtime helps children recover from busy days and prevents burnout. Keeping vaccinations up to date is also an important step in protecting children and the wider school community.

By focusing on sleep, nutrition, hygiene, and routine, families can help children transition smoothly back to school and build resilience for a healthy year ahead.



## The Importance of Cervical Screening with Your GP

Cervical screening is one of the most effective ways to protect women's health, yet many people delay or avoid it due to uncertainty or discomfort. Regular cervical screening with your GP plays a vital role in preventing cervical cancer and detecting potential problems early, when they are easiest to treat.

Cervical screening tests look for human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that can cause changes to cervical cells over time. Most people will have HPV at some stage in their lives, often without knowing it. In many cases the virus clears on its own, but in some women it can lead to abnormal cell changes that, if left untreated, may progress to cancer. Screening helps identify these changes long before symptoms appear.

Seeing your GP for cervical screening also provides an opportunity for personalised care. Your doctor can explain the test, address concerns, and ensure you feel comfortable throughout the process. They can also discuss your individual risk factors, screening intervals, and any follow-up that may be needed. For many women, reassurance and clear information from a trusted GP can make a significant difference in attending regular screening.

Importantly, cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Regular screening has been shown to dramatically reduce both the incidence of cervical cancer and deaths from the disease. Even if you feel healthy, have no symptoms, or have received the HPV vaccine, screening remains essential.

Prioritising cervical screening is a simple but powerful step toward long-term health. Booking an appointment with your GP could truly be life-saving.



## Spirulina: A Nutrient-Dense Superfood

Spirulina is a blue-green algae that has gained popularity as a natural health supplement due to its impressive nutritional profile. Available as a powder or tablet, spirulina is rich in protein, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, making it a convenient addition to a balanced diet.

One of spirulina's key benefits is its high protein content, containing all essential amino acids. This makes it particularly appealing for people following vegetarian or plant-based diets. It is also a good source of iron, B vitamins, magnesium, and iodine, nutrients that support energy levels, muscle function, and overall wellbeing.

Spirulina is well known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, largely due to a compound called phycocyanin. Antioxidants help protect cells from oxidative stress, which is linked to ageing and many chronic diseases. Some studies suggest spirulina may support immune function, improve cholesterol levels, and assist with blood sugar control when combined with healthy lifestyle habits.

Additionally, spirulina may help combat fatigue and support recovery after exercise. It is often added to smoothies or juices, although its strong taste may take some getting used to.

As with any supplement, spirulina should be used responsibly. It's best to discuss its use with your GP, particularly if you are pregnant, immunocompromised, or taking medications.



### SPIRULINA BLISS BALLS

These no-bake spirulina bliss balls are quick to make, naturally sweet, and perfect for a healthy snack or lunchbox treat.

#### Ingredients (Makes ~12 balls):

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup pitted dates
- 2 tablespoons almond butter or peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon shredded coconut (plus extra for rolling)
- ½ teaspoon spirulina powder
- 1–2 tablespoons water (as needed)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

#### Method:

1. Place the rolled oats and dates into a food processor and pulse until finely chopped.
2. Add nut butter, chia seeds, coconut, spirulina, and vanilla.
3. Process until the mixture begins to stick together. Add water gradually if the mixture is too dry.
4. Roll tablespoon-sized portions into balls.
5. Roll in extra coconut if desired.
6. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up.

#### Serving & Storage

Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to one week, or freeze for up to one month.

#### Why You'll Love Them

Spirulina adds antioxidants and plant-based protein, while oats and dates provide lasting energy. The sweetness of dates balances spirulina's earthy flavour, making these bliss balls both nutritious and delicious.

## WORD SEARCH

G	I	S	C	N	U	T	R	I	T	I	O	N	N
M	H	P	Y	G	I	I	G	L	E	R	N	N	N
I	S	I	C	I	M	M	U	N	E	E	X	H	L
R	E	R	L	E	C	E	P	T	R	L	O	M	H
C	L	U	I	A	Y	G	A	I	I	G	E	M	N
S	G	L	N	G	O	W	E	G	L	H	I	M	T
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R	E	G	I	I	I	L	L	L	O	U	A	G	C
I	I	R	G	L	V	Y	O	A	M	O	U	A	I
X	U	S	C	R	E	E	N	I	N	G	L	I	M
X	H	U	M	A	N	N	N	I	E	T	O	R	P

- SLEEP
- HYGIENE
- WATER
- NUTRITION
- SCHOOL
- SPIRULINA
- VIRAL
- PROTEIN
- IMMUNE
- SCREENING
- CYCLING
- SHINGLES
- ALGAE
- SHINGRIX
- HUMAN

#### 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).