# BACCHUS MARSH MEDICAL CENTRE

Turner Street
Bacchus Marsh
VIC 3340

**P:** 03 5367 3333
**F:** 03 5367 6971

**E:** admin@bmmc.com.au
**W:** www.bmmc.com.au

## CONSULTING DOCTORS

**Dr Siva SOOKNANDAN**
**Dr Paul WILLIAMS**
**Dr Niresh MADHANPALL**
**Dr Ravin SADHAI**
**Dr Om NAIDU**
**Dr Jessica TINT**
**Dr Michael O'MALLEY**
**Dr Senthooran ARUDSHIVAM**
**Dr Karinne TUNNECLIFF**
**Dr Minh Thanh LE**
**Dr Faro HACE**
**Dr Sumaya ZAZ**
**Dr Maung THET**
**Dr Stephanie WILLIAMS**
**Dr Palwasha SAREER**
**Dr Teena JOSEPH**
**Dr Ferhat YAZICI**
**Dr Rebecca WEBSTER**
**Dr Ferhan MUNEEB**
**Dr Monty DO-WYELD**

## STAFF DETAILS

Katie Bielecki (Practice Manager)

Emma Thompson
(Clinical Care Co-ordinator)

## RECEPTIONISTS

Amanda, Dana, Eve, Joanne, Karen, Kylie, Laura, Lauren, Lucy, Naomi, Sandra, Susan, Olivia, Alison, Kasey, Robyn, Georgia and Chelsea

## NURSES

Bri, Katie H, Keeley, Kiara, Lea, Mark and Tammy

## CONSULTATION TIMES

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday to Friday | 8 am – 6 pm |
| Saturday | 8 am – 5 pm |
| Sunday & Public Holidays | 9 am – 1 pm |

# DARLEY MEDICAL CENTRE

147 Gisborne Rd
Darley, VIC 3340

P: (03) 5367 5000
F: (03) 5367 7510

E: darley@bmmc.com.au

## HOURS

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday to Friday | 8.30 am – 5 pm |

# MADDINGLEY MEDICAL CENTRE

4 O'Leary Way
Maddingley VIC 3340

Ph: 03 5367 1875
F: 03 5367 5260

E: maddingley@bmmc.com.au

## HOURS

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday to Friday | 8am – 8pm |
| Saturday | 8am – 5pm |
| Sunday & Public Holidays | 9am – 1pm |

YOUR DOCTOR

JANUARY 2026

PROTECT YOUR LOWER BACK

MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

MEDICINE MYTHS & TRUTHS

PROTECTING VISION AT RISK

*Compliments of your GP*

# Is breakfast truly important for your health?

**For years we were told that breakfast was "the most important meal of the day." However, newer research shows that although it can be helpful for many people, it's not essential for everyone. What matters most is how you feel and what you're eating across the whole day.**

For many of us, a wholesome morning meal is a great start; it can lift energy, improve concentration, and reduce the urge to reach for unhealthy snacks before lunch. Let's look at who benefits from eating breakfast, and clear up some common assumptions.

### Breakfast beliefs — true or false?

It's commonly thought that skipping breakfast leads to overeating later. This is not always the case, but evidence suggests it may influence overall diet habits, which could have long-term effects on weight and overall health. The total daily food intake is generally similar whether you have it or not.

Another misconception is that eating first thing in the morning boosts metabolism. There is no clear evidence that it "switches on" metabolism or burns more calories. The real benefits of breakfast tend to be steadier energy, clearer thinking, and better appetite control.

### Who benefits from eating breakfast?

Children and teenagers usually do better when they start the day with a nutritious meal. Their brains and bodies are still developing, and they need steady fuel to stay alert and active. Skipping breakfast at this stage is sometimes associated with a poorer diet quality, which may increase the risk of excess weight gain. Foods that provide steady energy and essential nutrients can support a balanced daily routine.

For people with diabetes or insulin resistance, eating a nutrient-rich breakfast may help stabilise blood sugar levels and support consistent, balanced eating patterns. It can also contribute to overall heart health by helping keep cholesterol within a healthy range.

### Make every meal count

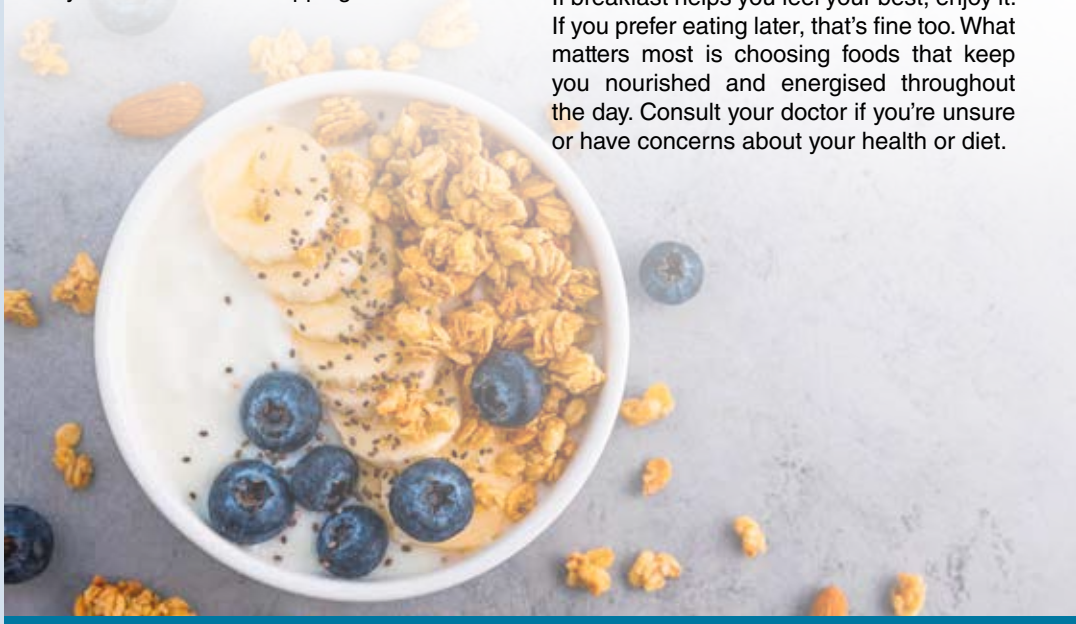
If you feel well, are not overweight, and have energy throughout the day, you can still have a healthy diet if you skip breakfast. The key is ensuring your other meals provide a variety of nutrients.

For example, meals that include some protein, fibre, wholegrains, vegetables and fruit and can help you stay fuller for longer and maintain good energy. These foods also support gut health, heart health, and steady blood sugar levels.

You don't need anything fancy. A bowl of oats with fruit, eggs or tomatoes on wholegrain toast, or yoghurt with berries and nuts all provide a balanced, nutritious mix. A smoothie made with milk or yoghurt, fruit or vegetables, and nut butter is a quick, healthy option for busy mornings.

### A healthy approach

If breakfast helps you feel your best, enjoy it. If you prefer eating later, that's fine too. What matters most is choosing foods that keep you nourished and energised throughout the day. Consult your doctor if you're unsure or have concerns about your health or diet.



Our newsletter is free - please take a copy with you

# Finding calm after the holidays: simple ways to manage stress

**The holiday season can be wonderful, but it can also leave us feeling rushed, tired, and a little frazzled. Between family gatherings, social events, and New Year plans, stress can creep in.**

While stress is a natural reaction, it shouldn't be constant. Managing it well can protect both your mind and body. Here are some simple, practical strategies to help you feel calmer and more in control.

### Breathe your way to calmness

Mindful breathing is an easy way to reduce stress. Even a few minutes of slow, even, deep breaths can make a difference. You can do this anywhere — at your desk, on the phone, or waiting in traffic or queues. Regular practice can ease muscle tension, lower your heart rate, and bring a sense of calm.

### Take mini breaks

During busy days, it can be tempting to work non-stop. Regular brief breaks, however, can refresh your mind, reduce stress and improve focus. Step outside for a short walk, stretch, or simply pause to notice your surroundings.

### Move and energise

Physical activity is a powerful stress reliever. It doesn't need to be complicated — gentle walks, yoga, playing a game with the kids, or a dance around the living room all count. Moving your body releases natural "feel-good" chemicals called endorphins and can also improve sleep, which often suffers during stressful periods.

### Nourish mind and body

After the indulgences of festive food, eating well can help you feel more balanced. Try adding more whole foods — fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins — and limit alcohol and sugar. Staying hydrated and regular meals can support steady energy and a more stable mood.

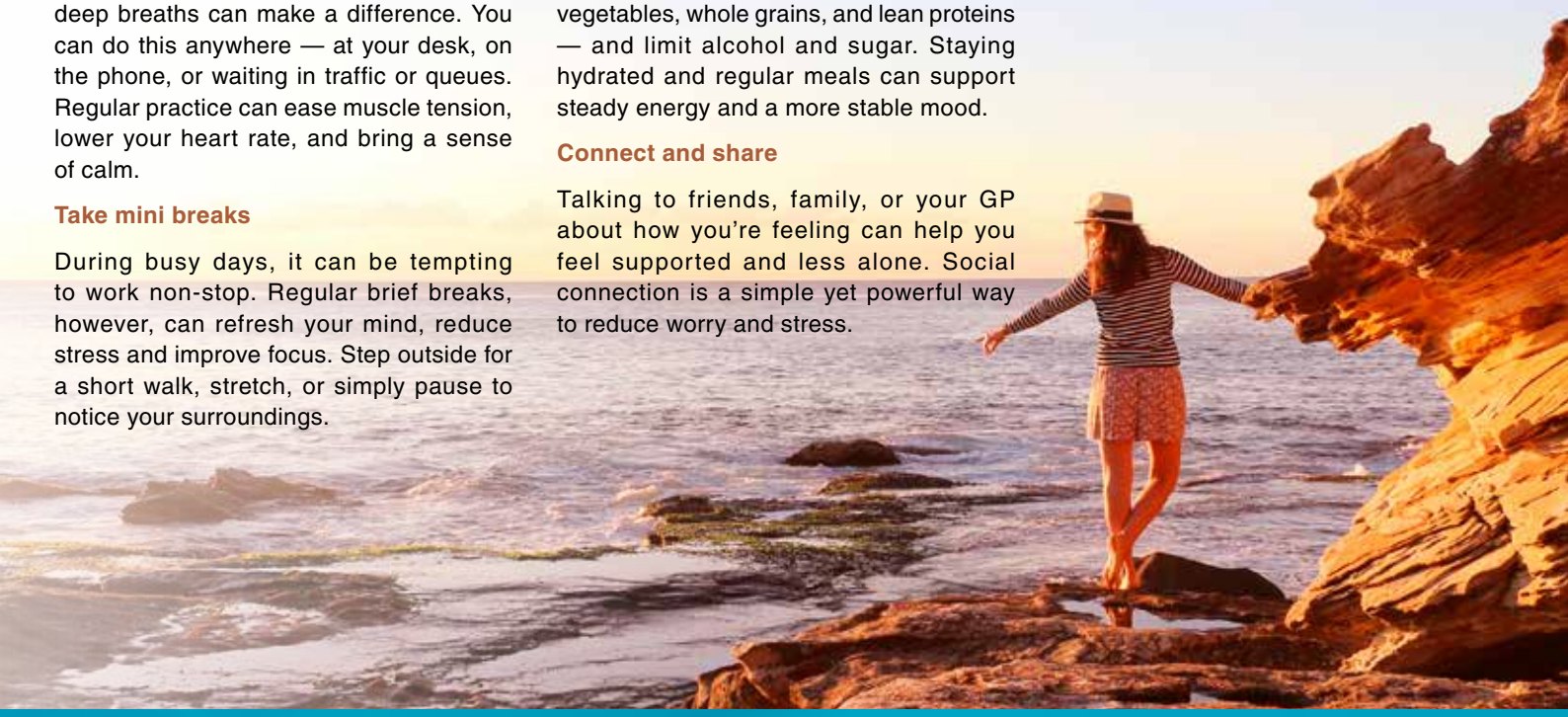
### Connect and share

Talking to friends, family, or your GP about how you're feeling can help you feel supported and less alone. Social connection is a simple yet powerful way to reduce worry and stress.

### Build simple routines

Even small routines — a morning walk, reading, or a bedtime wind-down — can provide stability and calm. These habits don't need much time but can give you a sense of structure in a busy world.

**Stress is a normal part of life, but it doesn't have to take over. By using simple, everyday strategies, you can help your mind and body recover after the holiday rush, and start the year feeling more balanced and resilient.**



## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

ANTIBIOTICS
APPETITE
BONES
BREAKFAST
CHOLESTEROL
COCCYX
DIABETES
ENDORPHINS
ENERGY
EXERCISE
EYES
FASCIA
LIGAMENTS
LUMBAR
MEDICINE
METABOLISM
MINDFUL
MUSCLES
PILATES
RETINA
SACRUM
SPINE
STRENGTH
STRESS
SWIMMING
VERTEBRAE
VISION
VITAMINS
WALKING
YOGA

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| T | E | Q | D | P | Y | E | U | D | Q | V | P | V | B |
| M | U | Y | O | G | X | M | Z | C | U | F | P | E | Z |
| O | Y | P | R | W | Z | Q | X | G | Q | T | I | C | D |
| P | X | T | Z | O | L | X | M | L | O | N | K | L | R |
| V | P | E | B | L | H | P | G | P | J | X | W | K | J |
| H | P | Y | V | X | U | N | P | H | T | U | Y | H | U |
| Z | Q | C | R | O | Z | W | G | J | D | M | B | F | D |
| W | S | V | S | F | C | K | Z | E | U | R | L | Q | N |
| J | V | U | P | O | Z | F | E | K | Q | G | O | A | C |
| O | C | V | P | P | A | Y | O | D | F | R | W | T | O |
| B | T | Z | W | Q | R | O | N | Z | K | P | M | D | O |
| L | O | P | G | Y | B | E | A | L | J | V | T | L | J |
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| R | D | J | Z | R | U | W | Z | N | C | Q | C | S | A |

# Understand your vision risk: protect your sight

**Many people see the New Year as a chance to focus on their health with a check-up. This usually includes blood tests, blood pressure and lifestyle advice — but eyesight is often left until later. However, some chronic health conditions can quietly affect vision, so it's important to keep this in mind.**

### Diabetes and vision

Healthy vision matters for everyone, but people living with diabetes can face a higher risk of complications that can affect eyesight. Because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience higher rates of diabetes, regular eye care is especially important in these communities.

Diabetes can affect vision, sometimes without noticeable symptoms. High blood sugar may damage the tiny blood vessels in the retina, a condition known as diabetic retinopathy. Left unchecked, it can lead to vision loss — making early detection essential.

The good news is that with regular eye exams and proper diabetes management, most vision problems can be prevented or slowed.

### Steps to protect your vision:

- **Get regular eye checks:** Most people with diabetes should have an eye exam every 1–2 years, or as recommended by their health provider. Early signs of diabetic retinopathy are often invisible, so professional checks are essential.
- **Manage your health:** Keeping blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol under control reduces the risk of eye damage.
- **Ask about accessible services:** Many communities offer mobile or local eye-screening programs for people living in remote areas. Clinics that provide culturally respectful care make it easier and more comfortable for everyone to access checks.

**Protecting your eyesight is essential — and often simple. Regular eye checks, managing diabetes well, and staying informed can reduce the risk of vision problems and help you begin the year with a clear view ahead.**

# Medication myths:
## Common misunderstandings explained

**Many of us take medicines from time to time — from simple pain relievers to antibiotics or long-term prescriptions. Despite how common they are, there are still some myths about how medicines work and how to use them safely. Let's clear up a few of the most common ones.**

### "I can stop antibiotics once I feel better"

It's tempting to stop taking antibiotics early, especially when symptoms improve after a few days. However, stopping too early can allow the infection to return and increase the risk of antibiotic resistance, where bacteria survive and become harder to treat. It's important to finish the full course unless your doctor advises otherwise.

### "Natural means safe"

It's easy to assume that herbal remedies, vitamins, or other "natural" products are risk-free. That's not always true. Some can interact with prescription medicines, or affect how your body processes them.

For example, St John's Wort, often used for mood, may reduce the effectiveness of birth control pills.

If you have a health condition, check with your GP or pharmacist before starting any supplements.

### "I can share my prescription medicine"

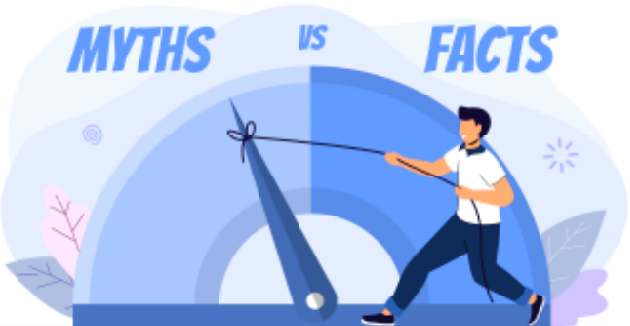
Even if two people have similar symptoms, medicines aren't one-size-fits-all. The right dose, timing, and type of medication depend on individual health needs.

Sharing prescriptions can be risky, especially antibiotics or strong painkillers, as they may cause side effects or delay the correct treatment.

### "I don't need to tell my doctor about over-the-counter medicines I take"

Pain relievers, cold and flu tablets, and other over-the-counter products may seem harmless, but they can still interact with prescribed treatments. For example, some anti-inflammatories can interfere with blood pressure medication or irritate the stomach.

Let your GP or pharmacist know everything you take so they can help you avoid unwanted interactions or side effects.



# NUTTY BANANA OAT PANCAKES

**These thick oaty, banana pancakes are a tasty, healthy way to begin the morning. With a balance of protein, fibre, healthy fats, and antioxidants, they provide steady energy and essential nutrients.**

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 medium ripe bananas, mashed
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp chopped walnuts
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseeds
- 50 g fresh or frozen berries
- ¼ cup milk (or enough to make batter pourable)
- 1 tsp baking powder (optional, for fluffier pancakes)

### METHOD:

1. Blend the rolled oats in a blender or food processor until they form coarse flour.
2. In a bowl, combine oat flour, mashed bananas, eggs, milk, cinnamon, and baking powder (if using) until smooth. Aim for a batter that is thicker than a standard pancake mix, but still pourable.
3. Stir in the chopped walnuts, flaxseeds, and berries.
4. Heat a non-stick frying pan and lightly grease it. Pour ¼ cup of batter per oatcake into the pan. Cook 2–3 minutes on each side, until golden and cooked through.
5. Top with yoghurt, a drizzle of honey, extra nuts, banana or berries if desired..

# Looking after your lower back

**Lower back pain is one of the most common reasons people see their healthcare provider. But why is this area so vulnerable? The answer lies in its structure, function, and the demands we place on it every day.**

Your lower back, or lumbar spine, carries the weight of your upper body while still allowing movement. It connects your upper and lower body, helping you bend, twist, and lift. Because it works so hard, it's more prone to strain and irritation than the upper back.

### The anatomy of your lower back

Your lower back is made up of five lumbar vertebrae, the sacrum, coccyx, and the surrounding pelvic bones. Together, they form a stable yet flexible base supported by muscles, ligaments, and fascia.

Nerve roots from the lumbar and sacral spine travel down into your hips, legs, and feet. Because the spinal discs sit close to these nerves, disc injuries — such as a herniated disc — can sometimes cause irritation or compression. This may lead to pain, numbness, or weakness. Sciatica is one well-known example.

**Keep your back strong and healthy with simple daily habits.**

Many factors can contribute to lower back discomfort, including:

- poor posture and long periods of sitting or staying still
- lifting heavy objects incorrectly
- insufficient core and back strength
- sudden movements, falls, or high-impact activities
- workplace strain
- natural age-related changes that make discs less flexible

### How to protect your lower back

Many cases of lower back pain can be managed or prevented with simple habits:

- Strengthen: exercises like planks and bridges help support your spine by strengthening back and core muscles.
- Use proper lifting techniques: squat down, keep your back straight, hold the load close, and avoid twisting.
- Maintain good posture: keep your spine and head aligned whether sitting, sleeping, or standing.
- Keep active: low impact activities such as walking, swimming, Pilates and yoga help improve strength, flexibility, and overall spine health.
- Avoid prolonged sitting: stand, stretch, or walk for a few minutes every 30–60 minutes. Ensure your workstation is set up correctly for your body.
- Stretch regularly: gentle stretches for the lower back, hamstrings, and hip flexors can ease tension.
- Support your general health: excess weight, smoking, poor diet, and ongoing stress can affect back health.
- Listen to your body: early attention to stiffness or discomfort can help prevent it from worsening.

If you have ongoing back discomfort, see your GP to discuss the best course of action.

## Questions to ask at your doctor's visit

Asking questions helps you get the care you need. To make the most of your visit, jot down anything you'd like to know about in the space below. Take this list with you so it's easy to remember what you wanted to ask.

| DOCTOR'S NAME | DATE | TIME |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

1.

2.

3.

NOTES:

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your health should always be made in consultation with your health care provider. Talk to your doctor first.

# PRACTICE INFORMATION

### GENERAL CONSULTATION POLICIES

Longer consultation times are available, so please ask our receptionists if you require some extra time

### HOME VISITS

Home and other visits are available for regular patients of this practice whose condition prevents them from attending the surgery

### AFTER HOURS

If you get sick at night or on the weekend, please ring 5367 3333 for advice. We look after our patients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### APPOINTMENTS

Please ring 5367 3333 for an appointment. Patients attending without a booking will be fitted in at the earliest available time.

Emergencies will always be seen quickly – simply notify the receptionist

### PHONE CALLS

Your regular doctor may arrange to phone you under particular circumstances. Unfortunately we are not able to connect telephone calls to our doctors routinely, as the interruption caused to the patients they are seeing can be harmful. Our staff will usually be able to pass on a message to your doctor.

### FEES

Fees are payable at the time of consultation by cash, cheque, Mastercard or Visa. The GPs at this practice bulk bill most consults. Veterans may sign the service voucher.

An increased fee applies on Sundays and public holidays.

From March 1st 2023 a non-attendance fee will be charged for appointments that are not cancelled with at least 2 hours notice.

### SMOKING POLICY

This practice has a no smoking policy.

### SERVICES AVAILABLE

- General family medicine
- Check-ups, medical examinations
- Family planning
- Cervical screening tests, pregnancy tests
- Antenatal care, obstetrics
- ECG, heart check
- Counselling
- Vaccination: children and travel
- Blood tests / pathology
- Minor surgery: stitching cuts, removing moles, skin cancers
- Liquid nitrogen (freezing) therapy for sunspots and warts
- Acupuncture
- Weight control, nutrition advice
- Treatment of fractures
- Ear wax removal