



## my family chiropractor

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### HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

#### Principal Chiropractor

**Dr Sharon Howard** BScChiro, MChiro

Sharon graduated from Macquarie University, Sydney in 2003. She worked in Dubbo NSW for two and a half years and joined this practice as an associate in September 2006, before becoming the Principal Chiropractor in 2011. Patients appreciate her wide range of experience developed from working in western NSW, and advanced skills gained through continued education including Diversified, Gonstead, Applied Kinesiology and SOT.

#### Associate Chiropractor

**Fiona Couchman** BBioMed Sc. MChiro

Dr Fiona Couchman completed her BioMedical Science degree in 2000 at Griffith University. She then graduated in 2003 with a Masters of Chiropractic from Macquarie University. Combining continued education with years of practical experience, Fiona uses techniques that include Diversified, Activator, SOT and cranial, as well as soft tissue and drop piece. This enables her to care for a range of patients, from newborns to the elderly.

### HEALTH ASSISTANTS

Melissa Kirkley, Adele Klints

### CLINIC HOURS AND SERVICES

Consultations are by appointment. We try very hard to adhere to appointments, however, the nature of chiropractic is that emergencies and circumstances sometimes mean we run behind time. Please feel free to call and check.

#### Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

8.00am – 12.30pm      3.00pm – 7.00pm

**Wednesday**      3.00pm – 7.00pm

**Saturday**      8.00am – 11.00am

# YOUR CHIROPRACTOR

FREE!

MARCH/APRIL 2021

## This month we discuss...



**MEDITATION & HEALTH**



**BENEFITS OF STRETCHING**



**NUTRIGENOMICS**



**COULD THAT PAIN BE WHIPLASH?**

## Being smart about salt

*Taking a closer look at the salt you get in your diet might surprise you. If you don't keep track of your sodium intake, it could be time to start.*

Salt, also known as Sodium chloride or NaCl, is a chemical compound which is found in our foods. Both of the components of salt – the sodium and the chloride – are essential for health. Our bodies use it to absorb and transport nutrients, maintain blood pressure, maintain our fluid balance, transmit nerve signals, and contract and relax muscles.

Too little or too much salt can be harmful to your health, however most people get too much in the modern diet, which can contribute to some of our most common and serious diseases.

### High Sodium

High sodium intake is closely linked with hypertension (high blood pressure), which is a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases and kidney disease. The link between high sodium intake and stroke is very clear, prompting campaigns to encourage people to check their salt intake.

Both Australian and New Zealand Governments recommend a suggested dietary target of 2000mg of sodium per day for adults (one teaspoon of salt contains 2,300 mg of sodium). Half of this amount would still give most people more than they need. The current average sodium intake in Australia is about 3600mg a day.

### Low Sodium

A low sodium level can also cause serious health problems. It's known as hyponatremia and occurs when water and sodium are out of balance – so there's either too much water or not enough sodium in your blood. It is uncommon and usually only seen in people with certain pre-existing medical conditions, although other causes can include severe vomiting or diarrhoea, and certain drugs.

### Where do we get salt from in our diets?

- The most obvious source is salt we add to our food.
- Processed meats such as hamburgers and sausages often have an astounding amount of salt.
- Pre-prepared foods can contain a lot of salt and sometimes very high levels of fat and sugar too. Salt can even be found added in unexpected foods such as cereal, bread, and effervescent vitamins.

Salt occurs naturally in many foods, and a balanced diet will contain enough without having to add any.

### How to reduce salt intake

We easily get used to adding salt to our diet, so when we start to cut back food may taste bland – gradually reducing your intake may help you to adjust slowly. Get used to checking food labels, eat fewer takeaways and processed foods, and liven up your home cooking by using a mix of herbs and spices instead of salt.

*Sea salt may sound healthier than table salt, but both contain about the same proportion of sodium.*



**Our newsletter is free! You can take a copy with you.**

# Could the path to health be in the power of our minds?

*Have you ever wondered if using your mind more could improve your health? The simple answer is yes, it can. Mind-body practices can deliver a range of evidence-based benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing; plus they're accessible, easy-to-do, and enjoyable.*

Meditation is one of the mind-body practices that focus on the connections between our brain, mind, and body. It has a long history of use for increasing calmness, relaxation, coping with illness, and enhancing overall health and well-being.

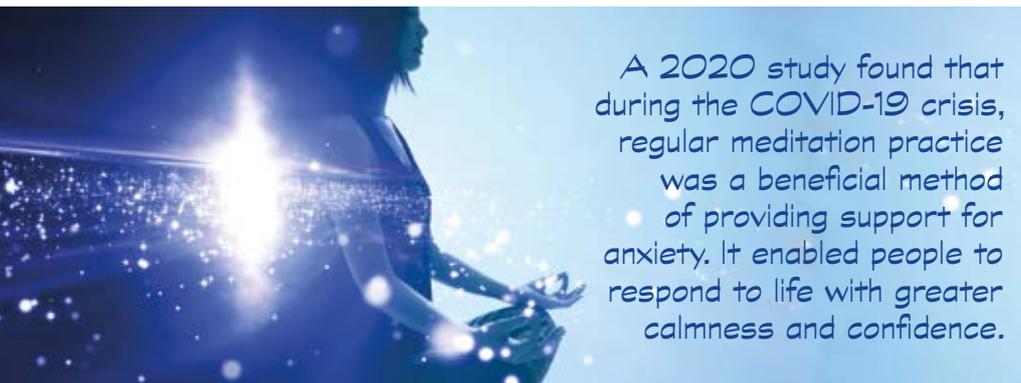
One of the major arguments for incorporating meditation into daily life is that it combats psychological strain and has been shown to reduce stress and its associated issues. Chronic stress is common and can lead to a raft of physical issues, such as increased inflammation and susceptibility to viral infection.

A number of studies on the effects of meditation have noted many other benefits. These include: a reduced risk of

inflammation-related diseases, reduced fatigue, improved sleep, and fewer depressive symptoms. That's not surprising given that studies suggest that regular meditation can affect the part of the brain involved in processing emotions. Activity in the regions of the brain connected with anxiety and stress diminishes, and the areas associated with ease and clarity expand. Positive mood and a sense of peace grow. The world feels easier to navigate.

Meditation has benefits for easing pain, too. Whether acute or chronic, mild or severe, pain can impact strongly on day to day living. Pain is common, and sadly, so are problems like addiction as people search for ways to cope. Meditation has been shown to help control both short and long-term pain.

Meditation, then, can offer a simple way to calm mental tension, improve physical and psychological wellbeing and quell pain. The benefits are potentially profound. Talk to your chiropractor about how you can incorporate mind-body practices into your life.



*A 2020 study found that during the COVID-19 crisis, regular meditation practice was a beneficial method of providing support for anxiety. It enabled people to respond to life with greater calmness and confidence.*

## MOROCCAN CHICKEN SALAD

*This is not your average salad. It's amazing – tender spiced Moroccan chicken, sweet apricots, couscous and a delicious citrus dressing. Easy to make – so it's perfect for entertaining.*

### INGREDIENTS

2 large chicken breast fillets  
1 cup Israeli couscous  
1 can chickpeas, rinsed & drained  
120g fresh baby spinach  
(or other green leaves)  
1 cup roasted almonds, chopped  
1 cup dried apricots, chopped

### Spice rub

1 tsp ground ginger  
1 tsp cumin  
½ tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp cayenne or paprika  
½ tsp allspice

### Dressing

¼ cup orange juice  
Zest of half an orange  
2 Tbsp cider vinegar  
¼ cup mild olive oil  
1 tsp runny honey

### METHOD

1. Combine spice rub ingredients. Massage onto chicken and leave to rest while preheating the oven to 180°C.
2. Place chicken on baking paper and cook for 25 minutes, or until cooked through. Remove from oven, cover and allow to rest for 10 minutes before slicing.
3. While the chicken is in the oven, prepare the couscous as per packet instructions. Drain and rinse in cold water.
4. Place the all the dressing ingredients together in a screw lid jar, and shake.
5. In a large bowl, add remaining ingredients and sliced chicken. Drizzle the dressing on top. Gently toss, serve and enjoy!

**Serving ideas:** decorate with mixed seeds, microgreens, fresh coriander or mint leaves.

## Nutrigenomics: can the study of diet and genetics make us healthier?

*Have you heard of the term nutrigenomics? Awareness of this new scientific field is slowly seeping into the mainstream and more and more people are becoming interested. Why, and what is it? How might this approach help you to live a healthier, longer life? These are important questions!*

The phrase “you are what you eat” was coined in 1850; although humans have known that food plays a role in health for thousands of years. Through time, science, knowledge, and our ability to create more advanced tools has evolved. We now know the world of genetics and nutrition are intimately linked – birthing the field of nutrigenomics.

In the term nutrigenomics, ‘nutri’ refers to nutrition. Genomics denotes the study of genes and how our genetic blueprint interacts with the environment and with itself. Nutrigenomics, then, refers to the discipline that connects the two. It helps to answer these questions: How do our genes and the food we eat interact? What are the potential health repercussions? How can we make better choices?

The hope or goal is to maintain or improve health by analysing an individual's DNA – their unique genetic code – then use the findings, along with medical and other relevant information, to tailor the ideal nutrition plan and guidance.

Each person's genetic expression is different; we're unique, complex, and live very different lives. We have diverse stressors, varied food preferences, and distinctive risks of illness. Knowing what foods best suit us and which supplements will make a difference is enticing. Although the field of nutrigenomics is still young; we have some expertise already, and with time it has the potential to change how well – and how long – we live.



# Whiplash is NOT just a pain in the neck!

Whiplash occurs when your head is rapidly forced backward and forward. The sudden movement causes your neck's muscles, tendons and ligaments to stretch and tear. This commonly creates significant ongoing problems.

We tend to think of whiplash as a result of a car accident, and while this is certainly one common cause, any trauma that results in an abrupt flexion-extension of the neck can be responsible. You may or may not feel much when whiplash occurs, and the full effects are not always noticeable at first, so it's important to pay attention to any changes for a few days following the incident.

So how might you know you've experienced it? Whether the signs are delayed or immediate, they could include:

- pain and stiffness in the neck
- headache, upper back and shoulder pain
- pain, numbness or weakness in the arms
- blurred vision, dizziness, fatigue and trouble swallowing
- vertigo, tinnitus.

These signs can also indicate fracture, nerve damage, or other high-priority problems, so it's important to be examined quickly.

Whiplash effects can be short-term (acute), and can also be long-lasting (chronic).

With chronic whiplash the person may be aware they've had an injury which hasn't mended. Or they may be unaware whiplash is responsible for their symptoms. A combination of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), physical care, and patient education has been proven to achieve the best results.

Either way, life can become harder; anxiety, depression, and mood disorders are frequent in people with whiplash. If this injury occurs when you're older, or already have neck or lower back pain, there's a greater chance of delayed recovery. This means an intensive treatment plan is usually needed.

As you can see, the impact of whiplash can be serious and ongoing. Seek prompt professional help – we know that fast treatment improves recovery. Your chiropractor can evaluate your condition and provide tailored advice and treatment.

# WHIPLASH INJURY can happen in many ways...



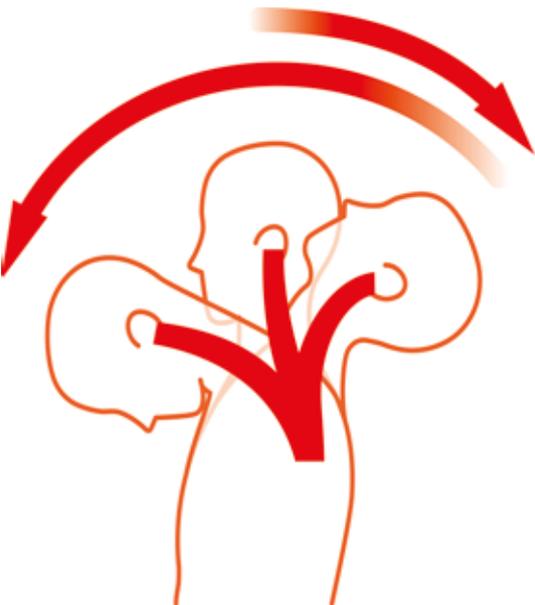
falls where the head violently jerks backward



blows to the head with a heavy object



physical abuse, such as being punched or shaken



# CROSSWORD CORNER

## ACROSS

6. High blood pressure
7. The study of diet and genetics
9. Sodium chloride or NaCl
10. Tiredness
12. Abbreviation for cognitive behavioural therapy
13. Flexible, supple
14. A low sodium level

## DOWN

1. A continual noise in the ear, such as ringing or roaring
2. Long lasting
3. Relating to both the heart and the blood vessels
4. An abrupt flexion-extension of the neck
5. A reaction in the body to injury or infection
8. Dizziness
11. A condition or injury that is short-term

Answers can be found in this edition of Your Chiropractor

Solution is on the back page

# PRACTICE UPDATE

## DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

### Public Holidays – CLINIC CLOSED

Easter 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> April Closed

ANZAC Day – 26<sup>th</sup> April Closed

### School Holidays

2<sup>nd</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April

*– As the twig is bent, so grows the tree –*

## IMPORTANT COVID 19 INFO:

### ON ARRIVAL AT THE CLINIC

- Upon arrival at the clinic, please proceed to wash/sanitise hands **prior** to being seated in reception.
- Remember social distancing.
- Reschedule your appointment if you have any COVID symptoms.

## APPOINTMENTS

Your health is our concern, but your responsibility. Your appointment schedule is designed specifically to obtain the best possible results. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please let the clinic know as soon as possible so that other patients can be offered your time, and be sure to make up your missed appointment. To contact your chiropractor after hours, please call the main number where a recorded message will advise after-hours numbers.

## PHONE CALLS

Chiropractors in this practice may be contacted by phone during office hours. A message will be taken if the Chiropractor is with another patient and your call will be returned when the Chiropractor is available.

## WAITING TIMES

Despite our best intentions, we sometimes run late. This is because someone has needed unexpected urgent attention. Be assured that when it comes your turn the chiropractor will not rush to catch up but will give your problem the time it deserves.

Thank you for your consideration.

*From all the staff at my family chiropractor, we hope your year has been positive so far and we wish you a wonderful Easter break!*

## APPOINTMENT REMINDER

Your next appointment is on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Time

## Simple stretching can stop you ‘seizing up’

*Do you give stretching much thought? Many people perform a quick stretch after a workout or a run, then forget about it until the next time. Whether or not you lead an active lifestyle, regular stretching offers a simple way to improve your health.*

To understand how stretching helps, we first must know what muscles do. Imagine our muscles are like the carriages on a train; each one connected by a coupling. As we contract a muscle, it shortens. In our train analogy, contraction brings the carriages closer together – it makes the train shorter. In our body, muscle contraction is what generates movement.

Regular stretching lengthens muscle tissue and increases flexibility, which we need to maintain a range of motion in our joints.

### What happens if we don't stretch?

Our bodies are efficient, so if a muscle remains contracted for long periods, the ‘extra carriages’ are deemed unnecessary. After all, every ‘carriage’ requires sustenance and maintenance. By removing what isn't used, those resources can be used elsewhere. In our bodies this can result in shorter, tighter muscles, reduced flexibility and stiffness, loss of strength, reduced blood flow, and pain. These muscular changes are commonly seen with poor posture, continual sitting, and following injury.

Stretching, then, helps to restore the lost carriages. It also figuratively oils the couplings. As with brushing your teeth, a daily routine improves outcomes. The benefits include improved range of motion, enhanced blood flow, better posture, and relief from shoulder and back pain.

### Stretching tips and safety

As with all exercise, there are some safety guidelines. If you have an injury or any physical limitations, only perform stretches recommended for you by a health professional.

The best time to stretch is after you work out or have warmed your body up with some light exercise. Cold muscles are not as pliable, which makes stretching more difficult and risky.

Don't overdo it. If you're stretching the same muscle groups too often, you risk overstretching and causing injuries, inflammation and pain. Think back to the train. If we were to force the carriages too far apart, damage would occur.

Should stretching feel painful? The short answer is no, but it's normal to feel some tension. A stretch should feel like a stretch!

If you experience pain or you have any questions about stretching, ask your chiropractor for advice.



## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: 6. HYPERTENSION 7. NUTRIGENOMICS 9. SALT  
DOWN: 1. TINNITUS 2. CHRONIC 3. CARDIOVASCULAR  
4. WHIPLASH 5. INFLAMMATION 8. VERTIGO 11. ACUTE  
10. FATIGUE 12. CBT 13. PLIABLE 14. HYPONATREMIA

**Disclaimer:** The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for sound health care advice. We are not liable for any adverse effects or consequences resulting from the use of any information, suggestions, or procedures presented. Always consult a qualified health care professional in all matters pertaining to your physical, emotional and mental health.

*Our newsletter is free! Take a copy with you.*