

Your Health

DECEMBER 2015

SUMMER NEWSLETTER



Otumoetai
Doctors

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The latest news and health advice from your Otumoetai Doctors

OPEN

Monday – Friday: 8.00am - 5.30pm
Saturday: 8.30am - 1.00pm

WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO TAKE CONTROL OF A FEVER

Whilst older children and adults with mild fever do not usually need medical attention, unless they are otherwise unwell or the fever does not go away in a few days, babies under 3 months old with fever should always be seen by a doctor.

Just what is a fever?

Fever is when the inner (core) body temperature is raised, usually due to your body fighting a viral or bacterial infection. A mild fever is core body temperature above 38°C, a high fever is 39°C and above, and a very high fever is 40°C or over.

Infants and young children may have convulsions or fits associated with fever known as febrile seizures. These can be a normal occurrence (associated with a fever and viral infection) in children under the age of 5 years, but the infant should be seen by a doctor afterwards for assessment. **If the seizure lasts longer than five minutes or the child is having trouble breathing you should phone 111 for an ambulance.**

What causes a fever?

Fever is generally caused by a viral or bacterial infection, although immunisation can sometimes cause mild fever in children and adults. Fever is the body's way of fighting infection. The normal body temperature is around 37 degrees Celsius.

Symptoms such as headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to light, irritability or vomiting may indicate meningitis, which needs urgent medical attention.

Antibiotics are not prescribed for viral infections unless there is a secondary infection, but bacterial infections usually need antibiotics prescribed by your doctor.

What is the best treatment?

- **For young babies and pregnant women:**
Babies under three months old with fever should be checked by a doctor. Pregnant women with fever should contact their lead maternity carer (LMC) or doctor.
- **For other ages**
Older infants, children and adults will not usually need any medical treatment for mild fever, especially if they are otherwise well. However, if the fever occurs in addition to other symptoms and the child/person is unwell, it is important to get medical advice. Also see your doctor if the fever gets worse, doesn't go away in a couple of days or the child/person becomes unwell. Healthline also offers advice on freephone 0800 611 116

General care for fever:

- make sure the room temperature is comfortable (not too hot or too cold)
- if possible, open a window for ventilation but avoid draughts
- keep the child/person in lightweight clothing and bedding
- rest is important as the fever means they are fighting an infection
- do not use hot water bottles or electric blankets during fever
- make sure the child/person takes plenty of fluids (little and often is best)
- a lukewarm flannel-bath can be refreshing – using a lukewarm flannel, wash the face, hands and neck
- change the bed linen and clothing regularly

Take or return the child/person to the doctor if they:

- have a severe headache or neck pain
- have pain anywhere in the body (especially the ears)
- have not had anything to drink for 10 hours or are constantly vomiting
- say that light hurts their eyes
- are not improved after 48 hours
- have difficulty waking up
- have trouble breathing
- have a skin rash
- have become unwell after recent overseas travel
- look like they are getting sicker or you feel really worried.

Ultimately consult with your Doctor for the best advice.

E-MAIL SERVICE

Do you have a computer and an e-mail address? Have you given this address to us to hold on your file?

We have the option of e-mailing our newsletter out to our patients instead of posting.

Please contact us if you would be interested in receiving our newsletter this way. We would be grateful for your comments.



KEEPING YOUR 'NEXT OF KIN' DETAILS CURRENT

In the case of an emergency we may need to contact your next of kin. We recommend that when you are next visiting the doctor, you ask our receptionist to check your records to make sure that we have an up-to-date record of who is your next of kin.

Caring For You

THE FACTS ON REFLUX DISEASE (GORD)

Also known as gastro-oesophageal reflux disease GORD is the inflammation of the lining of the oesophagus due to stomach acid leaking up from the stomach.

GORD is diagnosed when heartburn is experienced consistently two or more times a week. Heartburn is caused by stomach acid leaking up from the stomach to the oesophagus. This 'acid reflux' can cause damage to the lining of the oesophagus.

Treatment for GORD is primarily by medication; lifestyle changes may also be necessary.

Untreated GORD can lead to serious complications.

What causes it?

After food enters your mouth it travels down your oesophagus into your stomach. Where the oesophagus meets the stomach there is a ring of muscle called the lower oesophageal sphincter.

The sphincter acts as a valve between the oesophagus and the stomach, preventing stomach acid from backing up the oesophagus. GORD occurs when there is a weakness or defect in the oesophageal sphincter. When the valve fails, it allows acid to flow (reflux) into the oesophagus.

Frequent or persistent acid reflux can lead to inflammation of the lining of the oesophagus. This is known as oesophagitis.

What are the risk factors for it?

• **Obesity**

This is one of the main risk factors for GORD, thought to be due to extra pressure being put on the lower oesophageal sphincter by the stomach

• **Pregnancy**

Many women experience heartburn during later stages of pregnancy, when the womb pushes up against the stomach

• **Smoking**

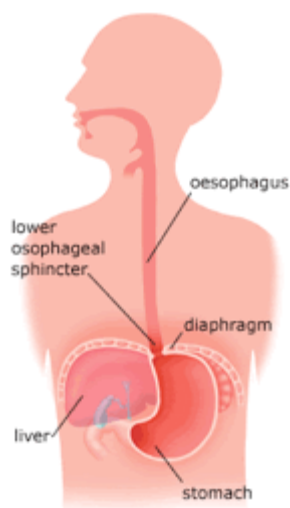
Nicotine can cause the muscles of the lower oesophageal sphincter to relax which may allow reflux to occur. GORD in smokers is also thought to be caused by coughing and straining leading to hiatal hernia

• **Abnormalities of the oesophagus**

These may lead to reflux of stomach contents including acid and sometimes bile into the oesophagus

• **Eating certain foods**

Spicy foods, acidic fruits and vegetables like citrus or tomatoes, mint or chocolate, caffeine, alcohol, garlic and onions and fried or fatty foods are all known to potentially contribute to GORD



Symptoms and treatment

Heartburn is the main symptom of GORD. This is a burning feeling which rises from the upper stomach or lower chest up towards the neck. To make a diagnosis of GORD, your doctor will take your medical history and conduct a physical examination. A diagnosis of GORD is highly likely if persistent heartburn is your primary complaint (75% of cases of heartburn are caused by GORD).

Ultimately consult with your Doctor on your next visit for the best advice.

SKIN TEARS

Our skin is the largest organ in the body and is made up of three layers: the epidermis, the dermis and the hypodermis.

The dermis is only 60% of adult thickness when we are first born. These layers are held in place by structures called "retes"- like anchor points coming up from lower layers or going down from top layers.

As we age skin changes occur causing thinning and flattening of the epidermis and loss of elasticity. Cells dry and contract in the dermis giving us the appearance of wrinkles and folds in the skin. The "retes" start flattening out and this enables the layers of skin to slide on each other; changes to blood vessel walls reduces blood supply to the extremities so instead of small lacerations, if we catch our skin on something sharp, we end up with what we know as skin tears.

How deeply we tear the skin depends on how sharp the object is that we might catch our skin on.

These tears will heal in time, but by being able to clean and reposition the top layer of skin, a bit like a jigsaw, the tear will heal even faster.

You are at more risk of skin tears:

- if you are on certain drugs, e.g. prednisone
- if you have reduced mobility or sight
- if you are of an older age, or very young
- if you have echymoses- that is bruising and discolouration of the skin due to leakage of blood vessels into the subcutaneous tissues as a result of trauma to the blood vessels, poor nutrition and hydration
- if you have conditions that affect the blood supply of the skin such as chronic heart disease, renal failure, or you are prone to strokes, CVA or TIA
- if you are dependent on others for showering, dressing or moving
- if you are keen on gardening and do not wear protection on your arms and legs

If you wish to purchase leg or arm protectors please don't hesitate to contact us and we can source these for you.

If you do get a skin tear, we ask you to come in for a dressing as soon as possible, to help healing start. It is not appropriate to remove any of what you might think of as excess skin prior to coming in for a dressing as often we can salvage most of it; especially, if the skin is still attached to you and your blood supply.

If you can wash it well and apply a pad or dressing with a bandage we will do the rest for you.

APPOINTMENT CANCELLATIONS

We appreciate that there are times when circumstances may change, or when something happens which is beyond your control, and the appointment you may have booked is no longer suitable.

If you are in this situation, please telephone us as soon as possible before the actual appointment time to cancel the appointment.

As you can appreciate our doctor's appointment slots book up very quickly, and often get fully booked.

If a patient fails to arrive for an appointment, this is a missed appointment that could have been offered to another ill person, who would like to have been seen earlier.

Some practices charge for appointments whether or not they are attended. While we prefer not to do this, unless it happens repeatedly, we would really appreciate your help in letting us know if you can't make it.



THE POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF ZINC IN OUR DIET

We all need Zinc to stay healthy. How much depends on your age and lifestyle. Zinc is important for our immune system as it helps our bodies make proteins and DNA for wound healing, senses of taste and smell, and for growth and development during pregnancy, as a baby and as a child.

Oysters are the best source of Zinc but it can be found in a wide range of foods. Red meat, poultry and seafood such as crab and lobsters and fortified breakfast cereals all contain good sources of zinc. Some zinc can also be found in beans, nuts, whole grains and dairy products. Ultimately by eating a wide range of food groups, it is rare to develop zinc deficiency.

Who is at higher risk of zinc deficiency?

- People who have had gastrointestinal surgery, such as weight loss surgery, or who have digestive disorders, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease because these conditions decrease the amount of zinc that the body absorbs and increase the amount lost in the urine
- Vegetarians – because beans and grains often eaten by vegetarians have a compound that reduces the absorption of zinc
- Older infants who are breastfed because breast milk does not have enough zinc for infants over 6 months of age
- People who drink a lot of alcohol
- People with sickle cell disease because they might need more zinc

Zinc supplements can provide a solution for many people

If you are one of the higher risk groups mentioned above, talk with your doctor or nurse to see if you need to take a zinc supplement or multivitamin

There are also some other cases where zinc supplements can help.

• The common cold

Some studies suggest that zinc may help speed recovery from the common cold and reduce its symptoms if taken within 24 hours of cold symptoms

• Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

This is an eye disease that gradually causes vision loss. Research suggests that zinc might slow down the progression of early AMD worsening into advanced AMD. More research is needed before this is routinely recommended

Children with diarrhoea in low income countries.

Children in low income countries often die from diarrhoea. Research studies have shown that zinc deficiency is common in these countries and dietary supplements help reduce the symptoms and duration of diarrhoea

Can zinc be harmful?

Yes, like most nutrients, too much zinc can be harmful. Signs can include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, stomach cramps, diarrhoea, and headaches. Zinc can be present in some denture adhesive creams and using large amounts of these products, well beyond recommended levels, could lead to excessive zinc intake and copper deficiency. This can cause neurological problems, including numbness and weakness in the arms and legs.

Ultimately consult with your Doctor on your next visit for the best advice.



The staff of Otumoetai Doctors wish you all a healthy, happy & safe christmas

- C**arry more than enough of your prescription medications with you on holidays
- H**andle food with extra care. Keep it clean, covered and cold
- R**espect the needs of those who struggle at Christmas, the lonely & grieving
- I**nitiate some family traditions, great for stress relief
- S**un-sense time – 'SLIP, SLOP, SLAP' and remember sunglasses too
- T**ravel safely. Allow extra time for crowded roads and drive defensively
- M**oderation in all things
- A**lcohol in moderation. The sober driver always enjoys the next day best
- S**avour the day and consider its significance in history

SOUTHERN CROSS 'EASY CLAIM'

If you are a member of Southern Cross then Otumoetai Doctors can now claim your doctor's consultation fee directly for you, so that you don't need to complete claim forms. Please let our receptionists know when you are next seen, and they will take a note of your membership card details and claim for you.

Some policies pay a percentage of the doctor's fees, leaving a small co-payment for you to pay. The receptionist will advise you if this is the case, once she has loaded the claim and had a response back from Southern Cross.



TRAVEL HEALTH & VACCINATION ADVICE



Dr Marty Lemberg is a member of MASTA of New Zealand. (The Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad.) He is able to give up-to-date advice on vaccination requirements, malaria prevention and latest health news with support from Worldwide Travel Health Vaccination Centres.

Dr Lemberg can provide travel health reports, medical kits, water purifying tablets, insect repellents and mosquito nets. We are also a Yellow Fever vaccination authorised centre.

Dr Jocelyn Heard also has a special interest in Travel Medicine. Dr Heard, our Practice Nurse Gill and Dr Lemberg regularly complete courses relating to Travel Medicine and are also available for appointments.

SKIN SURGERY

We have several doctors who are 'accredited' under the Western BOP PHO and DHB Skin Surgery programme, to do skin cancer surgery approved by the PHO.

If you would like to discuss this further and see if you qualify for this funded service, please don't hesitate to mention it to your doctor when you are next seen.

PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

You can request your repeat prescription by emailing a nurse from our website, www.ohcdoctor.co.nz Please be sure to put your name, date of birth, and which Chemist you would like your prescription sent to, on the email message.

Alternatively you can telephone the practice nurse **between 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday**. She can have the prescription prepared then faxed to a pharmacy of your choice – unless you are due for a doctor's appointment. **Please allow 2 working days for your prescription to be prepared – so please be sure to check when your prescription is due to run out, so that your request can be processed in time.** The cost for a prescription to be prepared by the doctor is \$18.

Please be sure to pay all your accounts here before the end of the month, to ensure you are not charged an administration fee for the preparation, printing and posting of your account to you.

“URGENT APPOINTMENTS” INFORMATION

In our Annual Practice Questionnaire some of you asked about our urgent appointment system, and how this works.

Otumoetai Doctors provides a service for our enrolled/registered patients who may need to be seen for “URGENT” medical attention, when there are no appointments available, because we are fully booked.

An “URGENT APPOINTMENT” is not an allocated appointment time, so is under time pressure. It means you are likely to be seen by a doctor other than your own.

Our “URGENT” system allows us to briefly see our patients who need to be seen **urgently** to deal with an **immediate emergency situation**. It does not allow time for extensive background reading of patient files.

We make every effort to have you seen as soon as possible. For your information the following is the process of events that will take place:

- > The Practice Nurse is required to assess your medical condition to ascertain whether your condition requires “URGENT” medical attention.
- > She will ask you a number of questions about your condition.
- > She will then advise you either:
 - > That you will be seen as an “URGENT” appointment – as per above,
 - OR
 - > that the matter you presented with today does not require “URGENT” medical attention, and that a booked appointment with your doctor at a later date would be a better way to help you.

(NB: please note there is a \$5 surcharge for patients seen in our URGENT Appointment system.)

EXTENDED APPOINTMENT TIMES

Following our Annual Practice Questionnaire some of you asked about the possibility of having more time in your consultation with your doctor.

Doctor appointments are 10-15 minutes in length. If you would like a longer appointment at any time, please mention this to the receptionist who will be happy to arrange this for you. Please note a double appointment has a double fee.

VACCINATION DURING PREGNANCY

Influenza and Whooping Cough immunisations are recommended and funded for pregnant women who are eligible for publicly funded health and disability services in New Zealand. These types of vaccine are used internationally during pregnancy with no evidence of harm for the course of the pregnancy, foetus or new born. Having the influenza vaccine during pregnancy can protect both mother and baby, and can be given at any stage of the pregnancy. It is funded during the usual influenza season.

Whooping cough given at 28-38weeks of pregnancy is recommended to protect babies less than 12months old, particularly those less than six months old, who have a high risk of hospitalisation and death from whooping cough.

Please don't hesitate to contact our practice nurses, if you have any questions regarding either of these vaccines.

SATURDAY MORNING CLINIC

We run an 8.30am – 1pm Saturday morning clinic. This clinic is generally reserved for urgent/acute consultations, and therefore we are not generally able to pre-book appointments.

There are however times when we can pre-book appointments for patients who find it impossible to come to the doctor during weekday hours, because of work commitments.

If you need to be seen at our Saturday morning clinic, please phone us from 8.30am onwards on the Saturday and our receptionist will provide you with an appointment time.

(NB - There is an extra surcharge of \$5 for seeing us on Saturday mornings)

DOCTORS WORKING DAYS

As each of our Doctors work different hours and days, if you would like a copy of the latest “Surgery Hours” pamphlet, please ask our receptionists when you are next in the surgery.

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORS' WORKING DAYS

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Dr Heard	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dr Lemberg	✓	✓	✓		✓
Dr Robinson	✓		✓	✓	✓
Dr Chavasse	✓		✓		✓
Dr Dixon	✓	✓			✓
Dr Johnstone	✓	✓	✓		✓
Dr Ryan	✓	✓		✓	
Dr Hill		✓		✓	
Dr Burness		✓	✓	✓	✓
Dr Eastwood			✓	✓	
Dr Drummond			✓	✓	

OUR ONSITE SERVICES

OTUMOETAI DOCTORS

(07) 576 2321



Unichem Otumoetai Pharmacy

(07) 576 7290



BAY PHYSIOTHERAPY

(07) 577 9798

Bryce P. Hamer & Associates



ROSEMARY DIPROSE COUNSELLOR

(07) 570 1041

Suite 5, 506 Otumoetai Rd, Tauranga

COUNSELLOR
Children, Adolescents, Adults

ANNA ROSE KENDALL PODIATRIST

(07) 576 2321



OTUMOETAI OPTOMETRISTS

(07) 576 0085

David Parlane Optometrist



THE DENTISTS

(07) 576 4895

Alistair Miller BDS (Otago)

