

# melomag

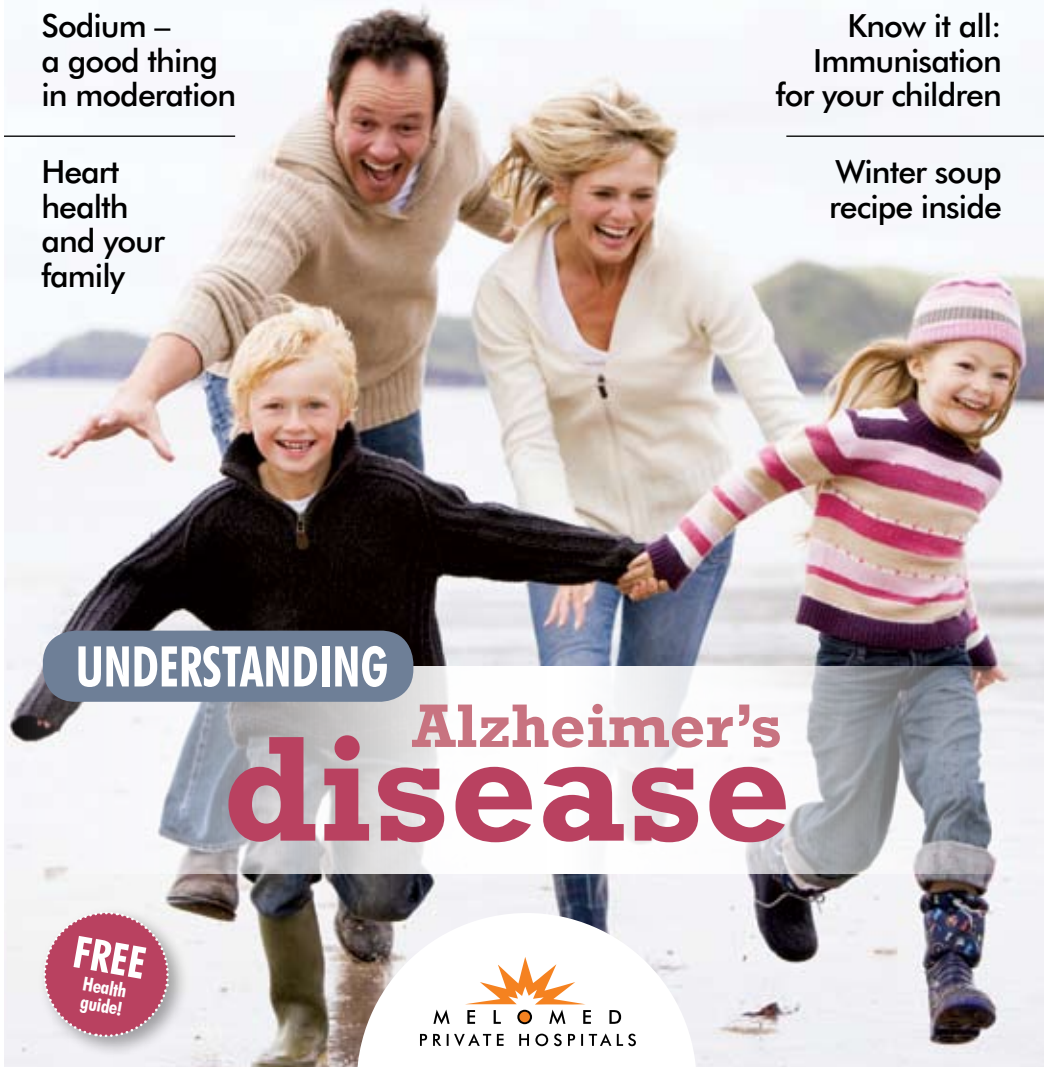
Winter 2011 | Issue 05

Sodium –  
a good thing  
in moderation

Know it all:  
Immunisation  
for your children

Heart  
health  
and your  
family

Winter soup  
recipe inside



UNDERSTANDING

## Alzheimer's disease

FREE  
Health  
guide!

  
M E L O M E D  
PRIVATE HOSPITALS

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# PathCare

**Drs Dietrich, Voigt, Mia**  
Vennote • Partners

## WHAT IS PATHOLOGY?

The word **pathology** strictly refers to the scientific study of the causes and progression of diseases.

Nowadays the term also refers to the practice of diagnostic pathology which concerns itself with laboratory tests on tissues and body fluids mainly requested by doctors to enable them to diagnose and classify diseases accurately and to monitor their progression and the results of treatment.

Diagnostic pathology tests are performed in pathology laboratories which are located either in or outside of hospitals. Private laboratories are

generally owned and run by private pathologists. The practice of diagnostic pathology has become very specialised and the instrumentation and techniques in the laboratories highly sophisticated. Specially trained medical technologists in general conduct the tests in the laboratory while the pathologists interpret the results and act as consultants to the clients, i.e. doctors and patients.

Both pathologists and technologists are responsible for maintaining high standards of quality assurance to ensure the accuracy of tests results thereby protecting the consumer.

## PATHCARE - PATHOLOGY THAT ADDS VALUE

You may have been referred to us by your doctor for pathology investigations that will assist with the diagnosis and treatment of your illness. Your doctor or our sister will take a sample of blood, urine, sputum etc from you, for us to perform the laboratory tests.

PathCare comprises of approximately 60 pathology laboratories and 110 specimen-collecting depots, with its head office at NI City, near Cape Town. The laboratories and depots are spread over South Africa and Namibia.

In all the laboratories the specimens are processed by the most technologically advanced and fully automated laboratory equipment. Specimens from hospitalised patients requiring urgent analysis can be dealt with in PathCare laboratories situated within many major private

hospitals throughout the country. Currently PathCare has more than 70 pathologists in South Africa and Namibia. These are all experienced specialists in their respective fields.

PathCare was the first pathology practice in South Africa to be fully SANAS (South African National Accreditation System) accredited (ISO Guide 15189). This is an international accreditation system which ensures that the quality of the results produced by PathCare meets international standards. The accreditation is maintained via annual inspections by the SANAS Accreditation Committee.

The logo of PathCare represents the care that we provide to our patients.

"Pathology that **adds value**"

[www.pathcare.co.za](http://www.pathcare.co.za)  
email: [clients@pathcare.co.za](mailto:clients@pathcare.co.za)

*PathCare ...*

The first syllable "*Path*" symbolises our core business "pathology" whereas the second syllable "*Care*" symbolises our value system, i.e. patient care is our priority.

# MELOMED MARCHES ON

"Our mid-year edition

of Melomag."

As in our past editions we are able to report continued development within the ranks of the Melomed Group.

There for all to see, is the exciting new development at Melomed Gatesville. We are looking forward to its completion within the next quarter with brand new additional medical facilities such as a renal unit, oncology facility and nuclear medicine facility. The opening of these facilities will be announced in due course.

Also in the pipeline is the establishment of a cardiac catheterisation laboratory at Melomed Bellville. Exploratory investigations into the feasibility of placing this facility at Melomed Bellville has reached an advanced stage and it is hoped that in our next edition there will be more to be said about this important development.

We have also introduced to the Melomed Group a new Melobabes program which also offers antenatal classes. There is little need to stress the societal importance of this area of healthcare and it is hoped that the programme will be utilised to its fullest.

While the above touches on only a few developments within the Melomed Group, it can be said that the Group is vibrant, forward-looking and coping well in achieving its ultimate goal of providing quality healthcare to the communities it serves.

To our Muslim readers, since we will have entered Ramadan before the next edition of Melomag is published, may I wish them a holy and blessed Ramadan, and may they emerge from the holy month into Eid-ul-Fitr spiritually renewed and strengthened.



**EBRAHIM BORAT**  
CHAIRMAN  
MELOMED GROUP

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## CONTRIBUTORS



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## GIVE-AWAY

We're giving away a book, *500 Health Tips* to one lucky reader! See **page 13** for competition details.



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## AN APP A DAY

### TO KEEP THE DOCTOR AWAY

Could the path to a healthier, more active you be as close as your mobile phone?



Our love of ever more sophisticated smartphones has the potential to turn what used to be 'just a phone' into an essential tool for good health, as a growing number of us use our mobiles to access specialised health and fitness apps (short for applications).

There's no shortage of health apps on the market and you don't have to look too far to find health apps that will:

- provide health information – e.g. apps that help coeliacs shop for gluten-free foods
- make a diagnosis based on a list of symptoms that you enter
- allow you to self-monitor health behaviours – e.g. there are apps that count your steps and others that allow you to record your blood glucose levels across the day.

| SNIPPETS |

## HEALTH NEWS & VIEWS

# YOGA

## MAY IMPROVE BALANCE OF STROKE PATIENTS

**Practising yoga after a stroke may help rebuild balance and prevent potentially disabling falls among the elderly, a study shows.**

The study shows stroke survivors who participated in a specialised post-stroke yoga class improved their balance by up to 34%. Researchers say the participants also experienced a big boost in their own self-confidence after their yoga practice and became more physically active in their communities. Many of the participants wanted to continue their yoga practice at home after the study ended. Previous research shows the risk of falls and breaking a hip increase significantly after a stroke and also increase with age. In particular, the average score on the Berg Balance Scale improved from 40 to 47, which indicates they were no longer at high risk for a fall. The study also shows that the stroke survivors experienced improvements in endurance and self-confidence in their ability to be physically active.

### CAUGHT A WINTER BUG?

**You should recover for at least two weeks before you start exercising again if you've had the flu. However, if it is a simple cold, it's okay to do some low-intensity exercise during your illness and return to your normal routine straight after.**

**FAST FACTS!**

## 6 TIPS FOR DRY, CHAPPED SKIN

1

### Shorten those showers

Long, steamy showers may soothe sore muscles, but they're also good at dehydrating you. That's because hot water removes the skin's natural oils more quickly than warm or cold water. Take shorter showers and baths and use warm water instead of steamy hot.

2

### Mild soaps

Your favourite antibacterial or deodorant soap may be doing you more harm than good, stripping your skin of essential oils. That's why skin care pros recommend sticking with mild soaps, preferably unscented or lightly scented.

3

### Moisturise

A great way to soothe or prevent chapped skin, and you don't need expensive elixirs from the cosmetics counter to keep skin dewy. Petroleum jelly, mineral oil, even hair conditioner can help you trap in moisture as you step from the shower.

4

### Get sharp about shaving

- Use a lubricant when you shave.
- Change the blades in your shaver often.
- Shave in the direction that hair grows.

5

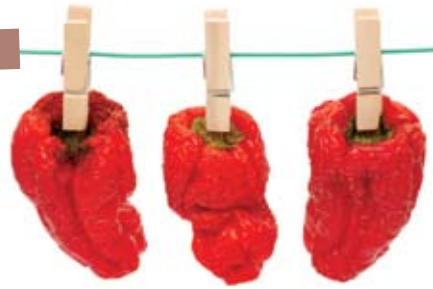
### Slather on sunscreen

Up to 80% of the sun's rays can penetrate light clouds, snow and fog. Over time that exposure can lead to moles, wrinkles and skin cancers. Even on cloudy or overcast days slap on that sunscreen.

6

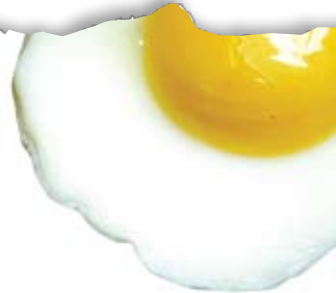
### Soothing chapped lips

The cycle of wetting and drying that occurs when you lick your lips quickly causes them to chap. Sun exposure can make chapped lips even worse, so spread on plenty of lip balm with a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.



HEALTH  
TIP

**NEED A VITAMIN D BOOST  
OVER WINTER? EAT AN EGG.  
IT'S A RARE FOOD SOURCE OF  
THIS ESSENTIAL VITAMIN.**



## FIGHTING WINTER ALLERGIES

### Warm up

A cozy night in front of a warm fireplace – there's nothing better. Just make sure you store firewood outside, to keep mold and pollen where it belongs.

### "Spring clean" in winter

Dust mites flourish in mattresses and bedding. When their droppings and remains become airborne, they can cause allergy symptoms in people who are sensitive to them.

### Wash Fido and Fluffy

When it's cold outside, pets need to come in. Just keep them in a confined living area. Also, give them a bath every week, if pet dander is a problem.



calendar

**JULY**

Tough Living with Cancer and Men's Health

Psychiatric Disability Awareness Month (Mental Illness)

Sterilisation Month

11 July 2011

World Population Day

23 July National Schizophrenia Day

26 July Osteoarthritis Day

31 July-6 Aug Cancer Prevention Week



25

5-10 September National Physiotherapy Back Week

5-10 September Kidney Awareness Week

9 September International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Day (FASD) "Education and Awareness"

10 September World Suicide Prevention Day

12-16 September Stroke Week

1-5 August Rheumatic Fever Week

1-7 August Breastfeeding Week

20 August Fibromyalgia Day

20 August Cancer Survivors Day

22-26 August Cerebral Palsy Week



**SEPTEMBER**

Oral Health Month

Women's Health: Cervical/Breast & Lymphoedema

Confidence Awareness Month

Better Hearing Month

Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month

School HIV/AIDS Life Skills Month

National Heart Awareness Month

National Month for Deaf People

Sterilisation Month

19-23 September Retina Week

19 Sept-21 Oct Eye Care Awareness Month

21 September World Alzheimer's Day

25 September World Heart Day

26 Sept-2 Oct Week of Older Persons "Treasure our aged - The guardians of our future"



**AUGUST**

Organ Donor Month

Child Safety/Injury Prevention

Women's Health: Cervical/Breast & Lymphoedema

National Women's Health Month

Sterilisation Month

1-5 August Immunisation Awareness Week





SAMWU NATIONAL MEDICAL SCHEME

# SAMWUMED

## Have you visited the SAMWUMED Clinics in Athlone and Mitchell's Plain yet?

### HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT OUR CLINICS:

- We are committed to providing quality medical care that is convenient and comprehensive to our members.
- If you live or work in and around Athlone and Mitchell's Plain, chances are it is close by.
- All services are charged at the Scheme Tariff, which means out-of-pocket expenses are reduced significantly.

### Contact us

If you are a SAMWUMED member, pay us a visit or contact your SAMWUMED Clinic today on 021 697 9032 in Athlone or 021 391 4141 in Mitchell's Plain for an appointment.

Clinics are open from 08h30 to 17h30, Mondays to Thursdays and close at 12h00 on Fridays and Saturdays. Clinics are open on the last Friday of the month, from 08h30 to 16h00 and closed on the last Saturday of the month.

**EVERY PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO ACCESS SUFFICIENT HEALTHCARE WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, AND SOCIETY MUST UNITE TO ENSURE ITS ADEQUATE FUNDING.**

- Services are charged at lower rates than many private providers.
- Regular promotions where selected products are available at discounted prices.
- Free physiotherapy at the Mitchell's Plain Clinic, subject to a doctor's referral.
- In-house dental laboratory and X-ray machines help keep costs to a minimum.
- Personalised care for members and their families.

**“ SAMWUMED IS A MEDICAL SCHEME STARTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND GOVERNED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. ”**





# HEART attacks

❖  
The golden rule:  
always get chest pains checked out.



A heart attack occurs when an artery supplying the heart with blood and oxygen becomes blocked.

The loss of blood flow injures the heart muscle.

**A heart attack is a true medical emergency.** Call an ambulance when experiencing or witnessing the warning signs of a heart attack – do not delay! Immediate action can save a life. The average person waits three hours before seeking help for symptoms of a heart attack. Many heart attack victims die before they reach a hospital. The sooner someone gets to the emergency room, the better the chance of survival. Prompt medical treatment also reduces the amount of damage done to the heart following an attack. Many people who suffer a heart attack have warning symptoms hours, days or weeks in advance. The earliest predictor of an attack may be recurrent chest pain that's triggered by exertion and relieved by rest.

**The golden rule:** always get chest pains checked out.

**FIRST-AID FOR A HEART ATTACK**  
**Recognise the warning signs and symptoms.** Heart attacks cause a wide range of symptoms, from mild to intense:

- + Uncomfortable pressure, fullness or squeezing pain in the centre of the chest. The pain may last several minutes or come and go. It may be severe, moderate or even mild.
- + Prolonged pain in the upper abdomen, often mistaken for indigestion (heartburn).
- + Difficulty breathing (shortness of breath), nausea or vomiting, sweating or dizziness.
- + Signs of shock, or collapsing.
- + Sharp stabbing pain in the

left side of the chest is usually NOT heart pain.

Women are more likely than men to have symptoms of nausea, vomiting, back or jaw pain, and shortness of breath with chest pain. Warning signs of a heart attack are less evident and sometimes even subtle or atypical in women, the elderly, and people with diabetes.

**+ Loosen tight clothing.**

Keep him/her as calm and relaxed as possible.

**+ Assist the victim to take any prescribed heart medication for such an attack** – usually nitroglycerin, which is placed under the tongue. If you

are the victim yourself, take prescribed medication as directed.



## Be prepared to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

– provided you are trained to do so. If you are with a person who might be having a heart attack and he/she is unconscious, tell this to the emergency dispatcher or other emergency medical specialist and turn the victim on his/her side in the recovery position. You may be advised to begin CPR.

Proper training is required to perform CPR. However, any heart attack can lead to cardiac-respiratory arrest and it is therefore vital for first-aiders to be able to recognise the early

warning signs of a heart attack in order to give the victim prompt professional attention.

### DO NOT

- + allow the person to deny the symptoms and convince you not to call for emergency help;
- + give the person anything by mouth unless a heart medication (such as nitroglycerin) has been prescribed.



## Prevention



### REDUCE RISK FACTORS:

- + If you smoke, quit – smoking more than triples your chance of developing heart disease.
- + Keep blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes under control and follow doctor's orders.
- + Lose weight if necessary.
- + Exercise regularly.
- + Limit your alcohol intake – one drink a day may reduce the risk of heart attack, but two or more can damage the heart and cause other medical problems.

## Melomed 24 Emergency Services

Melomed 24 Ambulance Services was launched in November 2003 to address the key issue of providing immediate and reliable emergency services for the Cape Flats and surrounding areas of the Cape Town Metropole:

- 24-hour access to the Melomed emergency call centre
- Dispatch of emergency response vehicles
- Medical transportation
- Inter-hospital transfers
- Medical repatriation
- First aid training
- Special events standby
- Emergency medical rescue service
- All medical aids accepted

### Emergency NUMBERS

**Melomed 24 Ambulance:**  
0800 786 000

**Melomed Gatesville Trauma Unit**  
021 637 8100

**Melomed Bellville Trauma Unit**  
021 948 8131

**Melomed Mitchells Plain Trauma Unit**  
021 392 3126



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Healthcare. We Care.



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Tollfree 1800 122 813

A12863 03/11



# Sodium

## A GOOD THING ... IN MODERATION

Eating less sodium can help lower blood pressure in some individuals. It can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney damage in those with hypertension. Sodium plays an important role in the body. It's essential for fluid balance, muscle strength, and nerve function. But most of us get too much. Guidelines call for less than 2,3g of sodium per day – about 1 teaspoon of table salt. Surprisingly, most of our salt intake is hidden in the foods we buy at the grocery store.

### The obvious offenders

These snack-time favourites are always a safe bet for high salt content. Here's how a 28g serving compares.

- Potato chips = 149 mg
- Cheese puffs = 258 mg
- Pretzels = 385 mg

**TIP**

*Even "baked" or fat-free snacks can pack the same amount of sodium or more, so read the label.*

### Condiments do count

If you think those little extras you add to your food don't count, think again.

- Ketchup (1 tbsp) = 178 mg
- Sweet relish (1 tbsp) = 121 mg
- Capers (1 tbsp) = 255 mg

**TIP**

*Go for low-sodium or sodium-free condiments. Or get creative with your substitutions: Try cranberry relish for a naturally lower sodium choice.*



## Ready-to-eat cereals

They seem safe enough, right? Look closer.

- Some brands of corn flakes have up to 266mg of sodium per cup.
- Some brands of raisin bran have up to 342mg of sodium per cup.

**TIP**

*Puffed rice and puffed wheat are sodium free. Mix half of your favourite cereal with half of a sodium-free choice.*



## Nuts!

Rethink those salty peanuts. 28g of dry-roasted, salted peanuts contains 230mg of sodium. The same size serving of dry-roasted, salted mixed nuts has 190mg.

**TIP**

*For about the same amount of kilojoules, 28g of oil-roasted, salted peanuts rings in at only 91mg of sodium. Or better yet, buy the unsalted variety, which are practically sodium-free.*



## Canned vegetables

While a handy substitute for fresh produce, canned veggies are typically laden with preservatives or sauces and seasonings that add extra sodium. A cup of canned cream-style corn contains 730mg of sodium.



## Soups

It's a warm comfort food on a cold day, but look out – soups are typically loaded with sodium. For instance, a cup of chicken noodle soup (canned) contains as much as 1,1g of sodium.

**TIP**

*Look for reduced-sodium versions of your favourites. And always check the label – you might find that one brand's "Healthy" version actually has less sodium than the "25% Less Sodium" variety.*

## Marinades and flavourings

Notoriously high-sodium offenders include Teriyaki sauce (1 tablespoon) which contains 690mg of sodium, and soy sauce (1 tablespoon), which may contain up to 1g of sodium.

**TIP**

*Even "lower-sodium" soy sauce packs a wallop, so use sparingly. Go for vinegar and lemon juice to enhance flavour. And try orange or pineapple juice as a base for meat marinades.*



## PHYSIOTHERAPY



### Melissa Wentzel

B.SC (Physiotherapy) Practice no. 0238120

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**C:** 082 367 3779

**E:** wentzelmelissa@yahoo.com

A dynamic team of physiotherapists that treat a wide variety of conditions (namely musculoskeletal, orthopaedic, neurological, chests and paediatrics) in both the in-hospital and out-patient setting.

## PAEDIATRICS



### Dr Rafiq Khan

MB ChB(Natal), B.SOC SC(HONS) (UCT), MCFP (SA), DCH (SA), M.Fam.Med (US), F.C.Paed (SA) Practice no. 0127884

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Well-established paediatric practice providing ambulant and emergency care on a 24/7 basis. Paediatrician available for all types of deliveries, neo-natal care, intensive care of very sick infants and children. Special interest in allergies, asthma and eczema.

## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST



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Assessment and psychotherapy for adolescents and adults with anxiety, mood disorders, bereavement, trauma, relationship difficulties and somatoform conditions. Also personal development. Long- and short-term therapy with individuals and couples.

## DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGISTS



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Dr Norman Smuts - MB.Ch.B; F.F. Rad(D) SA

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Practice no: 0366862

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General radiology and X-ray, multi-slice CT, ultrasound, mammography, bone densitometry and intervention.

## PAEDIATRICIAN & PAEDIATRIC PULMONOLOGIST



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This new practice offers a 24-hour general paediatric and neonatal service with multi-disciplinary support. Special interests are paediatric lung disease, asthma, intensive care and both interventional and diagnostic bronchoscopy.

## GENERAL SURGEON



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A general surgeon with special interest in gastroenterology, endoscopy (both diagnostic and interventional), oncology, laparoscopic surgery, as well as breast and thyroid surgery.

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**E:** mobile.gyn@gmail.com

Community gynaecology also available in Khayelitsha  
021 364 7992 and Gugulethu 021 637 2269.

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She provides excellent care for children from birth to  
16 years in a child friendly environment.

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# MELOMED EVENTS!



Events that have taken place at Melomed over the past few months.



## PITBULL TOUR TO CAPE TOWN, APRIL 2011

Melomed24 Ambulance services was the emergency medical service provider for the Pitbull tour to Cape Town.



## Melomed Bellville Grand Tea

On 9 June Melomed Bellville staff members were treated to a grand tea by Hospital Manager Mr. Johan Nienaber.



**Mr Achmat Ismail has been an employee at Melomed for over 21 years.** We thank him for his loyalty and support over the years.



## Elite Walk-a-thon

On Wednesday 27 April the 9th Elite Walk-a-thon for the physically challenged took place and Melomed 24 Ambulance Service was, for the 5th year, a proud sponsor of this event.



**Olive Wessels from Melomed Gatesville** received an award for her contribution over the years at the hospital.

An award was handed out to Sr Oliver, the Unit Manager of the Paediatric Unit at Melomed Mitchells Plain, for her contribution to Melomed.



The Melomag competition winner is Moggamad Zaid Tofa who has won the Bamboo Fun Gift Set. We trust that he will enjoy his prize.



Melomed24 Ambulance services was the emergency medical service provider for the Rugby World Cup Trophy Tour in Cape Town on 26 June.



Dr Garish Mohlaba who is a gynaecologist at Melomed Bellville has completed his master's degree in obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of Cape Town. We wish him everything of the best with his practice and trust that he will grow from strength to strength. Dr Mohlaba now has his MBChB. FLOG (SA) Mmed (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) (UCT).



### International Nurses Day

On Thursday 12 May, we celebrated International Nurses Day to honour and thank all our nurses that work so selflessly in order to preserve human life. In true Melomed style, we splashed out and enjoyed a wonderful day together, which included a scrumptious lunch and warm winter gifts for our nurses. Thank you to all our nurses for all that you do!



### Long Service Awards

Long service awards were issued to those employees with 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of service. Each employee received a certificate and a cheque as a token of appreciation. Thank you to all staff for their continued support, hard work and dedication.



## MELOMED GIVE-AWAY

We're giving away a book, *500 Health Tips*, to one lucky reader!

To stand a chance to qualify, **SMS the name of the give-away book** and your name to 34298 (R2 per SMS). Competition closes 16 September 2011. Prize sponsored by Health Bytes.

Give-away terms and conditions: The winners will be the first correct entries drawn after the closing date. In the event of the judges not being able to get hold of winners on details supplied, alternative winners will be selected. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners must be prepared to be photographed for publicity purposes. The prize is not transferable and may not be converted into cash.

# LIQUID GOLD

Everybody has it; everybody needs it.

Without blood, our organs couldn't get the oxygen and nutrients they need to survive, we couldn't keep warm or cool down, we couldn't fight infections, and we couldn't get rid of our own waste products. Without enough blood, we'd weaken and die.

## WHAT IS BLOOD AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

Two types of blood vessels carry blood throughout our bodies:

- + The **arteries** carry oxygenated blood from the heart to the rest of the body where it is liberated and carbon dioxide is taken up.
- + The blood then travels through the **veins** back to the heart and lungs, where it gives up the carbon dioxide

and receives more oxygen.

The blood that flows through this network of veins and arteries is called whole blood, which is made up of three types of blood cells suspended in a yellowish fluid called plasma:

- + red blood cells
- + white blood cells
- + platelets.

These cells are mostly manufactured in the bone marrow, especially in the vertebrae, ribs, pelvis, skull, and sternum (breastbone). Plasma is 90% water and contains nutrients, proteins, hormones, some clotting factors and waste products. It makes up about 55% of the total volume of blood.

**Red blood cells** are shaped like slightly indented, flattened disks

that contain an iron-rich protein called haemoglobin. **Blood gets its bright red colour when haemoglobin picks up oxygen in the lungs, which is then released to the tissues as blood travels through the body.**

Red blood cells make up about 40% of blood volume – more than any other type of cell. New ones are produced daily as each cell has a life span of about four months.

**White blood cells** are a key part of the body's defence system. They can move in and out of the bloodstream to reach affected tissues. Your blood normally contains far fewer white blood cells than red cells. There are several types of white blood cells, and their life spans vary from a few days to

months.

When you have an infection your white cell count is often higher than when you are well because more white blood cells are being produced to battle the infection. Once the body has fought an infection, some of these cells “remember” how to make the specific antibodies that will quickly attack the same germ if it enters the body again.

**Platelets** are the smallest components of blood: oval-shaped cells that comprise 1–2% of blood volume. When a blood vessel breaks, platelets gather in the area, creating a web that seals off the leak. Platelets survive only about nine days in the bloodstream and are constantly being replaced.

Did you know?



- + Blood makes up about 7% of your body's weight.
- + An average adult has about 5 litres (8–10 pints) of blood – a newborn baby only has about one cup.

# Antenatal classes

at Melomed  
Private Hospitals

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## contact ❖❖❖

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Tanya Botha: Tel: 021 948 8131

[www.melomed.co.za](http://www.melomed.co.za)

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## UNDERSTANDING

# Alzheimer's disease

Article by Health Bytes Publishers

Alzheimer's disease has a significant impact on the lives of patients and those around them. Even though there is no cure yet, proper management and knowledge can make a difference to the progression of the illness.

### WHAT IS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

Alzheimer's disease is an illness characterised by the progressive deterioration of brain functioning. Typically it has a very gradual onset and memory problems are noticed first. Usually the person with the illness experiences prominent short-term memory problems, while the long-term memory is preserved. People with Alzheimer's disease usually have problems learning new information.

### WHO GETS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

The risk increases with age. While roughly 10% of people above the age of 65 are affected, the percentage

increases to approximately 40% for people over 85.

The specific cause is still unknown. There probably is not one single cause, but several factors that can affect each person. In the more common form of Alzheimer's, no obvious family pattern is seen. Unfortunately there is still no clear answer to what the specific cause of this illness is.

### Signs and symptoms

- + Memory loss of recent events
- + Disorientation
- + Confusion
- + Difficulty finding words
- + Difficulty with usual daily activities
- + Anxiety or depression
- + Not recognising familiar people and places
- + Denial that there is a problem

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Alzheimer's disease usually has a very gradual onset. Initially a patient's family might notice



## IN SOUTH AFRICA WE HAVE VARIOUS MEDICATIONS AVAILABLE WHICH CAN HELP TO SLOW DOWN THE PROGRESSION OF THE ILLNESS.

mild forgetfulness. People with Alzheimer's can have trouble remembering recent events or familiar places. Daily tasks, for example cooking or using a cellphone, might become more difficult than usual. As the illness progresses, symptoms are more easily noticed and usually become serious enough to cause concern. Often patients also lose insight into their problem. Therefore it is important for family members to take action early on.

Alzheimer's disease can usually be divided into three stages:

**Early, moderate and severe.** In the **early stage** people would just have mild forgetfulness and become somewhat disorientated and struggle with some daily tasks.

When the illness progresses to a **moderate stage** and later to severe, it might become clear to the family that the patient would struggle to do simple tasks like brushing their teeth or combing their hair. They can no longer think clearly.

In **later stages** they will start to have problems speaking, understanding, reading & writing. In the more **advanced stages**, people with Alzheimer's disease may also become anxious or aggressive. These usually include personality changes, which can be very distressing to their family.

They also sometimes wander away from home.

In the very late stage of Alzheimer's disease, people will become incontinent and sometimes bedridden. At this stage they need total care.

### HOW IS ALZHEIMER'S DIAGNOSED?

Alzheimer's disease must be diagnosed as soon as possible. This gives the patient the chance to discuss care options with their doctor as well as their families.

There are no specific diagnostic tests available yet.

To make a diagnosis, the doctor will get a complete medical history from the patient as well as from family members.

Further medical tests, such as brain scans, blood tests, urine tests and at times cerebrospinal fluid, may be performed. These tests are done to exclude other causes of memory problems.

If there are no specific causes found during all these tests and the history and cognitive testing fits in with the diagnosis, the patient will be formally diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

### IS TREATMENT AVAILABLE?

There is still no cure. In South Africa, however, we have various medications avail-

### What support is available for family members or caregivers?

Most often spouses or other family members provide day-to-day care for people with Alzheimer's disease. As the disease progresses people often need more and more care. This can be very taxing on the caregivers and can affect their physical and mental health, as well as their family life. Various support groups, which caregivers usually find very helpful, are available in different areas. Contact the Alzheimer's Association of South Africa for more information regarding the illness and specific support groups.

Useful websites:

[www.alzheimers.org.za](http://www.alzheimers.org.za)

[www.gomemory.co.za](http://www.gomemory.co.za)

able, which can help to slow down the progression of the illness. **The sooner the patient starts medication, the better.**

On starting medication, there might be a slight improvement of symptoms initially, after which the patient's brain functioning will still deteriorate. Medication does, however, improve the quality of life, and research has shown that nursing home placements are delayed due to the use of this medication.



UPDATE



MELOMED RENAL CARE

## Extends its reach



Melomed Renal Care extends its reach in the Western Cape with the opening of a second dedicated dialysis unit.

In addition to 13 dialysis stations, including full isolation facilities, the unit which will open in September 2011 will have the capacity to dialyse up to 80 patients over a three-shift rota, six days a week.

Quality healthcare is assured through meticulous adherence to strict national and international protocols. High standards will be maintained through the measurement of dialysis efficiency, hepatitis screening, water quality testing and through data collection and customer satisfaction surveys.

In addition to offering a full complement of dialysis therapies to aid rehabilitation, MRC Gatesville will offer a comprehensive range of services which will give immeasurable value to

patients suffering from chronic kidney disease. These will include patient education on treatment and prevention and support groups for both patients and their families.

The full spectrum of dialysis treatment includes:

- **Chronic Hemodialysis:** Provided in a comfortable environment with flexible dialysis shifts designed to accommodate the varied lifestyle of patients.
- **Peritoneal Dialysis:** A patient-friendly training programme, designed to ensure safe and reliable dialysis treatment in the patient's home or work environment.
- **Acute Dialysis:** Specialised Melomed Renal Care staff are on call 24 hours a day.

This mobile service includes continuous therapies for unstable patients, and offers a range of treatment options.

- **Healthy Start Programme®:** Unique to National Renal Care, the Healthy Start Programme® is a lifestyle management programme for patients with end-stage kidney disease and patients at risk of developing end stage renal disease. These patients include diabetics, patients with hypertension, those with a family history of kidney disease and patients with compromised kidney function. National Renal Care is extending this service free of charge to all Melomed Renal Care patients.

For further information, please contact RN Grace Fortuin on 082 824 7627 or visit our website on [www.melomed.co.za](http://www.melomed.co.za).

DIALYSIS SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE



## ASPEN RETAINS ITS LEADERSHIP POSITION

### *Ranked the number 1 local pharmaceutical company amongst GP's, Funders and Providers in the Campbell Belman Survey*

Aspen Pharmacare, South Africa's leading pharmaceutical company, has been ranked the top local pharmaceutical company in the Campbell Belman Pharmaceutical Company Confidence Predictor Survey.

The survey, which is conducted annually, is based on the confidence predictor system, which is a unique diagnostic tool that converts attitudinal information on brands into empirical functions of their appropriate market stature. A total of 40 pharmaceutical companies, 16 of which are local and generic companies, were included in the 2011 survey.

Commenting on the outcome of the survey, Aspen's Marketing Executive, Deon Hall, says "the results are a clear testimony of Aspen's commitment to all our stakeholders". "We are very pleased at the improvements we have made in the past year, but realise that more still needs to be done", he added.

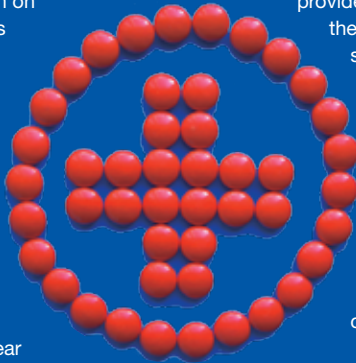
"The system employed in the survey takes into account the importance of each of the characteristics used in measuring confidence in a company and how a company rates on these relative to its competitors", adds Campbell

Belman spokesperson, Pamela Belman.

"Aspen has made notable strides over the past year, especially with regard to service provided by company representatives, customer and communication support", she added.

The survey further revealed the strong confidence in the company by service providers and funders, who ranked the company a leader for the second consecutive year. The company's social responsibility programs, representatives' understanding of the managed healthcare environment and future prospects have once again propelled Aspen to the number one position amongst all pharmaceutical companies.

Adding to this, Aspen's Chief Executive, Noel Guliwe, says "the results are a true reflection of our customers' confidence and positive sentiments in the local brands". "We employ the highest international standards in our manufacturing facilities and this is evident in the outcome of the survey. As we celebrate our successes, we remain steadfast on our mission to deliver value to all our stakeholders as a responsible corporate citizen that provides quality, affordable medicines globally".



# IMMUNISATION

## *know it all...*



**Effective vaccination remains the single most important, cost-effective intervention strategy**

**against a host of serious childhood illnesses. It is the duty of every health care worker and parent**

**to ensure compliance with vaccination schedules in the best interest of children's health.**

Article by paediatrician Dr Rafiq Khan.

### HOW VACCINES WORK

Despite a certain degree of *innate immunity*, our immune system is still rather underdeveloped weak and primitive at birth. Upon exposure to the environment, it evolves into a more *complex* entity, able to counter any hostile invading organism and protect us against serious illness. It has the uncanny ability to recognise invading harmful bacteria and viruses by comparing their identifying characteristics against the *stored memory* of previous encounters with that particular organism.

Vaccines stimulate the immune system to develop a clone of cells that can easily identify any harmful invading organism and thus guarantee protection against any future exposure to the same

organism. A vaccine can take the form of a live or killed virus or bacterium. It can also be a toxin made by a virus or bacterium, whose characteristics have been altered so that it cannot cause disease but can stimulate the immune system to recognise the unaltered virus or bacterium upon entry and launch an assault against the harmful organism.

### SAFETY OF VACCINES

Much disinformation exists regarding the safety of vaccines. A few common areas of concern are addressed below:

#### + MMR vaccination and its reputed link with autism in childhood

The weight of current scientific enquiry fails to establish a link between autism and the administration of the Measles, Mumps,

Rubella (MMR) vaccine. A 1998 report by Wakefield and others was at the centre of this controversy. Serious methodological flaws were found in the authors' interpretation of certain observations. In 2004, 10 out of the 13 authors retracted their original interpretation.

(See [www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/concerns/autism](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/concerns/autism) for further evidence.)

#### + Thiomersal usage in vaccines

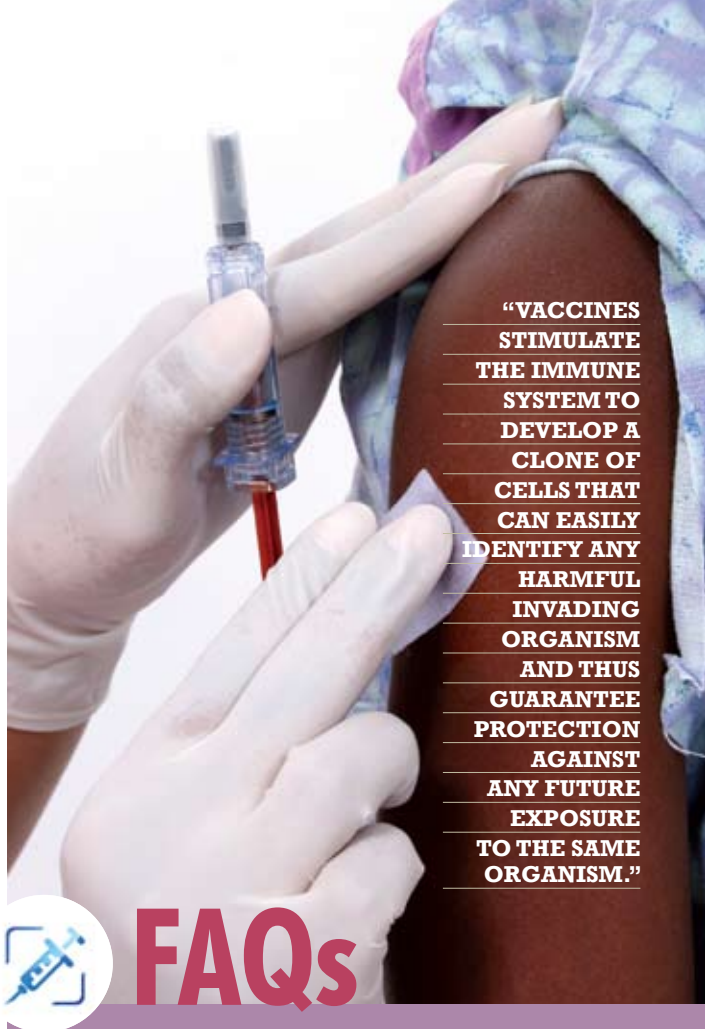
There has been much concern about the safety of using thiomersal as an agent to prevent bacterial and fungal contamination of vaccines in storage. However, there are no reports of illness or death due to thiomersal usage in vaccines.

### + Allergic reactions to measles vaccines

Since measles is a potentially lethal infection, only children who have a very rare, severe form of allergy to egg protein resulting in anaphylaxis (sudden onset of swelling of the mouth, throat, difficulty in breathing, collapse and shock) should avoid measles vaccination. A minor degree of egg allergy is no contra-indication to measles vaccination. Certain types of measles vaccine are not produced in eggs and thus safe to use in individuals allergic to egg protein.

### + Severe reactions to pertussis vaccine

Whilst most adverse reactions to the pertussis vaccine are local reactions such as redness, swelling and tenderness over the injection site, a few more serious cases were reported: a fever of more than 40.5°C; prolonged crying; a high-pitched cry; convulsions and shock-like episodes with collapse and floppiness of the infant. **Fortunately a newer form of the pertussis vaccine (made from components [acellular] and not the whole organism) is now available, with far fewer side effects.** ▶



**“VACCINES STIMULATE THE IMMUNE SYSTEM TO DEVELOP A CLONE OF CELLS THAT CAN EASILY IDENTIFY ANY HARMFUL INVADING ORGANISM AND THUS GUARANTEE PROTECTION AGAINST ANY FUTURE EXPOSURE TO THE SAME ORGANISM.”**



## FAQs

#### 1. Are boosters for hepatitis B vaccination necessary?

No. Provided the primary schedule is completed as recommended, no further booster doses are required.

#### 2. Can a live vaccine (e.g. chicken pox vaccine) and an inactivated vaccine (e.g. hepatitis A) be given together?

Yes. However, when administering two live vaccines, they need to be done simultaneously on two separate sites, or be given on two separate occasions at least one month apart.

#### 3. Recent exposure to hepatitis A – will vaccination help?

Probably not, though there is no contra-indication to administering the vaccine. For added protection a course of gamma globulin

will provide additional protection.

#### 4. Recent exposure to chicken pox – will vaccination help?

Yes, if given within three to five days of exposure. Severe immunodeficient individuals can be protected by varicella zoster immunoglobulin if given within three days of exposure to chicken pox or zoster.

#### 5. Will the pneumococcal vaccine protect against meningitis?

Yes, but only against the pneumococcus as cause of meningitis.

#### 6. What if the mother of a newborn infant develops chicken pox?

If she develops chicken pox seven days before and within 30 days after delivery, the infant should receive varicella zoster immunoglobulin.



**+ Other side effects associated with vaccines**

Most common side effects include fever, irritability, drowsiness and pain at injection sites. These are largely self-limiting symptoms. Get medical attention if they persist.

**NATIONAL VACCINATION SCHEDULE**

Most countries structure a national programme of childhood immunisation (based on WHO/UNICEF guidelines), covering the common illnesses within the resources available in that particular country, health district or region. (See table opposite for schedule currently in use in SA.)

**NEWER VACCINES**

**+ Conjugated pneumococcal vaccine**

This vaccine protects children (6 weeks – 5 years) against infections such as pneumonia, meningitis, febrile bacteraemia, otitis media, sinusitis and bronchitis caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. A three-dose vaccination programme offers the highest degree of protection against pneumococcal disease.

**+ Vaccine against rota virus**

This new vaccine, given in an



"Children are vaccinated according to their chronological and not their gestational age. Vaccine doses are therefore not lowered for pre-term or low birth-weight infants, nor delayed because of small body mass."

oral drop form at 10 and 14 weeks of age, is safe and well tolerated against rota virus, a cause of severe and debilitating diarrhoea in childhood. **Rota virus infections cause over 600 000 deaths annually.** The vaccine can be given simultaneously with the usual scheduled vaccinations in infancy.

**COMBINED VACCINES**

The single biggest advantage in administering a number of vaccines in a single intramuscular injection form is the ease of administration and fewer local and systemic side effects.

The WHO has declared South Africa a polio-free country. This has resulted in a change in the vaccination practices regarding polio. (See schedule).

Vaccines for MMR, haemophilus influenza B, diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (acellular variety) have always been available in a combined form. Recently TD-polio (tetanus-toxoid, diphtheria toxoid and inactivated polio) has become available as a booster vaccine to be administered at age six.

**MISSED VACCINES**

Minor acute illnesses, with or without a fever, are no contraindications to vaccination. In a child with a moderately severe illness, it may be reasonable to postpone a scheduled vaccination. Children with chronic illnesses may be at greater risk of developing a vaccine-preventable illness and hence should be immunised sooner.

## Vaccination schedule currently used in South Africa in state clinics and private practice.

Age	Vaccines administered	Alternate /additional vaccines administered	Notes
<b>At birth</b>	Oral polio drops, BCG TB vaccine.		
<b>6 weeks</b>	Oral polio drops, 13-valent Pneumococcal conjugated vaccine, Rota virus vaccine, Hepatitis B, [Diphtheria, acellular pertussis, tetanus, inactivated-polio, Haemophilus influenza B vaccine.] [ 5-1 vaccine]	Latter 5 vaccines listed in adjacent column are usually given in a single injectable form. There is a 6-1 injection available as well combining above 5 vaccines with hepatitis B vaccine.	The single dose of polio drops given at 6 weeks gives local gut immunity.
<b>10 weeks</b>	Hepatitis B vaccine 5-1 vaccine as above Rota virus vaccine * 13-valent pneumococcal vaccine*	* state run clinics usually supply rota virus and 13-valent pneumococcal conjugated vaccines at 6 and 14 weeks only.	In private practice either 2 or 3 doses of rota virus vaccine is used depending on the type of rota virus vaccine used.
<b>14 weeks</b>	As for 6 weeks above except that oral polio drops are not given at 14 weeks.		
<b>9 months</b>	Measles vaccine (1) 13-valent pneumococcal vaccine*	* this is the practice at state run clinics only.	State run clinics only provide 3 13-valent pneumococcal vaccines at present.
<b>12 months</b>	Hepatitis A vaccine Chicken pox vaccine 13-valent pneumococcal vaccine	All vaccines listed in adjacent column at one year are not available at state run clinics at present.	
<b>15 months</b>	Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) given as a combined vaccine	At present available in private practice only.	No need to give measles at 18 months if MMR is given at 15 months.
<b>18 months</b>	5-1 booster as above Hepatitis A (booster)* Measles vaccine (2)	*Not available on state schedule.	
<b>6 years</b>	Td vaccine (Tetanus and reduced strength diphtheria vaccine)*	*Available at state run clinics only.	A 4-1 combined vaccine comprising tetanus-, diphtheria-, acellular pertussis- and inactivated polio vaccines is available in private practice. MMR boosters are also given at this age
<b>12 years</b>	Td vaccine as at 6 years above* available at state run clinics. 4-1 (tetanus, acellular pertussis, diphtheria and inactivated polio) and MMR as above is available if missed at 6 years.		

\*\* Infanrix Hexa is a combined vaccine consisting of diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis, hepatitis B, enhanced inactivated polio and haemophilus influenza. Type B can be given instead of the six individual vaccines via a single intramuscular injection. If intending to use this combined vaccine, infants must receive a dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth.



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## GET MORE VITAMIN C in your diet

This antioxidant super-nutrient is found in a variety of fruits and vegetables. Yet, according to

dietary intake data, most adults don't get enough vitamin C in their diets.

The foods richest in vitamin C are citrus fruits, green peppers, strawberries, guavas, tomatoes, broccoli, potatoes and sweet potatoes. Other good sources include dark leafy greens, kiwi fruit, papaya, mango, watermelon, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, red peppers, raspberries, blueberries, winter squash and pineapples.

Here are **six easy ways** to work more fruits and veggies into your diet each day:

- + Keep cut-up fruits and veggies on hand so they are ready for a

quick snack.

- + Include dark lettuce, tomatoes, and shredded broccoli on all your sandwiches and wraps.
- + Eat raw veggies with hummus, low-fat dips and salsas.
- + Add fresh or frozen berries to muffins, pancakes, cereal and salads.
- + Throw a handful of dried fruit on top of your cereal or in a bag with nuts for an easy snack.
- + Enjoy a glass of vegetable juice as a filling and low-kilojoule mid-afternoon snack.



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Vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, is necessary for the growth, development and repair of all body tissues.

It's involved in many body functions, including formation of collagen, absorption of iron, the immune system, wound healing, and the maintenance of cartilage, bones, and teeth. Eat vitamin-C-rich fruits and vegetables raw, or cook them with minimal water so you don't lose some of the water-soluble vitamin in the cooking water.

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# CAPE TOWN MARKET



# Heart MATTERS

Article by cardiologist Dr Vernon Freeman

## BACK TO BASICS

By the time a specialist, like a cardiologist, needs to intervene in the heart health of an individual, failure has occurred in our system of caring.

Our system includes cardiologist, other specialities and all the help we can get from our colleagues in dietary care, physiotherapy, biokinetics, rehabilitation care and yes, you the patient. **The patient, the one afflicted with the problem, is in the centre of the circle of care.**

## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Lifestyle modification is advocated by all caregivers, but not adhered to at all. It is the most cost-effective medicine to perform. We are constantly bombarded in the media by how primary healthcare has failed. It has failed, because

we have ignored the most essential part of healthcare. The honourable Minister of Health has warned that we cannot forever continue along the costly path of secondary prevention. Instead of paying more money for the new tablets with miracle promises, why do we not spend our precious money on preventing dependence on expensive cures?

## PRIMARY CARE

Necessity is the mother of invention. Unfortunately our inventions are currently focused on helping when an event has already occurred. We are captivated by what “modern medicine” has to offer. We eagerly await the next “toy” or “tool” that will reverse the damage done by an adverse event. We tend to forget that these favours done for us by very skilled “help”, does no more than damage control.

## SIMPLY THE BEST

Ironically, in the era of evidence-based medicine, **the best measures to surviving a heart attack is the simplest one.** Here I reluctantly, (as I do not want to venture into “academic medicine”), to prove a point, have to mention one trial – ISIS-2 (Second International Study of Infarct Survival.) The relative reduction in death from vascular causes of 42% reported with the use of aspirin alone. The beneficial effect remained for more than 15 months after the initial event.

## LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION

What does it mean? “Must my wife change her cooking?” (Notice the focus on another person.) The self must realise that because I have suffered a life-threatening condition it does not mean that I go through a period of intensified healthcare until the dust has settled.



**WE ARE CAPTIVATED BY WHAT  
“MODERN MEDICINE” HAS TO OFFER.  
WE EAGERLY AWAIT THE NEXT  
“TOY” OR “TOOL” THAT WILL  
REVERSE THE DAMAGE DONE  
BY AN ADVERSE EVENT.**

It clearly aims to change “forever” the ways of daily living to try to avoid the next ambulance trip.

### **WALK THE EARTH**

Man has walked the earth for millennia. Now he has turned into a couch potato. Television, movies, video games, social networking and other convenience inventions may lead to our extinction. If man wants to continue to “walk the earth”, he must really start walking. It involves no expensive gymnasium contract and has too many benefits to mention. We run to this safe haven when a sudden cardiac death has occurred in our area.

### **AM I NEXT IN LINE?**

Applying simple measures such as diet, regular exercise, regular and early medical assessment and, if required, compliance to prescribed medications, you have gone a long way in ensuring no major adverse cardiac events. These measures also allow that if bad things are to happen, symptoms would appear and adequate time is provided to seek medical assistance.

### **I DON'T WANT TO PLAY AROUND WITH MY HEALTH**

“Yes, it is only one life and I am prepared to pay for my health whatever it takes.” No amount of money can reverse damage to your heart once it has happened. After the event your healthcare becomes very expensive, not only in monetary terms, but also in quality of life and dependence on others for basic daily functions. If you don't want to play around, then start doing something from inside. Do not rely on others to motivate you and blame “the doctor” when you end up in an emergency unit.

## **Self**

**Your health is your responsibility. Take a serious look at your current state of health. Address the modifications of lifestyle where appropriate. Seek professional help and advice where needed. No crash diets and suffering expected (those temporary fads where you gain what you have lost). It is a change in “lifestyle”. That means it is permanent.**

# Curried pumpkin & carrot soup

## What you will need

- 1** onion
- 2** cloves garlic
- small piece** of fresh ginger
- 500g** /  $\frac{1}{2}$  a medium pumpkin
- 2** medium carrots
- 2 tablespoons** olive oil
- ..... salt and pepper to taste
- ..... **2** teaspoons curry powder
- ..... **700ml** vegetable stock
- ..... **2** teaspoons lemon juice (optional)
- ..... roasted pumpkin seeds or fresh chives (garnish)



## Method of preparation

- 1.** Dice carrots and pumpkin.
- 2.** Peel and chop onion.
- 3.** Peel and mince the garlic / ginger.
- 4.** Heat oil in a large soup pot. Add onion, garlic and ginger. Sauté, but do not burn, until onions start to turn translucent. Add in carrots and pumpkin. Stir occasionally, but allow to brown (approx. 8–10 minutes). Add curry, salt & pepper. Mix evenly and cook for a few minutes until curry is fragrant. Then, pour in the stock. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the vegetables are able to be pureed (approx. 10 min).
- 5.** Remove pot from heat. Puree the vegetables with a hand-held mixer or in batches in a blender. Taste and add seasonings, adding up to 2 teaspoons lemon juice for flavour.
- 6.** Serve with chopped pumpkin seeds or chives and a few drops of pumpkin seed oil.

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Prep time: 15 min | Cooking time: 20–30 min  
Number of servings: 4 large bowls

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