



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2023

Kia ora koutou - a warm welcome to the Millhouse community and other readers,

What a disappointing summer it has been with the stormy weather culminating in Cyclone Gabrielle's devastation. Many have experienced restlessness, worries, anxiety, mood changes and unrefreshing sleep. I was interested to listen to Radio NZ's Jim Mora interview Dr [Melis Yilmaz Balban](#) a researcher at Stanford University studying stress reduction techniques. In the busyness of life few dedicate themselves to hours of mindfulness meditation or even exercise, but the Stanford researchers found that people who engage in cyclic 'sighing' - breathing exercises - for five minutes each day had a greater reduction in stress, improved mood, less anxiety than those engaging in mindfulness meditation. Try the simple exercise in the side bar and I think you might be surprised how much better you feel.

SIMPLE BREATHING EXERCISE

- Set a timer for 5 minutes.
- Sit in a chair or lie down.
- Inhale (through nose) slowly to expand your lungs.
- Slightly exhale (through mouth) and take a smaller quicker second IN breath (nose).
- Then slowly fully exhale (mouth), sighing, all your breath. Vocalising helps.
- Repeat for 5 minutes then breathe normally.



In the February's newsletter I introduced the **Health Improvement Practitioner (HIP) initiative**, and specifically **Vani** who is now working side-by-side with the Millhouse Medical Team, using brief targeted behaviour changes to enhance preventive and clinical care for mental health, substance addiction, emotional distress and for any suffering adverse effects of chronic illness. Vani is a skilled therapist who will explore wellness strategies with you. Don't hesitate to ring Reception for a FREE 30min appointment to discuss your concerns and crises.

Sadly, another baby died of whooping cough infection at the beginning of April, the third in NZ this year; another 11 pertussis cases have been reported. [Dr William Rainer](#) of the National Public Health Service has expressed concern that *"the ratio of fatalities to identified cases is much higher than in previous years and there may be undetected spread in the community"*. Please vaccinate your children against childhood illnesses.

The pertussis outbreak reminded me again of the protective influence Vitamin D has on the immune system of babies and infants. One [worldwide study](#) found that 54% pregnant woman and 72% of newborns were vitamin D deficient with levels less than 50 nmol/litre. A [controlled trial](#) at Starship a few years ago demonstrated that babies with low Vitamin D had more than twice the risk of developing respiratory infections. Please consider supplementing your children with Vitamin D as we go into winter, and don't feed them high sugar foods and drinks as these inhibit the body's immune protective function.

At this time, I have decided to discontinue reviewing the Four Country Covid experience but will highlight new information on Long Covid management in future newsletters. Please be vigilant if you are susceptible to respiratory illness and maintain a healthy immune system by using the approaches discussed in the newsletters over recent years (mmc website at [newsletter/archives](#)).

In this newsletter I review simple strategies for wellness and discuss whether alcohol has any health benefits or should be avoided.

MILLHOUSE NEWS

HAVING YOUR OWN DOCTOR is a core value of the Millhouse clinic. When registering at Millhouse you select a doctor of your choice, and we endeavour to maintain that relationship with you.

Dr Aileen	Child & women's health complex medical conditions, IUCD insertion - Cantonese & Mandarin
Dr Dan	Nutritional medicine
Dr Ric	Acupuncture, nutritional medicine, minor surgery
Dr Satya	Child & women's health, IUCD insertion. minor surgery - Tamil, Teluga, Hindi
Dr Stephanie	Child & women's health - Korean
Dr Therese	Child & women's health, IUCD insertion - Arabic

However, there are times, especially during emergencies and when your doctor is on holiday, that you may need to consult another member of the medical team - a doctor, Gabriella our Nurse Practitioner or one of the Practice Nurses. The text box outlines our doctors' special interest areas and the languages in which they communicate.

GABRIELLA is highly skilled and insightful **NURSE PRACTITIONER**, trained to diagnose, investigate, and manage illness as well as prescribing treatment. She is a valued member of the medical team and has a particular interest in child, teenager and women's health and the management of diabetes. Some of you will have experienced her skill in assessing acute problems when your doctor has been unavailable. Don't hesitate to see her to discuss any concerns and she will liaise with your doctor.



MILLHOUSE STAFF CHANGES continue in **Reception** with Brianna opting for a gap year from student training, and Adam commencing university. In their place, you will meet the friendly newcomers Reece and Amanda. We wish Practice Nurse Phyll well as she has left to commence a new position. We have been fortunate to replace her with experienced Practice Nurse Cindy.

FLU VACCINATION at 130 Millhouse is now available. Book an appointment to see one of the Nurse team.

BEXSERO VACCINE against meningococcal group B disease is also available and is funded for children between 8 weeks and 12 months and for 13 to 25-year-olds in specified close-living situations.

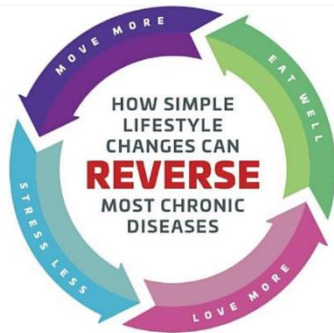


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HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Positive lifestyle choices have far reaching impact for 'undoing' or reversing a wide range of chronic diseases. Professor Dean Ornish of the University of California, founder of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute and co-author of *Undo It: How Simple Lifestyle Changes Can Reverse Most Chronic Diseases* observed that one set of lifestyle recommendations can reverse heart disease, early prostate cancer, type 2 diabetes and a number of chronic ailments. This is not surprising, as many diseases share common underlying biological pathways such as chronic inflammation, ongoing emotional distress, overactive sympathetic nervous system, sleep poverty, imbalance of reactive oxygen in cells, and microbiome (body's bugs) disturbance.

In 2018 the Harvard School of Public Health 30-year [large-scale study](#) on more than 100,000 people found that those adopting five healthy lifestyle habits had an 82% lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease, 65% less chance of dying from cancer and a 74% lower risk of dying from all other causes. Those who were not overweight, never smoked, exercised an average of 30 minute each day, did not drink alcohol to excess (about which I will say more) and ate a healthy diet *lived an average of 12 to 14 years longer*.



The message on choosing a healthy diet is not new. In 1972 Professor John Yudkin wrote *Pure, White and Deadly: How Sugar Is Killing Us and What We Can Do to Stop*, highlighting the dangers of consuming sugar - heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Two years later, Navy Surgeon-Captain T L Cleave published *The Saccharine Disease* where he argued that a refined carbohydrate diet of white flour and sugar not only caused obesity, heart disease and diabetes but also tooth decay, gastric acid reflux, peptic ulcer, gallbladder disease, bowel disorders including colon cancer, and E. coli bacterial infections. Doctors have taken many decades to endorse this advice.

Ornish's lifestyle programme, now widely taught in the USA has four components - **eat well, move more, stress less and love more**. (to be continued).

ALCOHOL - IN MODERATION, IS IT GOOD OR BAD?

Wine and beer have been brewed since antiquity and will always be with us. Belgian monasteries in the Middle Ages, unable to grow grapes suitable for wine, needed to provide a beverage for important guests and so began the production of beer using grains. They began with herbs and spices and later added hops; soon consumers realised their beer was much safer to drink than the often-contaminated town water supply. In the 1980's it was suggested the reason why France had a low incidence of heart disease, despite their high-cholesterol animal fat diet, might be their high consumption of red wine. This is referred to as the French Paradox, and provides legitimacy to those who wish to consume more vino.

There is universal agreement that excess alcohol consumption - binge drinking (consuming 4 or more drinks on an occasion for a woman or 5 for a man) and heavy drinking (10 or more drinks for a woman or 15 or more drinks for a man per week) - is BAD for your health. But what about alcohol in moderation?

In January of this year Canada's Public Health leaders announced a [change in health advice](#), advising that consuming NO ALCOHOL improves health, drinking less than two drinks per week minimises any adverse risk, and drinking more than that has harmful consequences. (*These are summarised in the text box*). Canadian media report a mixed reaction to the advice but that 40% of Canadians are considering [reducing their consumption](#) of alcohol.

Alcohol consumption is also a contentious topic in NZ. Parliament has just voted, and soundly defeated, the first reading of Green MP Chloe Swarbrick Private Members Bill on the 'Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Harm Minimisation)' which endeavoured to limit liquor outlets and alcohol sponsorship in sport.

Genetic variations protect some and not others from the adverse effects of alcohol which the liver breaks down to short-lived toxic acetaldehyde, then transformed to acetate and finally converted to water and carbon dioxide for elimination. The inebriating properties of alcohol cause a plethora of detrimental effects in society, and its long-term sequelae are an increased risk of cancer (acetaldehyde) and damage to all organs, especially in the developing foetus and teenage brain.

Contrary to popular opinion that alcohol prolongs life chiefly by reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, the [World Heart Federation](#) states "alcohol is not good for the heart" and advises all persons living with heart, vascular and chronic disease to abstain from its use.

Be proactive this year; why not choose one small change in this area in favour of a healthy lifestyle?

Noho ora mai - look after yourself and stay well.

Ma te wa, Dr Richard J Coleman

(references available on request)

Summary of Canada 2023 Alcohol Advice

0 drinks per week — better health & sleep.

2 drinks or fewer per week avoids alcohol - related consequences.

3-6 drinks per week — increased risk of several types of cancers (breast & colon)

7 drinks or more per week — significantly increased risk of heart disease or stroke at this level.

Each additional drink radically increases the risk of alcohol-related consequences.

Consuming more than 2 drinks at one time is associated with increased risk of self-harm and injuries and violence to others.

When pregnant or trying to get pregnant, there is no known safe amount of alcohol use.

When breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is safest.

Youth should delay use of alcohol.

No matter where you are on the continuum, for your health, less alcohol is better.