**saundersstreetclinic**

**37 Jackson Street, Wynyard, TASMANIA. Phone 6442 1700**

**Newsletter Dec-Jan 2019/2020**

**Opening hours**

Monday - Thursday 9am-1230 pm, 2pm-5 pm

Friday 9am-1230 pm, 2.30pm-5 pm

Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays closed

Doctors: Jim Berryman, Chris Hughes, Ali Johnson, Sarvin Randhawa, Louise Sykes, Jess Andrewartha, Tim Andrewartha, Bradley Williams. We are joined by two new GP’s in 2020, Dr Renu Singh who has completed all of her FRACGP training and examinations and has worked at Mowbray Medical, and Dr Sebastian Theilhaber who is completing his RACGP training and has worked at Bass House Surgery.

Jim is cutting back to 4 days per week.

Nurses: Fiona Munday, Belinda Townsend.

**After hours arrangements**

Please phone the surgery number, you will be given the number for Health Direct which is a phone triage service providing advice by the Federal Government. This service will contact the doctor on call at Saunders Street if necessary, following assessment by a registered nurse and in some cases by a doctor. If your concern is about **a medical emergency** call the ambulance service on **000**-there is no charge for ambulance callouts in Tasmania.

 If the matter is urgent but not an emergency call **Health Direct 1800 022 222**. A registered nurse using triage protocols will take your call. If necessary, the call will be transferred to a GP at GP Assist in Hobart and if that GP thinks a call out or house call is warranted a GP from this clinic will be contacted.

**Tick bites can make you really sick — so what is the best way to deal with them?**

**[ABC Health & Wellbeing](https://www.abc.net.au/news/health/)**

By [Anna Salleh](https://www.abc.net.au/news/anna-salleh/6762802)

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-10%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[Ticks can be hard to clock — in reality this one would be smaller than a poppyseed.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-10%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

(Supplied: Henry Lydecker)

**Blood-sucking ticks can end up feasting in some pretty awkward spots — from your**[**ear canal**](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-30/womans-face-paralysed-after-a-tick-burrowed-in-her-ear/10447008)**to your eyeball, not to mention your groin!**

You'll come across these tiny parasites — a type of arachnid related to mites — in many parts of Australia, particularly along the east coast.

They hang on blades of grass or other vegetation waving their outstretched legs, waiting to latch on to unsuspecting passers-by.

And they can make you really sick.

So, before you panic, check out these top tips on ticks.

Quick tick facts

* There are 70 species in Australia and at least 16 bite humans
* All stages of life cycle can feed, and you can be bitten any time of year
* Ticks can be smaller than poppyseeds
* Unless removed they can feed on you for around 3-7 days
* Pets and native animals can carry ticks into your backyard

Why worry about ticks?

When a tick bites you, it stabs you with a barbed straw-like mouth part and squirts saliva into you.

This saliva contains toxins and other nasties that can cause a range of health issues.

Tick bites can lead to **bacterial diseases**like Queensland Tick Typhus and Flinders Island Spotted.

The east coast paralysis tick (*Ixodes holocyclus)*can cause**paralysis,**which is a relatively rare in humans. ([**Watch out for your pets though**](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-08-29/preventing-tick-deaths-in-dogs-and-cats/7788346).)

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-16%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[Tick mouthparts are something to behold under the microscope.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-16%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

(Supplied: Sue Lindsay)

Far more common are **allergic reactions**to tick saliva. These can range from mild, where the bite gets red, swollen and inflamed, to life threatening anaphylaxis.

Ticks bites can also lead to [**Mammalian Meat Allergy**](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-18/how-ticks-can-cause-mammalian-meat-allergy/10719136) (MMA), which means you can no longer eat red meat (including beef, lamb, pork or goat) or associated products, like gelatine. It may also mean that you are unable to have certain drugs or vaccines.

According to [**Tick Induced Allergies Research & Awareness (TiARA)**](https://www.tiara.org.au/), Australia has the highest prevalence of MMA and tick anaphylaxis in the world.

To avoid getting ticks ...

* Wear light coloured clothing (to more easily see ticks) - permethrin-treated where possible
* Wear long-sleeved shirt, long pants with pants tucked into socks
* Wear a wide-brimmed hat
* Use an insect repellent containing DEET
* Before coming back inside brush your clothes to remove ticks
* Check your body over for ticks

You've got a tick. Now what?

There's conflicting advice about what you should do if you've been bitten by a tick.

What we do know, you need to avoid squeezing or disturbing it as this will likely cause it to squirt more allergens, toxins and pathogens into you.

**Don't:**

* scratch it
* pull it out with your fingers
* use a pin or matchstick to pull it out
* burn it
* put chemicals like methylated spirits, nail polish, alcohol or petroleum jelly on it.

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-21%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[When full of blood the paralysis tick can over a centimetre big.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-21%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

Some say pull it out

The traditional advice — including from the [**federal health department**](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-tick-bite-prevention.htm) — is to **pull it out with fine-tipped forceps tweezers** (not the blunt household tweezers most of us use).

Grasp the tick close to its mouth parts near your skin's surface, then gently pull upwards with steady pressure. Try to avoid jerking or twisting the tick.

In reality, this is quite difficult to do and is not recommended for those with a tick allergy.

Some say 'freeze it'

But the advice from Australian allergy and emergency specialists is to **kill it while it's still attached to you**.

They say using tweezers risks increases the chances you will inadvertently squeeze the tick, which means it will inject more saliva into you.

"Household tweezers are tick squeezers," says Dr Sheryl van Nunen, who first discovered Mammalian Meat Allergy.

"Freeze it, don't squeeze," says Dr van Nunen.

The [**Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA)**](https://www.allergy.org.au/ticks) recommends **freezing the tick using an ether-containing spray** — your pharmacist should be able to help you find these products.

After 5 minutes the tick should die and drop off. If it doesn't drop off or you can't freeze the tick, ASCIA says to seek medical help.

It's worth noting freezing can damage the skin in sensitive areas of the bodies, so be sure to follow the instructions.

**YOUTUBE:**[Watch how to freeze a tick to death](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j77nrTVM_j8)

Baby ticks are often too small to spray so the advice is to **"dab it, don't grab it"** — dabbing the tiny ticks with permethrin-containing cream like that used to treat scabies.

Then you can brush them off or they will fall off naturally.

Why is this advice confusing?

Experts say there has been **little research on Australian ticks** and the health risks they pose. International research may not take into account the Australian situation.

A [**study released last year**](https://apallergy.org/DOIx.php?id=10.5415/apallergy.2019.9.e15) by Dr van Nunen and team adds weight to a [**growing consensus**](https://theconversation.com/tackling-the-tricky-task-of-tick-removal-26306) in Australia supporting the "kill-the-tick-in-place" approach.

The health department says it's releasing an updated tick factsheet in early 2020 based on the latest evidence.

What should you do if you think you're allergic?

While there's no test for tick allergy, if you have had an allergic reaction to ticks then you should definitely see your doctor.

For those known to have tick allergies, the health department and ASCIA advise going to a medical facility to have the tick removed.

And make sure you carry an EpiPen and use it immediately you notice any symptoms of anaphylaxis.

Allergy aside, always **seek medical advice if you feel unwell following a tick bite**.

What about Lyme disease?

[**Some say**](https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/the-battle-over-diagnosing-lyme-disease-in-australia/8079356)Australian ticks can cause a debilitating Lyme disease-like syndrome.

However, so far researchers have failed to find Australian ticks harbouring the bacteria that cause the illness.

Research is looking into possible causes of the condition (currently called '[**Debilitating Symptom Complexes Attributed to Ticks**](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-lyme-disease.htm)').

[**Some researchers**](https://www.murdoch.edu.au/news/articles/new-research-to-help-solve-tick-illness-mystery) think unique bacteria present in Australian ticks may be causing the symptoms.

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2020-01-01/what-do-you-do-when-you-have-a-tick/11789538>

**'Food coma' after a big Christmas lunch is just your body's way of processing a large meal**

By [Jo Khan](https://www.abc.net.au/news/jo-khan/9550526)

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-11%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[If you feel sleepy after your Christmas feast it's because your body is prioritising digestion.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-11%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

**It washes over you roughly half an hour after you finally put down the cutlery at Christmas lunch.**

The wave of tiredness that makes your eyelids droop and brain fade, right when you're meant to be entertaining friends and family.

It's the postprandial dip, and if it's an extreme one you might call it a **"food coma".**

If it happens after lunch at work, an afternoon coffee or stroll around the block should be enough to get you back up and running.

But if you've had an abnormally large meal — such as a festive season feast — it may feel like you have no choice but to let the food coma take hold.

So, what do we really know about this holiday hazard, and is there anything you can do if you find yourself heading towards post-food torpor?

Let's take a look at some of theories on why eating can be followed by feelings of fatigue.

Rest and digest

The science of [**food comas**](https://theconversation.com/health-check-food-comas-or-why-eating-sometimes-makes-you-sleepy-44355) is mostly based on animal models and inferences from our current knowledge on how the body works, says Emma Beckett, a nutrition scientist at the University of Newcastle.

**There are three main theories**, and Dr Beckett thinks they probably all play a role to some extent.

The first theory involves**the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system — that's the rest and digest pathway**, as opposed to the sympathetic nervous system which is fight or flight.

"We've got a bunch of nerves around the digestive tract. And one of those big nerves — the vagus nerve — signals between the brain and the gastrointestinal tract," Dr Beckett says.

"The idea is that when you eat a big meal, that sets off the vagus nerve, which signals for you to rest and digest.

"From an evolutionary point of view, if you've come across abundant food — the feast period — you don't want to be going running around and risking losing that food."

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-19%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[After hours of eating, kicking back and having a snooze could be a great idea.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-19%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

So, if you're dying for a nap after that big family lunch, it might not just be because you want to avoid small talk, it's probably also your body trying to focus on digestion.

And Dr Becket says there's no reason why you shouldn't take a timeout on the couch, if that's what you feel like doing.

Blood flow and insulin levels

There is a myth that we feel drowsy after eating because the blood is directed away from our brain to our gut, but that has been disproven, according to Dr Beckett.

"But there is evidence that your body prioritises getting blood to your gut over your muscles, which could make you feel a little bit weak," she says.

So, theory two is that while your body directs some blood flow to your gut to aid digestion,**the blood flow to your muscles might decrease slightly and leave you feeling a bit lethargic**.

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-23%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[Food isn't just about health, it's also important for culture and socialising.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-23%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

The third theory is all about **the** **role of insulin in your body**.

Insulin is a hormone that allows us to use sugars from the food we eat for energy, and it might also help amino acids get to the brain, says Dr Beckett.

"Some of those amino acids are used to make your relaxation hormones or are part of the relaxation signaling pathway," she says.

"So, when we've got high levels of insulin, it might be easier for amino acids like tryptophan to get into the brain."

**Tryptophan** is an essential amino acid used by the body to make **serotonin** — and thus can make you feel sleepy.

More insulin can also increase the activity of the energy pathways in our cells — the moving of things, like potassium, out of cells and into the other fluids.

"This can also make you feel a little bit of fatigue or muscle weakness, because that's normally balanced further inside of the cells," Dr Becket says.

"So, all of those things are theories about how it works, and it's probably a little bit of all of them."

Basically, your body is busy processing your food, so you need to relax and divert energy while that happens.

More food, more food coma

High carb food that's going to increase your insulin levels is more likely to contribute to a food coma, whereas a balanced meal with less fat and carbs and more protein will have less of an effect.

And logically, the greater the amount of food you eat, the more each of those theories is going to come into play.

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-29%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[Scoffing some turkey, prawns and pavlova is totally fine, as long as it's not all the time.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-29%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

More carbs mean **more** **insulin**.

More food in your gut means **more** **parasympathetic nerve activation**.

And more food to digest means **more** **blood** **flow** that's going to be needed to help.

"More food, more feeling of lethargy, more food coma," Dr Beckett says

So, the obvious way to avoid a food coma these holidays is to eat less.

[](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-33%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

[Don't forget alcohol counts for your energy intake, and can certainly contribute to 'food coma'.](https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540%22%20%5Cl%20%22lightbox-content-lightbox-33%22%20%5Co%20%22Open%20lightbox)

A food coma itself won't hurt you, but it is an indication that you've probably eaten a bit too much, which, again won't hurt you if it's a one off.

"If someone was wanting to go and have a nap after lunch every single day, then I'd probably have questions about how much and what they were eating for lunch," Dr Beckett says.

"But you're not going to increase your risk of disease based on one meal that happens once a year.

"People can just relax and enjoy themselves as long as you are eating a healthy, balanced diet for the rest of the year.

"I wouldn't get too hung up on that Christmas indulgence."

But if the soporific power of the holiday feast becomes too much for you, **going for a walk might help** that food coma feeling pass a bit faster.

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-12-25/christmas-food-coma-science/11787540>