



# MERRI-BEK Family Doctors

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## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2025

## Welcome Dr Jessie Rucker



*Dr Jessie Rucker*

We welcome our newest addition to Merri-bek Family Doctors, [Dr Jessie Rucker](#). Jessie graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2016. She is passionate about providing holistic care and developing long-term therapeutic relationships with her patients. Outside of work Jessie loves getting out of town on camping trips, watching films and going to gigs. ...

## Did you know?



Our doctors do more than see our patients. Dr Kouteris MCs and moderates medical discussions about medical issues, such as the Fertility Panel Day held at Cafe Greco in Oakleigh last weekend.

*Fertility panel with Dr Arete Kouteris (l)*

The panel was made up of a fertility specialist, Dr Hector Georgiou, psychiatrist Dr Spiri Katsenos and dietitian Voula Korfiotis. Dr Kouteris moderated the panel and gave her specialised opinion as an Integrative GP. Dr Kouteris also devotes a lot of time to her role as the Chair of Education for The Australian Medical Acupuncture College, teaching new doctors to become medical acupuncturists.

## Your Health

Iron deficiency is a very common problem, and may present with tiredness, headaches, dizziness and shortness of breath. It can worsen other problems such as heart failure and sleep apnoea. It can be due to a lack of iron in the diet, heavy periods or another



source of blood loss, poor absorption in the gut, or an increased requirement such as during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

What are the solutions? Iron in lean red meat is easiest for your body to absorb, but there are other health risks from having a lot of meat. It's good for your body to also obtain iron from non-meat sources such as legumes, nuts,

wholegrains, and dark green leafy vegetables; but as iron from vegetable form is harder to absorb it's best to have some Vitamin C at the same meal to help with absorption. Foods rich in vitamin C include citrus fruit, strawberries, kiwifruit, pawpaw, melon, green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, broccoli and capsicum.

Of course there are many other causes of tiredness, and it's often lifestyle related. But if you're not sure why you're feeling so exhausted, ask your doctor whether it would be worth checking your iron levels. Iron deficiency can be treated with tablets, or some people require an infusion – which can be done at our clinic.

## Fun Fact (2)

It's almost 11 years since Dr Kouteris and Dr Barson purchased 'Moreland West Surgery' from Dr David Chong who ran the practice as a solo GP. Since then, the practice has grown rapidly: there are now 16 doctors and 2 allied health professionals. There have been many challenges (remember the pandemic?), two name changes, and changes in



government regulations around general practice. Now and then, Dr Kouteris and Dr Barson take time out from seeing patients to meet with other GP practice owners, so that they can learn about the latest and best ways to keep the practice in good shape to care for you and your family.

Here they are at a recent conference on the Gold Coast.

# Heart Food

Enjoy with us another beautiful poem by 20th century Irish poet John O'Donohue.

## **for a friend, on the arrival of illness**

Now is the time of dark invitation  
Beyond a frontier that you did not expect;  
Abruptly, your old life seems distant.

You barely noticed how each day opened  
A path through fields never questioned,  
Yet expected deep down to hold treasure.  
Now your time on earth becomes full of threat;  
Before your eyes your future shrinks.

You lived absorbed in the day to day,  
So continuous with everything around you,  
That you could forget you were separate;

Now this dark companion has come between you,  
Distances have opened in your eyes,  
You feel that against your will  
A stranger has married your heart.

Nothing before has made you  
Feel so isolated and lost.

When the reverberations of shock subside in you,  
May grace come to restore you to balance.  
May it shape a new space in your heart  
To embrace this illness as a teacher  
Who has come to open your life to new worlds.

May you find in yourself  
A courageous hospitality  
Towards what is difficult,  
Painful and unknown.

May you use this illness  
As a lantern to illuminate  
The new qualities that will emerge in you.

May the fragile harvesting of this slow light  
Help you to release whatever has become false in you.  
May you trust this light to clear a path  
Through all the fog of old unease and anxiety  
Until you feel arising within you a tranquility  
Profound enough to call the storm to stillness.

May you find the wisdom to listen to your illness:  
Ask it why it came? Why it chose your friendship?  
Where it wants to take you? What it wants you to know?  
What quality of space it wants to create in you?  
What you need to learn to become more fully yourself  
That your presence may shine in the world.

May you keep faith with your body,  
Learning to see it as a holy sanctuary  
Which can bring this night-wound gradually  
Towards the healing and freedom of dawn.

May you be granted the courage and vision  
To work through passivity and self-pity,  
To see the beauty you can harvest  
From the riches of this dark invitation.

May you learn to receive it graciously,  
And promise to learn swiftly  
That it may leave you newborn,  
Willing to dedicate your time to birth.

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