



March 2026

Fun Fact

Did you know that malaria and yellow fever forced Scotland into an unhappy union with England in the late 1600s?



But surely there's no Malaria or Yellow fever in Scotland? Correct! But they were both present in Panama. Scotland invested huge sums of money and sent hundreds of settlers there in 1698 in an attempt to set up a colony and perhaps create a trade passage over the narrow isthmus. The mission was a disaster: the settlers died by the hundreds from the tropical diseases that had arrived in the new world with African slaves. Scotland had no choice but to accept a bail-out from the English, and surrender its sovereignty.

Thankfully, unlike those ill-fated Scots, we now have effective ways to protect ourselves against illnesses that we may not encounter in Australia. Before you travel, even back to your country of origin, talk to your doctor about how to stay safe. Dr Redhuan Akram and Dr Angela Hawkins are authorised to prescribe the yellow fever vaccine, which you may require if you are going to sub-Saharan Africa, South America or the Caribbean.

Health Fact



Tummy bloating is a common but unpleasant symptom for many people. It can be a source of pain, discomfort and even breathing difficulties. It has always been thought that bloating relates to excess wind produced by reacting to certain foods. However, new research suggests that in some people it may be an abnormal reaction of the diaphragm and abdominal wall muscles that occurs immediately after eating specific foods or relating to stress.

So, there may be more options for dealing with bloating than you imagine. If bloating is something that is a problem for you, speak with your doctor to assess the cause of your symptoms as sometimes the cause can be more serious.

Merri-bek Family Doctors
223 Melville Rd, Brunswick West 3055
ph. (03) 9383 2493 | reception@mbfd.com.au



Heart Food

Enjoy with us this beautiful poem by contemporary Anglo-Irish poet David Whyte.

The Journey

Above the mountains
the geese turn into
the light again
painting their
black silhouettes
on an open sky.

Sometimes everything
has to be
inscribed across
the heavens
so you can find
the one line
already written
inside you.

Sometimes it takes
a great sky
to find that
small, bright
and indescribable
wedge of freedom
in your own heart.

Sometimes with
the bones of the black
sticks left when the fire
has gone out
someone has written
something new
in the ashes of your life.

You are not leaving
even as the light fades quickly now
you are arriving.