st martins medical

Kia ora,

It's hard to believe we're already in mid-November, with the end of the year fast approaching!

October was a busy month, with Mental Health Awareness Week giving us an opportunity to reflect on the importance of looking after our mental wellbeing. This year's theme, *Belonging Matters*, was a lovely reminder of how important connection and community are to our wellbeing.

Inspired by Mental Health Awareness Week, you'll notice this month's newsletter has a bit of a mental health and wellbeing theme. We'd like to introduce you to our Wellbeing Team and share some of the support available here at St Martins Medical.

We also have another Forest Bathing session coming up in December. Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood and support our mental wellbeing. See below for more details and how to sign up.

We've been delighted with the positive feedback we've received about our newsletter. It's lovely to hear that you're enjoying reading it and finding it useful. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share their thoughts and suggestions. Keep them coming!

Thank you for being part of our St Martins Medical community.

Ngā mihi nui,



From Lizzie and the
St Martins Medical Team



Last month, we talked about why seeing the same GP over time is so important and how it can lead to better health outcomes. We're encouraging everyone to have **two GPs they know and trust** – your primary GP, who you see most often, and a second GP who also gets to know you and can provide care when your primary GP isn't available. We know it can sometimes be difficult to get an appointment with your usual GP, so **booking ahead whenever possible** gives you the best chance of seeing one of your two GPs. It's all about building relationships so that we get to know you better and can provide more personal, joined-up care. If you missed our October newsletter, have a look back for the full article.



In October, we celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week, with this year's theme **Belonging Matters**. It was a chance to remind ourselves that looking after our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical health, and that small, everyday actions can make a real difference to how we feel.

Throughout the week, we focused on the **Five Ways to Wellbeing** – five simple, evidence-based ways to support our mental health:

- **Take Notice** – slow down and pay attention to the world around you.
- **Be Active** – move your body in ways you enjoy.
- **Keep Learning** – try something new, explore an interest or challenge yourself.
- **Give** – small acts of kindness can make a difference to others and ourselves.
- **Connect** – spend time with others and nurture relationships that help you feel you belong.

We shared daily Facebook posts exploring each of these ideas, with practical suggestions for bringing them into everyday life.

See our Facebook posts on Facebook and follow us there

View our Mental health awareness posts on our website

In our waiting room, we invited everyone to share **"What lifts you up?"** on our colourful interactive display. It was lovely to see so many contributions, from family and friends to pets, music, nature, naps, cups of tea and all the little pleasures in life. Thank you to everyone who took part!





Did you know St Martins has a Wellbeing Team?

At St Martins Medical, we're lucky to have a fantastic Wellbeing Team who work alongside our GPs and nureses, including:

- **Health Improvement Practitioner (HIP)**
- **Health Coach**
- **Occupational Therapist**

- **Support Worker**

Whether you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, struggling with your mental health, managing a long-term health condition or simply wanting to make some positive changes in your life, our team is here to help. They offer practical advice and support tailored to what's important to you.

Appointments with our Health Improvement Practitioner and Health Coach are completely free, and you don't need to see a GP or nurse first. You can book directly through your patient portal or by contacting reception. Support Worker appointments are also free, while Occupational Therapy appointments have a fee.

Over the coming months, we'll introduce you to each member of our Wellbeing Team, explain a little about what they do and how they might be able to help you. **This month, we're starting with Hazel, our Health Improvement Practitioner (HIP)**



You may already know Hazel. She's been part of the St Martins Medical team for three years as our Health Improvement Practitioner (HIP). She has a background in Occupational Therapy and many years' experience in community mental health.

So what does a HIP do?

Hazel helps with the stuff that makes life feel heavier than it needs to be. That might be stress, low mood, worry that won't switch off, sleep that's gone sideways, grief, big life changes, feeling a bit stuck, or just needing to talk things through with someone who's keen to listen. She also helps with the

practical side of living with a health condition, or wanting to make a change and not knowing where to start.

You don't need a diagnosis, and you don't need to be at breaking point. Plenty of people see Hazel because something's niggling and they'd like to sort it before it grows legs.

What matters most to Hazel is providing a safe space where you can check in, a bit like a **WOF for your mental health**.

Here's how it works:

- **It's free.** No need to stop at reception on your way out.
- **Same-day appointments are often available.** Handy for when the wheels wobble on a Tuesday.
- **As many or as few sessions as you like.** Some WOFs pass first time, some need a bit more TLC. Either way, it's up to you.
- **It's practical.** Appointments are 30 minutes. You'll work out what matters to you and leave with something you can try in your actual life.
- **Come as you are.** Whoever you are and wherever you're at, Hazel's happy to see you.

Hazel is a big believer in small, doable steps: trying, failing, trying again, and supporting you to navigate the messiness of life.

How to see Hazel: you don't need a referral or to see your GP or nurse first.

You can book directly through the patient portal or by contacting reception.

Whether it's a big thing or a small thing, Hazel's door is open.



Following the interest and positive feedback from our first Forest Bathing session, we're offering another opportunity to slow down, unwind and reconnect with nature.

Occupational Therapists Louise Tapper and Catherine Fink will be running another gentle, guided 90-minute session at **Mt Vernon Park** on **Friday 4 December, from 10.00–11.30am**.

Forest Bathing is all about slowing down, engaging your senses and taking time to notice the natural world around you. No experience is needed.

Places are limited. Get in touch with reception if you'd like to join us.

You can also read more about Forest Bathing in our October newsletter.

Sign up for next Forest Bathing session





Make Christmas Brighter for Kids in Need

Christmas is a time of joy, connection and giving. But for many families across Aotearoa New Zealand, the rising cost of living means Christmas can also be a difficult time for familes.

For some children, there may not be a present to unwrap on Christmas morning. Together, we can help change that.

This Christmas, St Martins Medical Practice is delighted to be supporting **The Kindness Collective**, a New Zealand charity helping bring a little Christmas magic to children and families who need it most.

We're collecting brand-new, unwrapped toys and gifts and would love our St Martins Medical community to get involved.

🎁 **How can you help?**

Simply bring a brand-new, unwrapped toy or gift into the practice by **Friday 11 December 2026**.

All gifts for children aged 1–16 years are all welcome. Don't forget our teenagers too!

Every gift, no matter how big or small, can help make Christmas a little brighter for a child.

📍 **Gift drop-off location:** St Martins Medical, waiting room

🗓️ **Last day for donations:** Friday 11 December 2026

Thank you for helping us spread a little kindness this Christmas. Together, we can make a difference. ❤️‍🩹

If you'd like to learn more about this wonderful initiative or are looking for some gift inspiration visit the Kindness Collective Website.

The Kindness Collective Website

Community Spotlight

Each newsletter, we shine a light on a local group or organisation doing great things in our community. This month is:

KO TĀTOU
Ōtautahi Recovery Café

Ko Tātou Recovery Café

This month, we'd like to introduce you to **Ko Tātou Recovery Café**, a welcoming space in Sydenham for adults experiencing emotional distress or a difficult time with their mental health.

Ko Tātou is a little different from traditional mental health services. It's a relaxed, non-clinical environment where you can drop in, have a cuppa, talk things through or simply take some time out in a supportive space.

What makes Ko Tātou special is that the team includes people with their own lived experience of mental health challenges. They understand what it can feel like to struggle and offer support without judgement.

You might visit if you're feeling anxious, overwhelmed, isolated, unsure where to turn or just need someone to listen. You don't need to wait until things reach crisis point.

The service is completely free, and you don't need an appointment or referral. Just turn up.

Where: 385 Colombo Street, Sydenham, Christchurch

When: Monday–Friday, 4.30–8.30pm

Who: Anyone aged 18 or over experiencing emotional distress or crisis

Ko Tātou Website



What do you enjoy most about working at St Martins Medical?

My very capable and kind colleagues! I also love how holistic the practice is, with lots of wonderful staff in different roles helping to support all aspects of our patients' hauora (wellbeing).

What's the best thing about being a GP?

It's never boring! We're constantly learning, and I love getting to know our patients and their whānau over time.

What do you enjoy doing on the weekends?

Being outdoors! I love running and cycling in the hills and playing sport.

What's your favourite album?

White Ladder by David Gray. It reminds me of road trips with my family when I was a kid.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Worry less about what other people think of you, love all your little differences and quirks, and keep trying new things!

We'd love to hear from you!

This newsletter is for you, and we'd love to know what you think.

Is there something you'd like to see in future editions? Or perhaps you have an idea or suggestion for the practice?

We're always keen to hear from our patients. Your thoughts and ideas help us make St Martins Medical an even better place for everyone.

Feedback

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