

Welcome - Program Overview

Welcome! We're delighted to have you with us, and look forward to getting to know you.

At Melbourne Functional Medicine, we do health a little differently; so this roadmap will show you what to expect over the coming six months. You are unique, so your health plan must be too.

The way your program looks will shift as your health and needs change, but broadly speaking follows this structure:

Detective Phase

Practitioner: collecting insights and data about you and your health

You: testing and experimentation of diet and lifestyle

Health coach: active in supporting you to manage the process



Implementation Phase

Practitioner: using the data and insights to direct your treatment

You: implementation of your plan

Health coach: supporting and guiding you to facilitate change



Maintenance Phase

Practitioner: minor modifications to your treatment plan

You: taking the reins and gaining control of your health

Health coach: continued guidance and assessing goals

So what happens after 6 months?

We find that typically, for patients to get results and maintain them without needing our support, it takes about six months. However, some patients do need longer if their cases are more complex, or they've had their health challenges for some time. In this case, our working relationship will remain the same - the only thing that changes is our financial relationship.

Once the six months come to an end, you'll simply transition to a different payment structure. Sessions with your health care team will move to a customary 'pay as you go' basis. Please speak with your team for details.

Health Coaching

Making the changes needed to get better can be hard, which is why you'll have the support of a health coach to help you achieve your health goals.

Your coach is here to ensure you are making changes and meeting your goals and targets. Whilst you drive all of the change, your coach is here to help you understand how to get there.

We encourage our patients to take the driver's seat and be in charge of their experience. During the coaching experience, the work with your health coach can look like:

- setting realistic goals
- thoughtful questions
- understanding motivations
- insightful observations
- identification of barriers
- harnessing your strengths
- mitigating sabotaging thoughts
- and a good dose of encouragement along the way!



As part of your collaborative care team, your health coach will also act as a conduit to your practitioner between consults to modify your treatment plan swiftly if needed.

You will have a primary coach, and from time to time another of our coaches may support you with specialty topics. You can expect support, education and a team approach where we encourage you to take full advantage of the wealth of insights and support your health coach can contribute to your health journey.

How does it work?

Coaching is delivered during standard business hours, through:



PHONE - booked health coaching calls



VIDEO - a link will be shared with you for a Google Meet call.



SLACK - your private health coaching channel



How do I book?

Two ways to book a health coaching call are:



ONLINE - visit tiny.cc/fujqgz



SLACK - message your coach via your private channel to schedule a call

To reschedule an appointment:



PHONE - 1300 614 814



SMS - REPLY to your SMS appointment reminder

Engaging others in your health journey

Many of our patients come to us expecting the answer to their health problems to be dietary or biological, but health is often complex. Health is about lifestyle; how you interact with and perceive the world, as well as your food, movement, and sleep.

Because we're looking at every aspect of your life to figure out the root cause(s), the changes you'll be making won't always be easy. This approach involves a considerable investment in time, money and effort. The payoff is your health.

During this time of exploration and discovery, having the support of those around you makes life (and change) much easier. It also means your results are achieved more rapidly.

Sometimes the people in your world won't understand why you're making all these changes. Here are some ways to have those conversations...

Starting the conversation - keep things simple:

'I've decided to invest in my health to finally get to the root of my health issues. So over the next few months, I'll be exploring ways of eating and living to see what works for me and my body.'

For those closest to you, acknowledge how what you're doing might affect them:

'I'd love your support and understanding during this time. These changes may be challenging at times for me, and I recognise they may affect you too.'

Some may be curious to know why you've chosen functional medicine. Our approach is best explained when compared to the healthcare model people are familiar with.

Conventional medicine approach	Melbourne Functional Medicine approach
Designed for acute conditions e.g. accidents, emergencies, brief illnesses	Designed for chronic conditions
Focused on rapid relief from symptoms or managing a condition	Focused on finding and treating root causes for lasting resolution
Quick appointments to treat the disease	In-depth consultations to treat the patient
Divides the body into parts, each area requires a specialist	The body is a web - all parts are connected, treat the whole body
Doctor in control of your health	Empowered to take control of your health through collaboration care

Slack




The Slack app is an important part of how we communicate with each other and is paramount in helping you implement and action your goals from your treatment plan. Answers and a plan are important but implementation is critical to achieving results.

Slack is a simple way to provide accountability and is one of our ways of supporting you through the often challenging process of change. Slack is also our preferred method of communication and a great place to bring your coach up to date, ask non-time sensitive questions and share any changes or results.

How to get started:

1. Install the Slack app onto your mobile device.
2. We will send you a Slack invitation email, which will allow you to sign in to Slack.
3. Click through using the link in the email and set up your account with your name and a password.

How to use Slack:

- On the top left corner there is a Slack logo/symbol 
- Click on that and it will take you to your dashboard where you can see the conversations/channels you are a part of.
- To message your coach, simply click on your coach's channel and write your message.
- Please make sure that you TURN NOTIFICATIONS ON so that you know when your coach has messaged you. This can be done by clicking the three dots in the top right hand corner of your message page. Click on 'settings' then 'notifications' and choose your preferences. To save your new settings, simply click out using the 'settings' tab at the top left of the page.

We want to help you in whatever way we can, and we can best help if we know what is going on...stay in touch with Slack.

Notion - Home of your Dashboard



Notion is the secure platform that your Dashboard is based on. Whereas Slack is a quick and easy way for us to communicate, your Dashboard is the information repository.

Your Dashboard will hold the following information:

- Treatment notes
- Resources, links and information
- Lab results
- Contact details for your healthcare team

If you are ever looking for treatment direction or information your Dashboard is the place to go.

How to get started:

1. Your health coach will share your private notion link
2. You can choose if you would like to use that link or have access via login
3. Once set up you can access your Dashboard via mobile, tablet or desktop

Top tips

- If you have a Notion login, download the Notion app to access your Dashboard on your phone.
- If you are using the private web link, be sure to **bookmark** the link on your computer or **pin** the page to your phone's home screen.

We want to ensure you have all the information at your fingertips. Your Dashboard is your one-stop-shop if you are ever in doubt.

How to choose the best produce

Would you prefer to have your food with industrial chemicals, or without? Unfortunately, most food we consume has been exposed to chemicals before it arrives at your door. Studies show these chemicals can have a highly significant impact on your health. Ask your practitioner for more information on how they might be affecting you.

Going organic, or in the case of animal products, going wild, is a wise investment for your health, albeit an expensive one. The good news is that some fresh produce has minimal exposure to chemicals, so buying organic isn't always essential. This guide is designed to bring you clarity on how to shop so you can spend your dollars wisely.

Meat

Most toxins are stored in fat, so farmed animals exposed to chemicals in their food and environment will accumulate and store these in their fat. When buying eggs, butter, dairy or fatty meat, choose organic, grass fed, free roaming sources. Try alternatives like wild game meats like kangaroo or venison, which are better than organic.

Seafood

Eat fish that have lived a wild life with minimal exposure to chemicals. In particular, heavy metals like mercury are a big problem with fish. They tend to bioaccumulate as you go up the food chain, so bigger fish tend to have more heavy metals. Farmed fish and large fish are off the menu. Opt for wild caught fish and small fish. Choose wild caught salmon, trout, herring, sardines, anchovies, whiting and other small fish.

Vegetables & Fruit*

Pesticides are regularly sprayed on crops most vulnerable to consumption by birds and insects, and herbicides to kill weeds. Therefore, choose organic for more delicate fruits and vegetables.

The following produce are HIGH in pesticides:

Berries	Tomatos	Stone fruit	Kiwi
Pears	Grapes	Leafy greens	Apple
Mushrooms	Sultanas	Potatoes	Celery

The following produce are LOW in pesticides, so are relatively safe when conventionally grown:

Cabbage	Avocado	Banana	Cauliflower
Melon	Mango	Onion	Brussel sprouts
Asparagus	Pineapple	Broccoli	

*The Australian Total Diet Study (ATDS) 2019 is the most comprehensive analytical food survey conducted in Australia to determine the level of chemicals in food. FSANZ conducts food surveys, gathering data and estimating the dietary exposure of the Australian population to these chemicals, including agricultural and veterinary chemicals, and metal contaminants arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury. Find out more at: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/25th-Australian-Total-Diet-Study.aspx>

4 - 7 - 8 Breathing

4-7-8 breathing is a key tool for balancing and re-setting your stress state. By slowing your breathing rate down using 4-7-8 your body will move from a stress state [*Sympathetic: fight or flight*] to a state of calm [*Parasympathetic: rest & digest*].

All it takes is 19 seconds...

- Inhale quietly but deeply through your nose to count of **4**.
Rest your tongue on the roof of your mouth, just behind your front teeth. Breathe into and expand your belly, not just your chest.
- Hold your breath for a count of **7**.
- Exhale completely through your mouth to a count of **8**, making a whooshing sound.
- Repeat with no break 1-4 times; more after becoming practiced.

How can I make this a new habit?

Getting results might take some time and practice for you so don't be concerned about the outcome, just focus on doing the process! As you continue to practice, it becomes more natural for you and the benefits will be observable. The trick with this is to make it a regular punctuation feature to every day, meaning: make it a habit.

Anchoring this habit to something else that is a frequent part of your life, makes it easy to remember. Our recommendation is to anchor it to when you go to the bathroom. You will go to the bathroom multiple times every day for the rest of your life, no matter what is happening in your life or where you are. Going to the bathroom means you are always alone (unless you have young kids!) and it always takes at least 20 seconds, which means doing a rotation of 4-7-8 doesn't take any extra time out of your day. Sure, the bathroom is not always the greatest smelling place, so before or after, or while washing your hands works too.

- Don't worry about how many repetitions you do.
- Don't worry about getting it exactly right.
- Don't worry about if you feel any different afterwards.
- Just focus on installing the habit!

Once it is a habit, you'll get good at it, it will be effortless, and the cumulative benefits will be profound.

Sleep Hygiene

We understand the importance of dental hygiene and when it comes to hormones, digestion and mental health - sleep hygiene shows up as being a crucial way to optimise these elements of health.

Sleep is crucial for healing, recovery and wellbeing. As part of our circadian rhythm it's also when we regulate and set our cortisol pattern. Having a healthy circadian rhythm means you can wake with energy as you get your cortisol awakening response, and then maintain energy throughout the day. You are conversely able to switch off at night as cortisol levels drop, making way for the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.

Being in bed by 10pm allows the crucial first stages of healing and recovery. Between 10pm and 2am is when physical repair occurs. And following that, 2am – 6am allows for psychological repair and recovery.

We suggest you don't be attached to the outcome straight away. It might take several weeks for your body to fall into your new bedtime pattern.

Think about how you settle a newborn baby or young child – dinner, bath, bed and book. Your body is no different in how it responds to the end of day routine. It's important to give your body signals about what is happening and over several weeks your body will begin to recognise the pattern of the evening wind-down. Here's how it can look:

Our top suggestions

- **Eat dinner early** (at least two hours before you go to bed)
 - Digesting food takes a lot of work. You want your body to be in the best possible position to heal while you sleep, so get the digesting done before you rest.
- **Do not drink alcohol** or have other **stimulating foods or drinks**.
 - Caffeine and similar stimulants are best had early in the day.
- **Turn off all electronics** a few hours before bed.
 - Blue light stops your body from producing melatonin. Watching screens signals our brain that it's daytime and you will be stimulated by this false sense of daylight and you're less likely to be able to go to sleep.
 - By turning off your ipad, tv, iphone, computer some time before sleep, your brain has the opportunity to start slowing down to be ready for sleep.
- Have a **strong** cup of relaxation tea.
- Do your nightly bathroom routine (brush teeth, makeup removal, etc).
- **Quiet** non-brain-intensive activity like reading, craft, knitting, art.
- When the sleep cycle arrives (melatonin comes in waves of around 70-90 minutes) you can simply get into bed.

The Importance of Poop

In clinic we will spend a good amount of time talking about poop. For some this will be a new experience and is likely to render you sensitive or somewhat uncomfortable, which is perfectly normal. We don't just talk about poop to challenge your sense of comfort around personal bathroom habits though; we talk about it because it's an amazingly powerful way to understand your health puzzle.

What comes out in the toilet bowl tells an awful lot about what is happening in the gut, which speaks volumes for overall health. As a tool or gauge for measuring your state of digestive health and therefore systemic health, your poop has a lot to say.

You may have already undergone scrutiny about the regularity, smell, consistency and sensation of your bowel movements; the Bristol Stool Chart is a universal guide to your poop.








Being 'regular' is what is normal for you – meaning that for some, normal is 2-3 bowel movements per day but for someone else it might be once a day or once every 2 days. Ideally we want to move towards 1-2 bowel motions daily.

Someone with healthy bowel habits is able to:

- Hold on for a short time after you feel the first urge to go to the toilet - this allows time to get there and remove clothing without any accidental loss of faeces
- Pass a bowel motion within about a minute of sitting down on the toilet
- Pass a bowel motion easily and without pain - ideally, you shouldn't be straining on the toilet or struggling to pass a bowel motion which is hard and dry, and
- Completely empty your bowel when you pass a motion - you don't have to go back to the toilet soon after, to pass more.

Keeping an eye on your bathroom habits will offer great insight into the health of your digestive tract and we'd love you to become really familiar with your bowel movements and identifying them so you can become a poop ninja and give us accurate feedback.

Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid

Our ideal poop is number 4, or verging on 5.

It shows that the faeces hasn't stayed in the colon too long as it has a smooth texture. No cracks, bumps or indications of dehydration. Conversely it also hasn't been rapidly evacuated showing us it's been digested well and we're likely to have received appropriate nutrition from our food.

Don't be afraid to have a look in the bowl and become really familiar with your bowel habits – how they look, smell and feel.

Check this out...

We think squatty potties are a great tool for perfect poop posture!

www.squattypottyaustralia.com