

The Elms



Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Spring 2018

The Elms recently celebrated a mid-year “Christmas” at The Royal Hotel to thank staff for their ongoing hard work and dedication throughout the year. The night passed quickly with the combination of food, drink and conversation. As entertainment, a “white elephant gift exchange” saw anonymous gifts being regularly re-possessed with hilarious results. The novelty presents ranged from the sought after (wine, chocolates, nice toiletries) to the niche (rabbit ear TV antennae, unused wedding guest book, onion-cutting goggles)!

Doctor news

Dr Amit Kumar has recently been awarded Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the specialist qualification in general practice. This is an immense achievement requiring much diligent studying and the passing of several rigorous examinations. We congratulate Amit on his success!

We are delighted with Dr Carmen Lei’s return to The Elms after her 6-month rotation to Daylesford. Carmen started at The Elms in February 2017 and continues working toward her specialist qualification in general practice. On a sad note, we fare-welled Dr Fortunato Mazzei who completed his half-year placement with us and now continues his post-graduate training in Daylesford.

Receptionist news

Lisa, one of our receptionists, has taken on an administrative role at the Bacchus Marsh Hospital and will be relinquishing her permanent position with us. However, she will still help out at The Elms on a casual basis to cover the occasional shift at our front desk. Another of our receptionists, Vicki D, has retired from work and will be busy relocating and building her new home on the Bellarine. We wish both Lisa and Vicki the best for the future.

We welcome the addition of two new receptionists, Bree and Elaine, who we are confident will provide the same friendly and attentive service our patients are accustomed to. Medical reception is more than just meet-and-greet, with plenty of behind the scenes work required to run an efficient and effective front desk. Bree and Elaine will receive training to equip them for this very important role.

Medical student news

Our Deakin University medical student from 2017, Jared Harris, has passed his final examinations and will graduate as a doctor at the end of this year. He will commence his year-long internship at the Geelong Hospital in 2019.

In 2018, we are hosting final year medical students from the University of Notre Dame, Western Australia, as part of their rural GP rotation. Our current student, David Hennes, will be attached to the Elms for four weeks as he observes and performs consultations under the supervision of Drs Rob Hosking and Woody Wu. The Elms has always been active in medical education and the teaching of university students is something we enthusiastically engage in. We thank our patients who have consistently welcomed the involvement of medical students during their placement with us.

Online booking of appointments

Our online appointment booking system and smart phone applications are up and running, meaning that patients can make appointments without having to ring the clinic. This is especially useful if the need to book an appointment arises outside of normal clinic opening hours. Only standard (15 minute) appointments can be booked via the online portal, and the furthest ahead an appointment can be made is 2 weeks using this method. Of course, our receptionists can still be contacted if variations are required. Details regarding this online service can be found on the clinic website, www.theelms.com.au.

Spring is in the air, and so is hay-fever

We often associate hay-fever with Spring and this is because reactions to airborne allergens tend to coincide with the time pollens are released from blooming plants. However, pollen is not the only culprit, with moulds, dust mite, and animal dander also affecting some people. This explains why not everyone has their hay-fever at the same time of the year as others. Managing hay-fever requires the elimination or avoidance of the offending allergen, counteracting the reaction with anti-histamines or occasionally cortisone-based medicines, or modifying the body's response through desensitisation treatment. Some people have even resorted to relocating to another part of the country with a different climate. Apart from being uncomfortable and annoying, recurrent or persistent hay-fever can also lead to complications such as breathing difficulties, snoring and sleep apnoea, and the development of sinus and nasal polyps.

There are a number of over the counter products that can be used for hay-fever, but for persisting symptoms, please have a chat with your doctor about further treatment options.

Safe Script

From October this year, a Victorian Government system to monitor prescribing of certain high-risk medications will commence. This system was put in place to reduce the harm associated with the inappropriate use of medications like sedatives, pain killers and other pharmaceuticals with addictive potential. It is alarming that more people die in Victoria each year from overdosing on prescription medications than from illicit drugs or the road toll. Safe Script will automatically identify in real-time those patients who are at increased risk of using dangerous medications above and beyond their medical needs. The roll-out of this system will eventually become nation-wide, meaning that doctor-shoppers and addicted patients can receive help to manage their uncontrolled medication use. The Safe Script program is designed to save lives and an earlier trial of its use in Tasmania demonstrated positive outcomes.

Overweight and Obesity

In various societies (especially in the past), being overweight was considered desirable as it implied affluence and higher social standing. However, it is also associated with increased health risks such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and a greater incidence of some cancers. Of course, our current society sees overweight as being less fashionable for other reasons. Overweight is a complex condition with many factors contributing to its development. Apart from the obvious imbalance of kilojoule intake versus energy expenditure, other variables playing a role are genetics, hormones, age, gender, medical conditions, medications and food makeup.

Unfortunately, there does not exist a medication that directly causes weight loss. Appetite suppressants and surgical interventions (like stomach reduction) work by forced behaviour change to restrict oral intake. They don't cause weight loss in themselves, and are redundant if the diet is already appropriately managed and limited. The best approach is to see your doctor to rule out medical causes, then to consult a dietician and an exercise physiologist to address the diet and exercise, respectively. Overweight is something that develops over many years and reversing it in a sustainable way usually takes a similar timeframe.

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

