

# The Elms Family Medical Centre

## Quarterly Newsletter

*Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre*

[www.theelms.com.au](http://www.theelms.com.au)



### Summer 2016/2017

We have recently changed our patient booking software so that it is now better linked with our existing clinical records program. Patients will notice that this means we do not need to use paper billing slips at the end of each consultation as your doctor can send the details to reception electronically. Apart from reducing paper use, it will also save time as billing details do not need to be entered manually by the receptionist. Please note that patients still need to present to reception on the way out after seeing the doctor so that they are exited from the system.

Another change that we have put in place is the confirmation of patient identity on arrival at reception. This will usually mean looking at your Medicare card and any associated concession or pension cards. Some patients may find this cumbersome, especially if they have been attending regularly and are already well known to staff. However, this is now considered “best practice” and all medical clinics are required to perform this check with each patient, every time they present. This is in line with hospital-based practice where a patient’s identity-band is double-checked every time a medication is administered or a procedure performed.

### Doctor news

We congratulate Dr Ayesha Munir who has recently passed all the necessary examinations as part of her post-graduate specialist training in general practice. This is the culmination of many years of study, and she will shortly be awarded Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Achieving Fellowship means that Ayesha will be a Specialist General Practitioner. Well done, Ayesha!

### Medical student news

Elisa Pruss, our Deakin University medical student, has just completed her year-long placement with us. We would like to thank all our patients who have contributed to Elisa’s learning by involving her during consultations. She will now progress to her fourth (and final year) of medical school in 2017 with rotations in various hospital specialties. We know that she will make a fantastic doctor and wish her the best for the future.

### Psychologist news

We have recently had Mr Melas Khole, psychologist, commence consulting at The Elms as a member of the Ranges Psychological Services team. Melas works mainly with adults and has particular interests in anger and aggression management, depression, anxiety and dealing with workplace stress. In addition to utilising standard counselling strategies like Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, he is also qualified in psychodrama techniques.

Melas may be consulted privately (no Medicare rebate although a rebate may apply if you have appropriate private health insurance) or through your doctor under a Mental Health Care Plan (Medicare rebate available). Please discuss your eligibility for the Medicare rebate with your doctor.

Working every Thursday, appointments to see Melas can be made by phoning 0425-240-021.

## **Dietitian news**

Joining dietitian Ms Vivian Tsang is her colleague, Ms Marie Huynh. Working in tandem, they provide patients with practical advice about nutrition to help promote good health. They consult at The Elms once a month on a Tuesday, and appointments to see Vivian or Marie can be made by speaking with our receptionists. A referral is not required; however, some private health funds may provide a rebate if you have a referral from your doctor. Also, patients with certain chronic medical conditions may be eligible to receive a Medicare rebate when seeing Vivian and Marie as part of a GP Management Plan (GPMP) and Team Care Arrangement (TCA). Please speak with your doctor to see if this applies to you.

## **45 to 49-year-old health checks**

If you are between 45 to 49 years of age, you may be eligible for a once-off bulk-billed comprehensive health check-up. This review involves seeing our clinic nurse for 30 minutes to perform baseline measurements and completing relevant health questionnaires, followed by seeing a doctor for 30 minutes to discuss medical issues such as medications, preventive activities, physical examination and possibly arrange routine blood tests. The aim of this full check is to identify issues and to address possible outstanding problems. The health information gained through these reviews adds to your complete medical record at The Elms, an important part of the continuity of your care. Please speak with our nurses or reception staff who can advise you of your eligibility. For patients over the age of 75 years, a similar full health check is available, which can be performed yearly.

## **Persistent tiredness**

A common presentation at the doctors is the patient with ongoing tiredness. We have all probably felt short-term lethargy due to life circumstances, passing illness or some other obvious reason. However, it is when the tiredness is persistent and not due to an apparent cause that a patient might see their doctor. The likely causes of tiredness can depend on age group, health risk factors and the psycho-social context. Patients will frequently have concerns relating to anaemia, thyroid disease, diabetes and glandular fever. These conditions can readily be excluded by your doctor. Less apparent causes for prolonged tiredness include the effects of some medication, obstructive sleep apnoea, depression, hormonal disturbance, heart disease, lung disease and kidney disease. Of course, tiredness can be relative and expected, such as when sleep is regularly disturbed by young children, a partner's snoring, night time waking to use the toilet, painful conditions, and shift work. Often underestimated is the role played by stress, actual overwork, relationship difficulties and the lack of enjoyable leisure time. If this sounds like you, it would be worth having a chat with your doctor.

## **Blocked ears? It may be wax!**

If your hearing does not seem as good as you remember, it may be that your outer ear canals are becoming blocked with wax. Ear wax is a normal phenomenon and serves to protect the ear canal. However, if it accumulates to the point of obstruction, then you may notice an unexpected loss of hearing. Some people make oilier wax whilst others produce a drier wax (or some even have one ear of each wax type). The oilier version tends to block more readily although workers in dusty environments also have a higher tendency to block. Keep in mind that there is no need to routinely clear out wax unless it is causing obstruction. Frequent unnecessary cleaning of wax can actually stimulate **more** wax to be secreted.

There are a number of ways to treat wax-blocked ears. Over the counter wax softening drops (such as Earclear, Waxsol and Cerumol) may break the wax down enough to allow hearing again. Self-administered ear washouts can also be effective (Audiclean) although this is used at your own risk. You may also have your wax flushed out (or "syringed") by your doctor or Judy (our clinic nurse who has completed the certification to perform clinical ear syringing).

Speak with your doctor if your hearing has recently diminished – it may just be ear wax!

**“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”**

