



# *The Elms Quarterly*

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



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

## *Autumn 2010*

### Doctor News

The Elms is very pleased to welcome Dr Manju Nadiger, who was originally trained in India. He has been working in a number of Melbourne hospitals over the last few years, and prior to starting at The Elms worked as GP in Craigieburn. In addition to his medical degree, he also has a Master of Public Health degree from Deakin University.

Dr Abha Chikarsal and Dr Grace Diao have both settled in well to the practice, despite a rather dramatic introduction to the practice, courtesy of the February flooding of Bacchus Marsh from the heavy rains. Without missing a beat, they took off their shoes and joined other staff, and a few patients, to help bail out the water in the clinic reception area. Mr Hayden Ward, a patient of the clinic, deserves a special mention as he helped out during the emergency above and beyond what would be expected. We would like to say a big “thank you” to Mr Ward. Additionally, we would like to thank everyone for their understanding during this difficult time, and in the near future when we have the ceiling and carpet in the reception area repaired.

Dr Anita Manku recently visited to show off her baby boy, Michael. He is a strapping young lad who was passed around to all the practice team for cuddles. Mum, dad and Michael are doing well.

Dr Faiza Khan also dropped in recently to let us know how she was going. She is completing a 6 month term of advanced training in Ararat. Her family has adjusted to the move, but she is looking forward to returning to The Elms in August.

### Nurse News

Judy Higgs has commenced training in diabetes education, all the while continuing her usual nursing duties. The completion of these studies will enable Judy to provide support and education to patients with diabetes management issues.

Sophie Kerr has returned from maternity leave and has resumed her role as our chronic disease management nurse. She helps to ensure that the medical needs of patients with chronic health problems are met.

### Influenza immunisation

Autumn is the time when we need to start immunising against seasonal influenza. This year's seasonal influenza vaccine includes the “swine flu” component along with coverage for two other strains of the influenza virus. Those who have previously had the “swine flu” injection are still recommended to have the seasonal injection as it will boost the immunity already achieved.

This year the Federal Government has expanded the criteria regarding who is eligible for the free influenza vaccine. In addition to patients over the age of 65, the free injection is now also available to all pregnant women, and anyone who has a chronic disease that would make them more vulnerable to the effects of influenza. This includes people with lung diseases (like moderate to severe asthma and emphysema), diabetes and heart disease. If you are eligible, simply make an appointment to see our nurse to have the injection. Those not eligible for the free vaccine will need to obtain a private (non-subsidised) prescription from their doctor, then pick up the injection from the pharmacy and have it administered by our nurse.

## **Cancelling of appointments**

Many people will agree that it is difficult to get an appointment due to a nation-wide doctor shortage. Hence if you are unable to attend your appointment, please ring and cancel with adequate warning so that the appointment is not wasted. It is frustrating for us when a booked patient does not arrive, and a patient-in-need is left waiting. For those who repeatedly miss appointments, we will be forced to charge a fee for non-attendance. This fee is not reimbursed through Medicare, and will also apply to patients who are normally bulk-billed.

## **Politeness is catching**

Our clinic prides itself for being a friendly and safe place. Rudeness or aggression to staff in our practice will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may result in offenders being asked to find another clinic to attend.

Please remember to TURN OFF YOUR MOBILE PHONE before going in to the doctor. Not only is it poor manners but it means that you will have less time with your doctor.

## **Pregnancy planning**

Prior to becoming pregnant, it can be useful to discuss your plans with your doctor. There are a number of considerations which are best discussed prior to conception, such as folate supplements, diet and exercise, smoking cessation, immunisation status and boosters, and Pap tests being up to date. We have prepared a patient guide which covers this information. Please speak with your doctor about this if you are planning a pregnancy.

## **Are you smoking, and want to stop?**

Please talk to your doctor about medications that can be helpful if you are ready to stop smoking. Champix and Zyban are both funded on the PBS to assist with smoking cessation.

## **Keeping active despite age**

There are many organisations in Bacchus Marsh to help older people remain active physically, socially and mentally. Such groups include Probus, Senior Citizens Club, Quamby, University of the Third Age (U3A), bowling clubs and golf clubs. There are also opportunities for volunteering at many organisations such as the Bacchus Marsh Hospital (Meals on Wheels, Transport assistance and the Auxiliary who run the "Op shop" and the hospital kiosk). We encourage people to remain active and involved with their community as there is good evidence that it keeps people healthy. Our Doctors, Reception staff and Nurses are able to help direct newcomers to the appropriate organisation.

## **Useful Websites**

Below are some websites that patients may find useful for reliable information:

[www.healthinsite.gov.au](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au) - This is a fantastic portal to health information that has received very high reviews among health professionals and lay people alike. It is a great entry point to search for quality Australian information on health concerns. It is like a Google for health in Australia, and only links to quality information sites.

[www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au) - This is a very useful Australian university site helping people with lowered mood or depression. It is mostly about preventing depression and assisting people with mild mood disorders.

[www.parentsjury.org.au](http://www.parentsjury.org.au) - This is a site addressing parental concerns about childhood obesity. It discusses how to help children eat well and be active. It is run with the assistance of many research and support organisations such as Diabetes Australia, Vic Health and the Cancer Council of Australia.

[www.labtestsonline.org.au](http://www.labtestsonline.org.au) - This site provides more information about the many medical tests that may be requested by your doctor.

[www.raisingchildren.org.au](http://www.raisingchildren.org.au) - This excellent site provides helpful information regarding parenting strategies. There is a free DVD available from this site provided by the Federal Government.