

The Elms Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au

Spring 2024

From September your doctor will have the option to send SMS notification of results to patients. Patients may receive an SMS message advising that the results have been reviewed and no further action is required, or that a follow up appointment is recommended to discuss the results. Your doctor will inform you how a result will be followed up at the time a test is requested. Our doctors may at their discretion choose to phone patients with results, according to circumstances and the nature of a result. Additionally, from 2025, all test results will be automatically available to patients in their My Health Record. However, it remains important that these results are interpreted with the help of a health care practitioner.

Doctor news

Our GP registrars for the first half of the year, Dr Kithmini Cooray, Dr Rahul Panchal, and Dr Ronen Leizerovitz, recently completed their six-month placement with us and have moved on to their next posts as part of their specialist training toward becoming specialist general practitioners. We wish them the very best as they progress in their careers.

We welcome Dr Binari Wijesundara and Dr Christopher Ee as our GP registrars for the second half of the year. Prior to starting at The Elms, Binari completed her first general practice rotation in Sunbury, and Chris comes to us after his first general practice rotation in Maidstone.

Staff news

The Elms is pleased to announce that we have a new assistant practice manager, Bree. She has been at the clinic since 2018, initially as a receptionist and later as one of our senior receptionists. Bree will work with Susanne, our practice manager. Managing a medical practice is a complicated task, having to deal with constant change and government bureaucracy. We are confident that Bree is up for the challenge and we congratulate her on her promotion!

Reception news

Patients will notice a few new faces at our front desk. Trish and Emily recently joined The Elms as part of our reception staff, both having previously worked in health care settings. We welcome them to our team and know that they will provide patients with warm and helpful service.

Specialist news

We have a new specialist coming to The Elms. Dr Brendan Dias, urologist, started consulting at our clinic in July and is currently visiting monthly. He treats a full range of urinary conditions, including incontinence, prostate disease, kidney conditions, and bladder issues. Dr Dias operates at Western Health, St Vincents Private Hospital Werribee, and Sunshine Private Hospital.

A referral from your General Practitioner is required and appointments to see Dr Dias at The Elms can be made by phoning his main rooms on (03) 9110-3828. Further information can be found at his website www.diasurology.com

Return of the Street Library

After an absence of several years during the Covid-19 pandemic, our waiting room 'Street Library' is back. The Street Library movement started as a way for communities to share a common enjoyment of books. Our Street Library is a bookcase in our waiting room where visitors may browse and borrow books for free. Books may be returned to any Street Library, and books from other Street Libraries may be placed in our book case. Donations of books are welcome, and the wider the subject range the better!

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) scribes during consultations

Some of our doctors are currently trialling the use of an AI scribe program to make clinical notes during some consultations. Rather than your doctor manually typing a record of the consultation, the audio is seamlessly converted to a written record that is succinct and reflective of the discussion. The information is fully encrypted and is only ever processed on systems located in Australia. An AI scribe is much more sophisticated than a voice to text conversion as it produces meaningful summaries instead of just a literal recording. One advantage is that it frees up time for the doctor to spend with the patient instead of typing. Patients will be asked for permission before consultations if the AI scribe program is to be used, and patients may opt out at any time.

GP management plan changes

The Australian Government has announced upcoming changes to GP management plans (GPMP) starting in November. GPMPs allow patients with eligible chronic medical conditions to have access to additional services through Medicare, such as rebates for allied health consultations. Details of the changes have not been released yet but are expected to limit access to GPMPs to patients who have registered for MyMedicare. Registering for MyMedicare involves a patient nominating their 'home' medical practice from which they receive their regular health care. Patients may complete their registration for MyMedicare through the Medicare Express Plus mobile application or on the MyGov website. Please speak with your doctor or our reception staff for more information.

Bowel cancer screening program update

The National Bowel Screen Program has widened the age group being targeted for testing. Since July this year, people between 45 to 49 years of age started receiving the free stool testing kit in the mail. Previously, only people aged between 50 to 74 years of age were included in the program. Bowel cancer remains one of the most common types of cancer and early detection through the stool test has been conclusively shown to save lives. We encourage everyone eligible for the test to get it done.

Beware of coin/button style batteries

A hidden danger lies in the very common coin or button style battery. When accidentally swallowed, these batteries can cause life-threatening complications including perforation of the oesophagus and stomach, erosion through to the trachea, and rupture of the aorta (the main artery from the heart). This is due to the electrical current creating a chemical reaction that burns the tissues, even with apparently flat batteries. The storage, use, and disposal of this type of battery needs careful consideration, especially to protect children.

Sports performance and high altitude

The oxygen carrying capacity of the blood is partly determined by the number of red blood cells in the circulation. One way to naturally raise the red blood cell count is to acclimatise to a high altitude. The lower oxygen level at elevated altitudes causes the body to produce more of a hormone called erythropoietin (EPO) which in turn activates red cell production in the bone marrow. Athletes may take advantage of this effect to improve their endurance and performance.

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