

The Elms Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Summer 2018/2019

We would like to wish all our patients a safe and happy festive season, and a healthy start to the new year. The Elms will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day; however, it will be business as usual otherwise. After-hours service is provided by the Urgent Care department of the Bacchus Marsh Hospital, and emergency attention can also be requested by calling the ambulance service on 000. In anticipation of reduced holiday services, patients should see their doctor to make sure that all their prescriptions are up to date. For those with travel plans, a printed medical summary and medication list may come in handy. Within Australia, having a My Health Record which contains this information can also be of assistance in case of an emergency or if there is a need to seek medical treatment whilst away.

Doctor news

Our doctors are involved in many activities in addition to providing medical care at The Elms. Dr Rob Hosking has recently taken on the position of Chair of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Expert Committee for Practice Technology and Management. As many of our patients may know, Dr Hosking has a keen interest in health informatics and has been involved in the e-health sphere for many years. Several of our doctors have visiting rights to look after in-patients at Bacchus Marsh Hospital and also work at the hospital's urgent care centre providing out of hours care. They also perform home visits to the three local aged-care facilities (Providence Aged Care in Maddingley, Grant Lodge in Bacchus Marsh, and The Royal Freemasons in Darley).

Reception news

Our front desk has recently been joined by a new receptionist, Bridget. She has previously had experience in the health care setting, and will receive further training by our existing staff on all aspects of general practice reception. We welcome Bridget to our family practice and know that she will make a great team member.

Nurse news

We are pleased to welcome back nurse Judy, who has returned after an extended time away. Many will know Judy as our practice nurse before she had to depart suddenly interstate to take care of her elderly mother. Judy will be working to help fill in during staff holidays as well as lending an extra pair of hands during busy times. Judy joins Catherine, Vicki H, and Therese to make up our nursing team.

Rubella officially eliminated from Australia

According to a recent World Health Organisation report, Australia is now free from rubella, also known as German Measles. Like measles and smallpox before it, rubella's eradication is the result of a very successful immunisation program and a robust system to report cases of contagious disease. Similarly, the widespread uptake of the influenza vaccine this year has resulted in much fewer confirmed cases than in previous seasons. Due to the existence of measles and rubella overseas, cases may still occur in travellers entering Australia. Hence the need to maintain a high level of immunisation in our community to minimise the number of people that may catch these imported cases.

My Health Record opt-out period extended

People now have more time to think about having a My Health Record after the opt-out deadline was delayed until the 31st January 2019. The time extension was to allow concerns about privacy, access and data management to be addressed and resolved. New changes that have been confirmed include that patients can cancel anytime even after the deadline date and the My Health Record will be permanently erased, stronger penalties for illegal access, and prohibiting access to records by employers and insurance companies to prevent health-based discrimination. The My Health Record is not the same as the medical history kept by your doctor but just a snapshot of your important health details. It helps inform your treating clinicians about your medications, allergies, immunisations and medical diagnoses. Use of this information is with patient consent only and individual My Health Records can be locked down with stronger restrictions at the discretion of the patient. We believe that with the appropriate safeguards in place, the My Health Record represents a positive step forward in improving safety for patients receiving treatment, reducing duplication of investigations, and encouraging patient engagement with their own healthcare. Feel free to speak with your doctor if you want further information about the My Health Record.

Telehealth facilities at The Elms

Although Bacchus Marsh has a few medical specialists who consult locally, more often than not it requires the patient to travel to the city. Not only is this time consuming and inconvenient but can also be difficult for the patient with poor mobility. For a number of years, The Elms has been equipped to run telehealth consultations with participating specialists remotely. We regularly have patients 'see' their specialist via video link from our clinic which by all accounts is highly effective and very popular. We currently have neurologists, endocrinologists and psychiatrists who offer telehealth consultations. Apart from the psychiatrists, the other specialists generally only use telehealth for review of established patients. If you are seeing a specialist in the city and would like to have follow up visits through telehealth, please speak with your doctor or specialist to see if this is an option for you.

The amazing human 'gut'

Most of us don't really think about the complex job our digestive tract, or gut, has. Apart from when we have symptoms, it goes about its business with little fanfare. Our gut is usually marvellous at what it does, including breaking down food, absorbing nutrients and excreting waste products, as well as making us feel good when we enjoy something delicious and satisfying. We do tend to take our gut for granted and like all complicated machinery, things can go awry. To put this into perspective, the human digestive tract actually has more nerve cells and connections than the brain, and there are more bacteria (good and bad) living in the gut than there are human cells in the whole body! There are many mysteries surrounding the gut, such as the purpose of the appendix, and why having an appendectomy at an early age reduces the chance of developing inflammatory bowel disease. So, look after your gut by eating lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, and plenty of fibre, and hopefully it will look after you!

The Elms website digital security

With the rising threat of cybercrime and fake websites, heightened authentication requirements are being rolled out by all major internet browsers such as Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge and Internet Explorer. Our clinic website (www.theelms.com.au) is fully compliant with these security standards. Being digitally authenticated means that personal information entered by patients booking online via our website is encrypted and cannot be intercepted by third parties. Websites that have this safety feature have the prefix 'https://' in the address bar, as well as a small closed padlock icon. Specific details about the identity of a secure website can be found by clicking on the padlock icon in the browser address bar.

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

