



The Elms Quarterly



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

Winter 2009

Doctors News

We have been fortunate to obtain the services of Dr Khemar (pronounced “K”-mar) Wadi from August 2009. She is a friend and contemporary of Dr Anita Manku (still with us) and Dr Elissa Stafford (who left at the end of January this year). Khemar attended secondary school and medical school in Australia. She will be working full time, which will help relieve some of the pressure as a number of doctors will be taking leave over the next 6 months. Also, Dr Annie Li has reduced her workload to 3 days per week.

We have been receiving regular e-mails from Dr Sue Wright who is enjoying her retirement travel immensely. She is somewhere in Europe (our last e-mails were from Turkey) checking out ancient architecture and culture.

We recently celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Elms Family Medical Centre in May at Baby Black in Bacchus Marsh. A very pleasant evening was had by all.

New Psychologist at The Elms

We are proud to announce that Dr Louise Hayes (PhD) will commence working at The Elms from Mid July 2009. Louise is a highly respected clinical psychologist who continues her research and teaching work at Ballarat University whilst working part time as a private psychologist at The Elms. She has worked for many years with the Child and Adolescent Health Service in Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh and she has published numerous books and programs in many different areas. Louise will be able to see people either privately (no rebate) or, if your GP prepares a mental health plan, you will receive a Medicare rebate. Contact reception for information or speak to your doctor about whether seeing Louise is appropriate for you.

Website for The Elms

After an absence of a couple of years, the website for the Elms Family Medical Centre is in the process of being redeveloped by Dr Wu. If you are interested in updates about things such as our clinic, doctors and staff, and this newsletter, please go to www.theelms.com.au.

Ozdocsonline

As mentioned before in this newsletter, the website www.ozdocsonline.com.au is used as a way of securely communicating with doctors from this practice. A small fee is required to initiate communication around such things as prescription requests, detailed information about test results, or non urgent on-line consultations (where physical examination is not required). Please visit this website to register (for free). We do not use open e-mail for communicating as this is not secure enough for personal medical issues.

Cervical cancer vaccine last chance

Gardasil (the cervical cancer vaccine) has been offered free to all women from 18-26 years of age for the last few years. This free offer (funded by the Federal government) will cease at the end of June 2009. If you have started the course of three injections by then you will receive the others for free if you attend before the end of December for the other two. However, if you wish to pay for the injections yourself after this time, it will cost around \$150 per injection (ie a total of \$450 for the complete vaccination course).

Girls will continue to be given the course of injection at school for the long term. It is just the catch up immunisation for 18 to 26 year olds that will cease. This program has already been extended, so it is unlikely there will be any further extension.

Swine Flu

The situation regarding the H1N1 09 swine flu pandemic appears to be changing frequently. So far it appears to have been milder in severity of illness than predicted. We are being guided by authorities about how to respond to this. Please ensure you inform reception if you think you may be affected by this virus so we can take measures to reduce transmission to other patients/staff and doctors.

Mobile Phones



Please Turn OFF mobile phones when in your consultation and refrain from using while at the reception desk.

Flu injections

It is not too late for people to have the usual seasonal influenza vaccine. This is available free to everyone over the age of 65. It is also recommended for other people at increased risk of the flu such as pregnant women, and people who suffer from heart and lung conditions. This includes children at increased risk because of asthma or other long term health conditions. Please discuss with your doctor or ask the reception staff if you require a prescription.

Whooping cough

There has been an increase in cases of whooping cough in Victoria over the last year by 48%. Babies under age 6 months are particularly vulnerable and one in 200 cases in this age group will die from it. Adults can suffer a prolonged severe cough (also known as the 100 day cough), require hospital admission, and may fracture ribs due to coughing. Adult immunity wanes after 10 years so booster is recommended. It is particularly recommended for parents of young children or, even better, those planning to be parents, to have the booster injection. This is not subsidised by government and will cost about \$50 for a booster. Speak to your doctor if you think this may apply to you.

Getting The Most Out Of Your Visit To The Doctor

Please be reminded that our standard appointment is **15 minutes**. Many other practices only book 10 minutes. If you think your appointment needs longer than 15 minutes, you would need to book a longer time before arriving. Also, we don't book more than one family member to one appointment. We ask your assistance in this to help us reduce your waiting time. Typical appointments that take longer are: full medical check ups, first visits to the practice, excision of skin lesions, complex problems, and multiple issues at the one visit. If in doubt, ask our receptionists and they may be able to guide you about the length of time you may require and the costs associated with this.

Many people think they only spend 5 minutes in a consultation when actual timing of consultations suggests this is almost never the case. Time seems to fly for patients during consultations. Please respect other patients and our doctors by booking appropriate appointments.

Our doctors may need to advise you to return for another appointment if everything cannot be dealt with at the one visit.

*It is helpful if you can tell the doctor **all** the reasons for your visit at the **start** of the appointment* (rather than dealing with one problem after the other) so the doctor can allocate time accordingly and you can get the most important issues dealt with first. We want to provide the best health service we can, but this becomes compromised if we try to "squeeze things in".

Motorcycle injuries in children

The Medical Journal of Australia recently (July 2008) reported an increasing problem of motorcycle injuries in children and adolescents, particularly in off road situations. A quarter of *serious* injuries were under 10 years old (some aged 5 and under). It is stated in the article that children under 10 do not have the developmental ability to control the power and torque of a motorcycle, nor do they have the capacity for hazard perception. Children are not just small adults. In this study of over 3,000 injuries in Victoria (2000-2004), only 53% of the injured children were wearing helmets. Of those who sustained head injuries, most were not wearing helmets, including two children who died.

In Bacchus Marsh we live in an area where motorbikes are popular. However, parents should carefully consider how old their children are when they buy a motorbike and also should enforce the wearing of helmets.

Emergency Contact and Ambulance Membership

Many people carry mobile telephones these days. Emergency workers (Ambulance, Fire Brigade and Hospital staff to name a few) are now looking in peoples' telephones for emergency contact details if they are caring for someone who cannot communicate with them. One easy and accepted way to do this is for everyone to have an entry under the name of ICE. This stands for In Case of Emergency. This number could be the phone number of a close family member or the health carer who knows the most about you.

Some people with a number of medical conditions and medications may also like to ask their doctor for a health summary that we can print off from your records in case you need urgent after hours help, or for when you are travelling.

This is also a great spot for us to remind you to have Ambulance membership. Ambulance transport is not free! Membership is relatively cheap, and is essential for residents of Bacchus Marsh as many health care services are not offered locally and Ambulance journeys can be very expensive (minimum is over \$800).

To join telephone: **1800 64 84 84**