



# *The Elms Quarterly*

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



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

## **Winter 2010**

### **Doctor News**

We are pleased to announce the return of Dr Faiza Khan after her six month outer rural general practice placement in Ararat. She has developed a special interest in child and adolescent health, and will be pursuing extra training in this area. Faiza has long term plans to continue working at The Elms.

Dr Grace Diao has recently been absent due to a sporting mishap, resulting in a broken wrist. We hope that everyone can show understanding of her temporary physical impairment, as the arm cast will slow her down and prevent her from performing certain procedures.

Dr Thai Nguyen has decided to leave to work closer to home in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, and also to spend more time with his two young boys. Thai has been with us since the start of 2009 and has successfully completed his GP training. As with the many doctors before him who have been with us for part of their post graduate training, we are sad to see him go.

Fortunately, we continue to have Drs Rob Hosking, Woody Wu, Christopher Maclay, Abha Chikarsal, Manju Nadiger, Grace Diao and Faiza Khan working here.

### **Receptionist News**

A valuable member of our reception staff for over eight years, Marian recently announced that she will be resigning to take up a position at Barwon Health in Geelong, closer to where she lives. During her time with us, she has developed a strong relationship with both patients and staff, and will be missed by all of us at The Elms.

Margot is back at work after an operation on her shoulder, and is gradually returning to normal duties. It reflects her great character and persistence, having cheerfully worked despite her painful recovery. We hope that everyone can be supportive of Margot if she is unable to do all that she normally does whilst assisting you at the front desk.

Lorissa is visibly progressing in her pregnancy and will soon commence her maternity leave. We wish her all the best and anticipate her return in the New Year. Hopefully her second child is not too much of a handful!

We would like to welcome Cassie as a new member of our reception team. Cassie has actually been working at The Elms as a girl Friday up until recently, and will be receiving training in her latest role from our reception staff.

The management of The Elms would like to thank all the reception staff for their help with filling in extra shifts during this time of shortage. We hope to recruit additional staff so that we can be back at full strength on reception again.

### **Psychologist News**

Dr Louise Hayes (PhD clinical psychologist) has built up a very busy psychological practice at the Elms since starting in mid 2009. She is currently consulting two days a week, with a particular interest in child and adolescent psychology, as well as general clinical psychology.

If you are interested in a referral to Louise, speak to your doctor to see if you qualify for a referral under Medicare via a Mental Health Care Plan in order to receive a rebate for her fees. Alternatively, you can see her privately without involving Medicare, but in that case you will not receive a rebate (although some Health Insurance companies do provide a partial rebate).

## **Seeing Our Practice Nurses**

Our practice nurses, Judy, Vicki and Rhonda, are available every weekday for many medical and nursing services. These include blood pressure checks, wound dressings, removal of stitches, childhood immunisations, 'flu injections, lung function testing, and assisting our doctors with minor surgical procedures. Judy has also been certified to flush out ear wax, and is currently studying towards her diabetes educator credentials.

To see our nurses for these services, speak with our reception staff about arranging an appointment.

## **Vitamin D and Winter**

Recent research has shown that up to half of Australians are deficient in the "sunlight vitamin", vitamin D. It is important for many functions, especially bone health. In winter, you need at least 45 minutes of direct (not through a window) sun exposure on the hands and face (without make-up). You can ask your doctor for a blood test to check you levels and to discuss taking supplements. Early morning sun exposure also helps regulate the body clock to improve natural sleep at night.

## **Antenatal (Pregnancy) Down Syndrome Screening**

Down syndrome is one of the more common chromosomal abnormalities that can affect a pregnancy. The frequency of occurrence is related to maternal age, with women over 36 years at particular risk, although any pregnancy can be affected.

To give prospective parents the opportunity to know the risk of having an affected pregnancy, there are a number of tests available to measure this risk, and to make a definitive diagnosis. This information can be useful as some may choose to end an affected pregnancy, whilst others will use the diagnosis to help prepare for the future.

The tests available fall into two main groups – those to measure the risk (called screening tests) and those to make a definitive diagnosis (diagnostic tests). The diagnostic tests, namely amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling (CVS), are invasive in that a needle must be passed into the pregnant abdomen to collect samples. Hence they have a risk of complications, including miscarriage.

The screening tests, namely the Combined First Trimester Screen and the so-called Quadruple test, only involve blood samples from the pregnant woman, with or without an early ultrasound. Hence there is no risk to the pregnancy. The role of the screening test is **not** to let you know whether a pregnancy is affected by Down Syndrome, but to help decide whether it is worth the risk of having the invasive diagnostic test.

We recommend that women consult with their doctor soon after their pregnancy diagnosis so that these options can be discussed.

## **Overseas Travel**

People travel overseas for many reasons, and it is important for travellers to be prepared. One commonly overlooked preparation is immunisation. It is best to speak with your doctor well in advance of your trip, ideally at least one month prior to departure, to allow time for travel immunisations. Keep in mind that sometimes there can be supply shortages at pharmacies of some injections, meaning that unexpected delays can occur. Also, travel to certain exotic destinations may require additional injections that can only be provided by Government designated clinics. Your doctor will be able to advise you on these special cases.

Less obvious considerations include making sure you have enough medications for your intended time away as your prescriptions are only valid in Australia, obtaining a letter from your doctor listing carried medications to facilitate your passage through Customs, and considering taking medications in anticipation of problems such as motion sickness, infections and bowel upset. We also recommend that people carry their medication in hand luggage as main baggage can be delayed or lost, plus it is more convenient when passing through Customs to declare and show hand luggage. A medication and health summary can also be provided by your doctor.

## **Mobile Phones**



**We request that patients please turn off their mobile phones during consultations, and refrain from using while at the reception desk. Thank you.**