

The Elms Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Winter 2014

We would like to announce that children under 16 years of age will now be bulk-billed at The Elms. The availability of bulk-billing for holders of Veteran's Affairs Gold Cards, Health Care Cards, pensioners and those receiving Government unemployment benefits remains unchanged. We hope that this improves healthcare accessibility to our most vulnerable patients.

Please note that the recent Federal Government Budget proposal of a \$7.00 bulk-billing co-payment to see a family doctor will **NOT** take effect until 1st July 2015, **AND** depends on it being passed through Parliament.

A special thank you to our patients

We would like to thank all of our patients who completed a recent survey as part of a quality improvement exercise. Your feedback is very important as it gives us the opportunity to address issues and to focus on ways to make your experience even better. We were pleased that the overall satisfaction was high, with 90% of respondents rating The Elms as good, very good or excellent. There were many helpful comments and we are mindful of the areas that need attention. The most common requests were for the clinic to maintain regular permanent doctors, and to be able to see the doctor of their choice. We have been looking at ways to increase our group of permanent doctors but finding like-minded GPs who share our vision of community commitment and patient-centred care is extremely difficult. Another consideration is to maintain a good balance of male and female GPs with a broad range of skills to ensure that patients have a comprehensive choice of doctors. Even if you cannot consult with your usual doctor every time, your medical record will allow another doctor at The Elms to see your history and treatment plan, enabling them to appropriately continue your care.

Doctor news

One of the qualities that sets The Elms apart from many practices is our involvement in mentoring the next generation of doctors. As a result, in addition to our core group of five permanent GPs, we have Registrars on 6 to 12 month rotations as part of their specialty training in General Practice, Primary Care and Family Medicine, as well as a Deakin University medical student. We aspire to give back to the community through our active role in the formal training of future doctors and General Practitioners.

Our permanent full-time doctors (Drs Rob Hosking, Woody Wu, Nyree O'Connor, Anmar Naoum and Amit Kumar) and our Registrars (Drs Alfie Ordukaya, Sue Lee and Carolyn Sebastian) all share the same commitment to upholding holistic community care. Doctors from The Elms are involved with services at the Bacchus Marsh Hospital including participating in the emergency department roster and providing in-patient treatment for medical, palliative and aged care, as well as pregnancy care.

Staff news

We would like to welcome Susanne Hodge as our new Administrative Assistant. Susanne will work mainly "behind the scenes" by supporting our Practice Manager, Mandy, and Assistant Practice Manager, Vicki B, with what they do. Susanne has previously run a successful family business so her experience will be a great asset. We are very fortunate to have such a strong team performing the crucial administrative and management duties of our very busy clinic.

Extra podiatrist starting

Gerard Zammit (PhD), of Medical Footcare Podiatry, has recently been joined by podiatrist Stephanie Giromondo. Since starting at The Elms in early 2012, the need for podiatry services has grown substantially and the addition of Stephanie will help to satisfy demand. Like Gerard, Stephanie provides general foot and nail care, especially for patients with diabetes and circulation problems. She also accepts referrals through the Chronic Disease Management program funded through Medicare.

Appointments to see Gerard and Stephanie can be made by phoning Medical Footcare Podiatry on (03) 9449-9393.

Yellow fever vaccination

The Elms is now a Victorian Government Accredited provider of Yellow Fever vaccination. Yellow Fever is a viral infection that is passed on by mosquito bites and occurs in parts of Central and South America, and tropical Africa. International health regulations make Yellow Fever vaccination mandatory when visiting countries where the disease occurs. The single injection lasts 10 years and patients receive an official World Health Organisation Certificate of Vaccination. Protection starts ten days after the injection and must be administered by a doctor. The Yellow Fever vaccine is not funded by the Government but stocks will be kept in the clinic for administration as it is not available through pharmacies. There is a standard consultation fee plus the cost of the vaccine and the official Certificate of Vaccination. Medicare rebates are not available for the provision, administration and certification of Yellow Fever injections.

Emergency and “walk-in” patients

We are currently trialling a system in our treatment room where a doctor is scheduled with our practice nurse to manage “walk-in” patients who need to be seen at short notice without an appointment. This is particularly useful for uncomplicated repeat prescriptions, or minor emergencies. This arrangement is designed to help reduce waiting times for patients who have a booked appointment by avoiding unplanned interruptions to the doctors who are consulting. As always, time-critical emergencies such as chest pain, strokes, severe breathlessness, major injuries and loss of consciousness require an ambulance and 000 should be called. Even though we can help with initial assessment and stabilisation, the time lost by not first calling an ambulance can lead to unnecessary delay in receiving essential treatment in hospital.

Blister packaging of regular medications

It is not uncommon for some patients to be taking multiple tablets as part of their treatment regimen, with doses several times a day. In addition to the risk of missing tablets or taking them at the wrong times, having many tablets to take every day can involve the cumbersome storage of pill bottles and packets. Some patients use a compartmentalised plastic storage box such as a Dosette container but this requires regular self-filling and is prone to accidental spillage. An Australian innovation helps address these problems in the form of blister packaging of all tablets, one week at a time.

One brand, called a Webster-Pak, is available at local Bacchus Marsh pharmacies. At a nominal cost, the pharmacist places up to a week of a patient’s tablets into a plastic frame-reinforced foil sheet with soft clear plastic blisters holding the tablets. There are blisters corresponding to each dose at an appropriate time of every day of the week. The prescriptions and medication containers are kept at the pharmacy for safety. As an added advantage, a medication list is automatically printed onto the back of the foil sheet identifying all the tablets.

Please speak with your doctor or pharmacist if you think blister packaging your medications might help you or a family member.

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

