

The Elms Family Medical Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Keeping you in touch with developments at our Medical Centre

www.theelms.com.au



Winter 2019

The Elms celebrated its 25th anniversary over dinner at Russo Estate Winery in Diggers Rest, with staff and partners enjoying the beautiful surroundings and amazing food. In addition to being a family practice providing quality medical care to our community, we are a teaching practice for visiting medical students and conduct post-graduate specialist GP training. This commitment to teaching and learning was recently recognised through a 25-year GP Training Service Award from the overseeing agency, Murray City Country Coast (MCCC) GP Training. We are very proud of what we have achieved during the last 25 years and will continue to make good on our motto, 'Complete ongoing care for you and your family'.

Staff news

Coinciding with the clinic having its 25th anniversary, founding partner, Dr Rob Hosking, and founding practice nurse, Ms Vicki Hosking, are acknowledged for their long service and dedication to upholding the clinic's culture of quality and community mindedness. They are the longest continuing-serving members of The Elms 'family' and we wish them many more years of success.

The BetterConsult trial

Patients of Drs Rob Hosking and Woody Wu may remember the one-month trial of a pre-appointment SMS questionnaire in March this year. We thank patients who received the questionnaire for their feedback and it was quite impressive what the technology allowed - when it worked! Despite the positives, we decided that we would discontinue using the BetterConsult platform until it matured further.

Physiotherapy service by 'Back In Motion'

Patients may be familiar with 'Back In Motion' who are a group of physiotherapists who have worked out of Clifton Drive, Bacchus Marsh, for a number of years. 'Back In Motion' are now also practicing at The Elms. Since late May this year, Shalin Patel, physiotherapist, has started consulting at The Elms on Fridays. He is qualified as an instructor for the GLA:D program (Good Life with Arthritis: Denmark). Developed in Denmark, this is an education and exercise package designed to help people with symptoms of hip and knee osteoarthritis. In addition to treating the full range of work and sports related injuries, Shalin has a particular interest in managing complex conditions.

Appointments to see Shalin can be made by phoning 'Back In Motion' on 5367-4130.

Influenza in the news, again

It seems like every year brings with it another warning of a bad 'flu season, and 2019 has been no different. However, the prediction appears to have come true this time with record numbers of confirmed cases. There was a higher than usual incidence of sporadic infections early in the year and a larger surge since the cooler weather. The likelihood of catching influenza is reduced by good hygiene practices (washing hands, covering the face when coughing or sneezing, avoiding others if unwell) and also by having the 'flu injection. Even if you have already had an influenza infection this year, it is still recommended to have the 'flu injection as there are multiple strains of the virus in circulation.

Measles outbreaks in Australia

Australia has experienced several outbreaks of measles in the last few years, mostly brought into the country by international travel. It is a very contagious condition caused by a virus which is passed by inhaling or swallowing expelled fluid droplets from an infected person who coughs or sneezes. As the virus can survive in these droplets in the environment for several hours, even touching contaminated surfaces can lead to exposure. Symptoms include fever, lethargy, a dry cough, runny nose, sore red eyes and a splotchy rash that starts on the face before it spreads to the rest of the body. Most cases make a full recovery but in up to 10%, there will be complications such as middle ear infection, pneumonia or encephalitis (brain inflammation).

The risk of measles infection is particularly relevant for Australians born during or since 1966 as prior to that year, measles was endemic and people became immune through catching the disease. Since 1966, being immunised against measles is the safest way to ensure protection. For patients who believe they may have been exposed or have suspicious symptoms, please advise reception as isolation is required to protect staff and other patients. If you have any concerns, please speak with your doctor.

Blood pressure

Your blood pressure is usually expressed as two numbers: a bigger number and a smaller number (such as 120/80). The bigger number is the peak pressure generated by each beat of the heart (called the systolic pressure) and the smaller number represents the trough pressure when the heart muscle relaxes between each beat (called the diastolic pressure). The unit of pressure used is millimetres of mercury (mmHg) which comes from the height of a column of mercury seen in earlier blood pressure devices.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is usually considered to be a systolic pressure over 140 mmHg (called systolic hypertension) or a diastolic pressure over 90 mmHg (called diastolic hypertension). However, in some patients, such as those with diabetes or heart disease, the target blood pressure is lower. A single high reading may not indicate a problem but persistently elevated pressures can put a strain on the heart and the blood vessels, risking long term damage like heart failure and narrowing of the arteries.

International standardisation of medication names

The process of updating the names of some medications in Australia to match international standards started in 2016 and will be complete by 2020. Some will be minor (replacing 'y' with 'i' such as amoxycillin to amoxicillin, and replacing 'ph' with 'f' as in cephalexin to cefalexin); some a little more significant (frusemide to furosemide, lignocaine to lidocaine). Hats off to our New Zealand neighbours who beat us by making the change back in 2008!

Street Library @ The Elms

Feedback is a valuable source of learning and improvement. Recently, we received a suggestion that really caught our attention. Coming to The Elms is a global movement of having books for the public to freely borrow, swap, read and enjoy. In Australia, it is called a Street Library (in America it is called a Little Free Library) and we have installed a small book case in the waiting room for this purpose.

The idea is that the selection of books in the Street Library can be borrowed or swapped at the reader's discretion. The book may be returned to any Street Library to continue its journey. Readers can also donate a book that they want to share (although this does not mean leaving a whole book collection!). Over time, the contents of our Street Library will evolve, meaning each browse may reveal something different or new.

And a special 'thank you' to the person (who wishes to remain anonymous) for suggesting this great idea!

“We are proud to be an Accredited General Practice”

