

NT INFLUENZA OUTBREAK

CDC in the NT have announced from surveillance data that we are finally experiencing an influenza outbreak in the NT. It is not too late to immunise and ASFMC stocks the private fluvax for \$25, which is usually a tax deductible expense if you work. Also check with your employer about whether they will fund you getting vaccinated; cheaper for them than lots of time off work.

RECALL & PATHOLOGY FORMS

ASFMC has long prided itself on proactive management of chronic health conditions and have had an active recall system in place since we first opened our doors in 2006. There have been times when Dr Mitchell has spent entire weekends trawling through the recall trying to engage patients into repeating overdue blood tests for their diabetes, or planned follow up for repeat blood pressure testing, all at no expense to the patient, and extra administrative cost to the clinic, as we would post forms out, so envelope, printing, letters and then stamps themselves.

These overheads are expensive and time consuming and no other clinic in town provides this level of service. It is with some regret but common sense that we need to adjust our approach. The uptake on posted out pathology forms varies, but might only be 20% and sometimes up to 6 months after they have been posted. We will be streamlining our system radically and basically making you, the patient more accountable. If repeat pathology is recommended rather than waste your time and ours, we will still print out requests but you will be asked to collect them from the surgery. Routine reminders on bloods will cease.

WORKERS COMPENSATION CLAIMS

Another ASFMC Management decision is to stop taking on ALL workers compensation cases. Again this is due to limited capacity, but also due to extra administration time in writing medico-legal reports, chasing unpaid invoices and a number of long standing individual claims, that are impacting on our ability to offer other routine appointments. It is not a personal decision against any existing workers compensation patients but as of 1st July 2014, if your claim is still ongoing ASFMC will not be providing future medical care. All insurance companies of our existing patients have been informed of this decision so may in fact direct you to another clinic for future appointments.

AFTER HOURS

ASFMC does provide a fee paying service to existing patients, except at certain times when Dr Mitchell is physically not in the NT—our after hours message will give the other options that exist. Again locums charge such an amazing amount of money to provide this service we just cannot afford to pay them. It has become increasing frequent that patients will ring at odd hours for administrative reasons eg. to cancel an appt made for the day after a long weekend, or ask to discuss results. Please be advised this is not what this service is for.

17 Stuart Highway (cnr Kekwick Ave)
PO Box 8574
Alice Springs NT 0871
Entry via Kekwick Ave

For more information about our medical centre visit

www.alicefamilymedical.com.au



ALICE SPRINGS
FAMILY MEDICAL

NEWSLETTER

EDITION 30
AUGUST 2014

DOCTORS

Dr Deb Mitchell

And locums

PRACTICE NURSE

Susie Leister RN

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Practice Manager—Susie Leister

Receptionists—Lynlee & Susie

PRACTICE HOURS

Monday to Friday 8:15am—5:30pm

Sat, Sun & Public Holiday's - closed



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WHAT'S NEW?

ASFMC is still down a part-time receptionist position despite advertising twice in the last few months. We have not been able to find a suitable replacement; if you or someone you know thinks this might be a position they would be interested in, please let Susie our practice manager know.

Due to this fact Susie will be covering reception at different times, impacting on her ability to provide practice nurse appointments plus do the day-to-day running of the practice. Therefore "diabetes clinics" will be put on hold for the next 2 months, and certain activities like medicals, and routine ECGs or spirometry may have a waiting time.

We have had an increasing number of patients think it is OK to be rude at receptionists when they cannot get what they want. This is not OK, and ASFMC policy mandates that all staff members are due respect and we will not tolerate rude or abusive behaviour. Please be on notice that if this is to happen we will take the option of blocking future access to our clinic and send you a letter inactivating your file.

The proposed Medicare changes are still theoretical as they have not been passed by the Senate, so nothing has changed as yet. It is not going to impact prior to the 1st July 2015 and ASFMC Management will try to keep you abreast of any changes as they happen.

ADULT MEASLES AWARENESS

There have been over 50 cases of measles diagnosed in the NT in 2014 so far. The main source of the disease is from returned travelers who were not measles immune are acquired their disease while overseas.

Measles rates are still high in nearby popular holiday destinations such as Bali, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines and measles cases are reported weekly in other places in Australia.

All adults born after 1966 should know their measles status and ensure they are protected against the disease. If they do not have evidence of having received 2 measles containing vaccines they should be offered the funded MMR vaccine. An alternative is to test their immunity on routine blood tests.

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus with more serious after-effects than many people realise. For the first few days the patient is miserable with symptoms of a heavy cold, fever, runny nose, red and watering eyes and a hacking cough. By the 3rd day tiny white spots might appear in the mouth and a rash then starts from Day 4—6. It is spread by aerosol, - coughing, sneezing and the incubation period is about 2 weeks and the person is infectious for 5 days prior to the rash and 5 days after the rash has disappeared.

Most patients make a good recovery with lifelong immunity but some will get complications involving ear and chest infections. Rarely it can involve the brain which can lead to permanent brain damage.

So in particular in adults, whether travelling overseas or not, we will be keen to promote this .

PATS - Patient Assistance Travel Scheme

This has recently become electronic on a secure website and is no longer a paper-based triplicate form. In one way that is excellent, however in another it has made doing them a lot more time-consuming and basically takes a minimum of 10 minutes of a GPs time to fill this out on-line. Therefore this is a gentle reminder that if you feel you are eligible for PATS you will need a stand alone appt to get the necessary paperwork filled out on-line, and this cannot be retrospectively dated and will not be done outside of a standard appointment.

ASFMC Management has recently been in contact with the head of PATS due to inconsistencies with applications of who is eligible ,as heresay from patients about actual clerks there "promising favours". Please do not shoot the messenger—we will fill in the on line paperwork if requested or offer a follow up appt for PATS if deemed potentially eligible but ASFMC has no say in who gets approved and who does not.

Be mindful that locums will have no idea about this system and will not be registered on line , so cannot really be doing PATS requests.

Considering at times it is 2 flights return from Alice Springs to Adelaide (escort) or Melbourne plus extra costs, the cost of a standard appt pales into insignificance.