

## ORGAN DONATION

Organ and tissue donation is a life-saving and life-transforming medical process where organs and tissues are removed from a donor and transplanted into someone very ill or dying from organ failure. While most transplants are performed after a donor's death, kidney and split liver transplants are possible from living donors.

Australia has one of the highest transplant success rates in the world and research shows that the majority of Australians support organ and tissue donation.

One donor can save the lives of up to 10 people and significantly improve the lives of dozens more.

Almost 1700 Australians are waiting for a transplant on the official waiting list at any one time. Sadly Australians die each week waiting for the gift of a heart, liver, kidney, lung or pancreas transplant. Others spend weeks or months in hospital making several trips to hospital every week for dialysis or other treatments. Some people need to be attached to an oxygen tank 24 hours a day while they wait.

Australia's record in positive transplant outcomes is among the best in the world. In 2008, 889 Australians received transplants from just 259 deceased donors. This meant that only 1/3 of the overall need for transplants was met. The challenge is to greatly increase that number and help those on the waiting list.

People requiring organ transplants are usually very ill or dying because their own organ is failing. They range from young babies and children through to older adults. People needing tissue transplants can also be of any age. In some cases, tissues saves lives. More often, they greatly improve the recipients' lives.

### **ARE YOU A DONOR? HAVE YOU DISCUSSED THIS TOPIC WITH YOUR PARTNER OR FAMILY?**

How do I register??

Join the Australian Organ Donor register, which is the national register administered by Medicare Australia. To join the register go to:

- [www.medicare.gov.au](http://www.medicare.gov.au)
- [www.donorregister.gov.au](http://www.donorregister.gov.au)
- Call 1800 777 203
- Or visit any medicare office in the country

Only authorised medical/healthcare personnel involved in organ and tissue donation have access to the Australian Organ Donor Register so your privacy is secure.

It is important to talk to your family about your decision to donate as donation will only proceed with their consent.

## SKIN CLINICS

Due to patient demand and recent media exposure, skin cancer checks have become increasingly popular again. These specific clinics have been held every 3rd Thursday afternoon. The standard cost of this appointment will be increasing to \$150 from the 1st April but there may be additional costs if liquid nitrogen, or photography is done. The frequency of these clinics vary and if increasing patient demands continue we will offer more regular clinics. More recently patients have stated they are unavailable for the clinic times and booking longer appointments haphazardly at their convenience—this will no longer be possible as it is too distracting for Dr Mitchell. Rightly or wrongly these clinics have become "larger than life" including patients from other clinics wanting to come just for a "skin check" - therefore ASFMC Management is choosing to run them like specialist clinics. We will be gauging interest over the next few weeks to decide on the frequency of the "skin cancer" clinics but at the moment it seems likely to be run every 2nd Thursday afternoon. Please register your interest at reception.

### **RECALL OR FOLLOW-UP**

On reviewing our recall policy ASFMC Management has gauged it is costing the clinic way too much money and time in phone calls, left messages, attempts to get patients to call back and collect requested pathology, re-messaging (at times 5 x or more). We will now be posting any requests for repeat pathology eg. planned repeat for chronic disease, or repeat requests for more recent testing. Please ensure your correct details are registered at reception—the number of "return to sender" letters we receive for patients we know are still in Alice Springs is mind blowing—again another waste of administration costs. E-mail will still be used for bulk e-mailing such as when our "flu clinic" will be held or for other important public health information—perhaps including this newsletter??

## **ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE**

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## **ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE**

### **NEWSLETTER 13/10**

Please welcome our new receptionist Deanne who will be out the front with Jodie, so Susie can spend more time being clinical as the practice nurse and less time covering reception.

ASFMC management also want to welcome new GP registrar Dr Sarah Cush who will be with us in Alice Springs until the end of July.

We continue to make administration changes to try and streamline our overhead costs—this includes the addition of a new phone service, reminding patients of our DNA (Do not Attend—cancellation) policy that in fact has been in place since we opened. Patients not turning up to appointments not only costs us money, but impacts on capacity and contributes to longer waiting times to see the GP of your choice.

**Please respect the no smoking policy on the entire grounds of the clinic. I am sick of picking up butts!! The signage cannot be clearer.**



Proud to be working with the community  
to improve Central Australian Health

**17 Stuart Highway  
Entrance off Kekwick Ave  
Parking at rear  
Phone 08 8952 7774 ALL HOURS**

## SWINE FLU "MINI CLINICS"

Due to patient demand ASFMC has been offering a mini swine flu vaccination clinic every Friday morning from 08:15—09:15hrs since November 2009. We will only continue to provide this type of clinic while the demand is there—anticipating not doing them after April 2010. If our clinic is full or if you cannot attend on Friday mornings Community Health at Flynn Drive is offering the vaccination. Please call Flynn Drive on **89516711** to make an appointment.

The H1N1 vaccine comes in a multidose vial that contains 10 adult doses—it is fully funded by the government and has been available since mid October in Alice Springs. The usual fluvax contains 3 different strains of influenza whereas this is just a stand alone strain. If you are considering getting the swine flu vaccine we would strongly advocate considering getting the annual fluvax, which continues to provide 3 different strains every year. This is funded if you are aged >65 yrs or any age if ATSI—otherwise is privately costs \$22 at ASFMC. The Australian government has also broadened the funding in 2010 to include all patients who are pregnant, or have chronic health issues—such as asthma, COPD, diabetes, heart disease, which means more patients will not be out of pocket for the annual influenza vaccination.

We are unable to source supply of the new influenza vaccine as of now (Feb 2010) due to delays in manufacturing because of the swine flu vaccination roll out last year. We anticipate running our usual "Flu clinics" in April—so watch our for notification of the exact dates. In the past it has been held over 2 or 3 Tuesday afternoons with 5 minute appointments with our practice nurse Susie and Dr Mitchell so that we usually can vaccinate 60 + patients in one afternoon. At the moment I am thinking Tuesday afternoon April 13th and 20th from 1.30—5.30pm. The visit will be funded through medicare—no out of pocket expense—and the vaccines offered include annual influenza, swine flu vaccine and we usually ask about tetanus boosters as well. However if you are not eligible for the funded fluvax this will cost \$22 and may be considering tax deductible depending on the advice of your accountant and the work you do.

## KIDNEYS

Most people have 2 kidneys but people can live with only one. They are situated in the lower back just under the bottom of the ribcage. A kidney is about the size of your fist and shaped like a large jelly bean weighing about 150g. They are very important because they remove waste and fluid from the body and produce urine (wee). Every day our kidneys perform an essential job of filtering 200 litres of blood to remove about 2 litres of waster products and unneeded water.

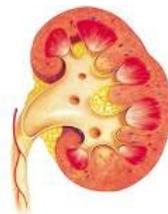
They can also help to:

- Control blood pressure
- Produce red blood cells
- Keep our bones strong
- Maintain the chemical balance of our blood
- Change vitamin D so our body can use it
- Get rid of drugs and poisons



The kidneys are designed to last a lifetime. They do an amazing job!! It is important to be kind to them. Your kidneys intervene in numerous processes and balances of the body and control many vital body functions and are amazing master chemists of the body. The major role of kidneys is to remove waste from the blood and eliminate it in the urine. To remove this waste and extra water, blood enters the kidney through the renal artery, blood is then cleaned in the kidney as it passes through tiny filters called nephrons. One kidney contains about 1 million nephrons. Each nephron contains a filtering apparatus called a glomerulus. We have about 1 million hair-pin like glomeruli at birth but lose about 100,000 of these every decade of life. Droplets of filtered blood pass through a number of tubules into the medulla into a central collecting system. If all these tubes were connected together they would run for close to 80kilometres!! Cleaned blood returns to the body by the renal vein. Waste removed by the kidney passes through a tube called the ureter to the bladder where it is stored as urine. When the bladder is full the urine passes out of the body through another tube called the urethra.

[www.kidney.org.au](http://www.kidney.org.au) 1800 682 531



## CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

The most common reasons why people start dialysis or kidney transplantation in Australia are:

- Diabetic nephropathy (32% of all new patients)
- Glomerulonephritis (24%)
- Hypertension (14%)
- Reflux nephropathy (3%)

While the causes of end stage kidney disease are well known, the causes of chronic kidney disease (CKD) are not well established.

Australian population studies have revealed that CKD is more common than we think—1 in 3 adults are at increased risk of developing CKD and 1 in 7 adults have some sign of CKD. Symptoms of CKD may not appear until the kidney function is severely and irreversibly impaired.

Who is at risk? - those who smoke, have diabetes, or high blood pressure or are overweight. Some patients have a family history, but anyone who is > 50 years or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) are at risk of kidney disease. Increasing amounts of protein in the urine correlate directly with an increased rate of progression into end-stage kidney disease. The amount of proteinuria can be reduced dramatically by the use of certain drugs and when the reduction is achieved early intervention can reduce CKD progression and cardiovascular risk by 50% and improves quality of life.

Clinical presentation of CKD - generally patients are asymptomatic and most patients with CKD only have symptoms when they reach end stage kidney disease requiring dialysis or transplant (90%+ of the kidney function can be damaged before symptoms appear).

Symptoms can include:

- Nocturia—going to the toilet more at night
- Malaise—tiredness, fatigue
- Anorexia, nausea, or vomiting
- Pruritus—itch, rash
- Restless legs, bad breath or foul taste in mouth
- Dyspnoea—shortness of breath

The simplest way to check your kidneys is a urine test testing for the amount of protein your kidneys excrete—and when functioning well that level is not usually detectable. Ask your GP for a simple urine test next time you are in—also when was the last time you had your blood pressure measured??

