

THE M5 PROJECT

Currently, 5 men die every hour in Australia from potentially preventable illnesses. This has to stop!

The **M5** Project is a bold new movement that will use the number 'five' to break down the barriers that prevent Australian men from going to a GP, and ultimately, save men's lives.

The **M5** Project is being managed by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners as their GPs are at the forefront of dealing with men's health issues every day. With the assistance of seed funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, this initiative has drawn together a diverse group of health organisations all focused on ensuring men live long and rich lives.

Men can get involved in The **M5** Project in a number of ways – it can be as simple as directing someone to this website, printing off a poster to put up on your club or office or simply by chatting to a mate. All it takes is **five** minutes to get involved and get people thinking.

As a start, men can take five preventive steps:

- Share your family history with your GP
- Know your healthy weight
- Check your blood pressure
- Stop smoking – it's the only health option
- Maintain a healthy mind and a healthy body

M5 HEALTH ONLINE is a new online health and wellness program designed to encourage men to access relevant health information and interactive health risk assessments, supported by professional ongoing support and advice. This online tool not only educates men about their health, but also gives them the opportunity to alter their behaviour and improve their health status.

Who is it for?

Men of all ages can access the information they need to better manage their health, prevent future illness, and live healthier, happier lives. The program is suitable for employers and human resource departments in the workplace that are keen to provide their staff with an engaging and interactive employee wellness program, that puts men in control of their own health and wellbeing, which can benefit morale and productivity in the workplace. www.m5project.com.au

AGPAL REACCREDITATION

ASFMC will be under going a new 3 year accreditation update with AGPAL later in 2010. AGPAL is the market leader providing quality accreditation for general practices, medical deputising services and Aboriginal medical services. AGPAL guides practices through accreditation against professional standards developed by the RACGP. Continuous quality improvement acknowledges the need for primary health care providers to continually improve, upgrade and monitor services the practice provides including education, practice management, the rights and needs of patients and the physical facilities of the practice. The aim of continuous quality improvement is to make substantial and sustained improvements in the quality of care to ultimately produce better health outcomes for patients.

ASFMC Management values all feedback—positive, negative but always preferably constructive. Please feel free to fill in the structured questionnaire at reception and either drop it into the box there or post back at your convenience.

INFLUENZA SEASON

ASFMC stocks the seasonal fluvax which retails for \$22. It covers 3 influenza strains which this year includes the "swine flu". It is estimated over the winter months that Central Australia will once again be hit with high numbers of cases. It is not too late to vaccinate. Currently we are unable to offer the fluvax for children under the age of 5 years of age due to government restrictions—however would like to remind all parents of the swine flu vaccination which is fully funded and safe. If a child under the age of 10 years has never had any fluvax before it is recommended that they have a second dose 4 weeks apart. If the government lifts it ban on children under the age of 5 years of age for the usual fluvax we will let parents know.

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ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE

NEWSLETTER 15/10

Unfortunately Dr Sarah Cush has left our clinic for the warmer weather of Darwin and we sincerely wish her all the best in her future training. She will be missed.

Dr Katrina Marshall has recently successfully passed her Fellowship exams for GP training and will be remaining at ASFMC in the immediate future.

The weather lately has been freezing - I cannot remember winters in Alice Springs being so cold and wet !! ASFMC Management apologises for the slipperiness of the tiles at the front entrance and encourage all patients to be mindful when it has been raining. PLEASE TAKE CARE.

Some new medicare options have recently become available that ASFMC Management is keen to adopt and promote for our patient population—stay tuned.

Please respect the no smoking policy on the entire grounds of the clinic.



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**

VICTIMS OF CRIME COUNSELLING SUPPORT

This programme is funded by the NT Department of Justice to provide free counselling support to reduce the potentially negative impact of a violent or traumatic crime. Face to face counselling is available in Alice Springs, and telephone counselling is possible across the territory as well as periodic visits.

Free call: 1800 898 500

E-mail: resolve@anglicare-nt.org.au

Website: www.anglicare-nt.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Checks

The Australian Government has recently changed the health assessment options for patients who identify as ATSI. Any patient who is aged > 15 years may wish to partake in the opportunity to do a longer health assessment at our clinic. ASFMC will be doing a mail out shortly inviting patients who have identified as ATSI to consider doing a thorough preventative check. If you do receive this invitation it is because you have self-identified on our original paperwork when first coming to ASFMC. Please inform reception staff or your GP if this has been recorded incorrectly.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-Payment Measure

This is a new Australian Government scheme aiming to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients access PBS medicines by reducing cost barriers. Co-payment relief will be targeted to patients with chronic disease or chronic disease risk factors.

This programme is intended to benefit ATSI people of any age who present with an existing disease or chronic disease risk factor, or in the opinion of their doctor are unlikely to adhere to their medication regime without assistance through the measure or would experience setbacks in the prevention or ongoing management of chronic disease if they patient did not take their prescribed medication.

ASFMC can now register eligible patients for this programme and the Indigenous Health Incentive. Once registered patients holding a concession card will get their PBS medicines without paying a co-payment to the pharmacy. Non-concession patients will pay the current concession rate instead of the usual full fee. **www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease**

707—for patients at risk of diabetes

The Australian Government has reinvented an initiative to provide health assessments for those aged between **40-49 years**. The aim of this initiative is for patients to participate in an extended appointment with their health care provider, identify any illness or precursors to illness and then proactively work to manage or improve overall health to avoid future health problems particularly focused on preventing type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease.

We have done a mail out recently for all our patients in this age group and included the "Get a new lease on life" brochure which has the AUSDRISK tool inside. We would encourage all patients to fill it out, and record your overall score.

Currently of our >5000 active patients on our books, we have close to 800 patients in this age group. ASFMC Management is very keen to adopt this programme, similar to the previous 717 health assessments that have been done in the past and proactively screen our patient population for preventative disease. If you are a new patient, or your contact details have changed, so you have not received this tool, and are interested please ask at reception or in your appointment with your GP for a copy to fill out.

You will need to book a standard appointment with a GP to discuss your wish and eligibility to access this type of service so please bring your "orange" filled in AUSDRISK handout to that appointment. The GP will discuss what is involved in more details and arrange the appropriate blood tests that will need to be done prior to the longer 60 minute appointment. The 707 Health Assessment appointment will take 50mins with our practice nurse Susie Leister and then 15—20 mins with your GP. As part of this programme the government has included funding for subsidised "Lifestyle Modification Programmes" to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. ASFMC can facilitate that referral if you are eligible.

www.newleaseoflife.com.au

EATING CHOCOLATE

Researchers at Stockholm's Karolinska Institute have found that people who ate chocolate 2–3 x a week reduced the risk of a recurring heart attack by 3 times. The researchers believe it is the antioxidants in cocoa which protect against disease causing free radicals which contribute to heart disease, cancer and aging. Hmmm, any excuse for Dr Mitchell to partake of more chocolate, but it really needs to be the good quality dark chocolate 70 % cocoa or higher.

IODINE DEFICIENCY

Why is adequate intake of iodine so important? Iodine deficiency is the leading cause of mental retardation in children. Iodine is found in foods such as seafood, iodised salt and some vegetables. Our bodies need iodine to make thyroid hormones. The thyroid is the gland in the throat that regulates many metabolic processes including growth and energy expenditure.

In the developing foetus, baby and young child, the effects of iodine deficiency are serious, including stunted growth, diminished intelligence and mental retardation. Lack of iodine is a major problem in developing countries and is considered to be the world's number one reason for preventable intellectual disability on children. Recently Australia has also been added to the world's list of countries with low iodine—due to our decreased consumption of iodised salt and the way that milk is processed differently. There is now laws in place that the salt used in baking bread must be iodised, as well as fortified with folic acid. This alone will not increase the levels of iodine to a safe level for our developing children. Pregnant and breastfeeding women must take a supplement to ensure adequate levels. Excessive amounts of iodine can lead to goitre—an enlarged thyroid. Anyone on a low-salt diet should consider adding an extra serve of seafood to their diet or vegetarians could use seaweed or kelp.

www.thyroid.org.au www.healthyeatingclub.org