

DIABETES AND AT RISK ASSESSMENTS

With Susie's involvement as our practice nurse we are going to proactively invite all patients who are between 40—49 years of age and potentially at risk of diabetes to a funded one hour visit with her. It will involve updating a baseline ECG (screening tool for the heart), potentially extra blood tests, physical measurements and lifestyle and dietary information. Our aim is to prevent progression to type 2 diabetes in those at risk, and better educate our patient population without penalising them with charges for this visit. However if someone declined the preventative check, we would make note in their file, as ASFMC prides itself on the preventative strategies we provide.

DIABETES EDUCATOR TRAINING

Susie is halfway through her year postgraduate course through the Gold Coast Southern Cross University to ultimately be eligible to be a private diabetic educator in town and access Medicare billing separately to what ASFMC already does using her as a practice nurse. If you are an existing diabetic patient or in particular newly diagnosed Dr Mitchell is keen to utilise Susie and her new acquisition of knowledge to our patients advantage. Our routine annual cycle of care "Diabetes Clinic" are still being run. Unfortunately the ad hoc nature of these clinics still happens due to patient demand and competing priorities for Dr Mitchell but the plan is to be running these more regularly during the year, usually on a Wednesday afternoon. This is a funded visit by invitation only but if you are a diabetic patient and feel you have never accessed this service yet please enquire through our reception staff about your eligibility.

NEWEST GOVT ANNOUNCEMENT ON MEDICARE PROPOSED CHANGES

The Aus govt has back flipped on numerous Medicare proposed changes over the last year but the one that seems set to stay is freezing the Medicare rebates for standard consults for the next 5 years. As pitiful as the previous increases have been (not even keeping up with CPI—consumer price index) now the current National Government plans to keep the rebate stagnant for a standard appointment at \$37.05. Our current private fee for that length of consult is \$80. Once this comes into play we will go ahead with the planned changes to pensioner bulk billing to reduce the unnecessary visits so that a nominated charge yet to be decided will be applied to visits initiated by patients that really were not needed. We still have a handful of elderly patients who frequent our clinic up to 4—6 times a month and at least 3 of those visits are not normally required. If there was a financial cost added to those visits our hope (and I assume the Government's hope) is that unnecessary visits will reduce. We would not penalise patients who were legitimately due to be seen for repeat prescriptions, or acutely unwell etc

NATIONAL PERTUSSIS VACCINE SHORTAGE

Currently as of 30/04/15 ASFMC has no stock of adacelpolio and cannot source it from our usual supplier until June 2015 at the earliest. We still have IPOL (polio) and adacel in stock for now but this will mean 2 injections instead of one for the same coverage. Also the funded Boostrix for new parents stock is running low and ASH pharmacy cannot guarantee a supply date. We will inform patients of any changes in supply as they happen.



ALICE SPRINGS
FAMILY MEDICAL

NEWSLETTER

EDITION 32
MAY 2015

DOCTORS

Dr Deb Mitchell

GP Registrar Dr Ally Lu

PRACTICE NURSE

Susie Leister RN

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Practice Manager—Susie Leister

Receptionists—Lynlee & Angela

PRACTICE HOURS

Monday to Friday 8:15am—5:30pm

Sat, Sun & Public Holiday's - closed



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WHAT'S NEW?

ASFMC hopes all patients and their families had a great Easter and are enjoying the cooler weather. Great for getting out and about for exercise now—no excuses!!

ASFMC Management is seriously trying to work out a viable “transition plan” to make for a better work-life balance for Dr Mitchell and Susie while still aiming to uphold the high level of care that we provide.

As Dr Mitchell has been doing numerous post-graduate courses through the University of Qld for skin cancer medicine she has now decided to continue that extra study and work towards her Masters in Skin Cancer Medicine. Due to the increasing demand for skin clinics this is our first easy step in the transition to provide more regular “skin clinics” on a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon at least averaging once a week (see entry later in newsletter for more details).

Due to delays in sourcing both funded and private fluvax this year we have not been able to run our usual “flu clinics” like in the past. Our stock is here though and we have already vaccinated over 200 patients but unfortunately we do not have the capacity to put on future “flu clinics”. The sooner you are vaccinated the sooner you are protected and town is certainly full of interesting viruses etc since the footy carnival over Easter and the extra people from communities still here. Consider vaccination!

SKIN CLINICS

Dr Mitchell has recently completed more skin cancer surgical training in the Gold Coast affiliated with the University of QLD. She is working towards her Masters in Skin Cancer Medicine and is continuing to upskill her surgical skills all the time.

We now can do shave biopsies to get tissue diagnoses of suspicious lesions during the skin clinic appointments plus outside during standard appt times.

A Hyfrecator is able to provide electrosurgical diathermy for various skin conditions as well as providing better coagulation control for when surgical procedures are carried out in the clinic. This machine can destroy a number of benign skin lesions and with it's wide range of power settings it can treat the most delicate facial lesion as well as the thickest scaling lesions on the trunk.

Due to increasing population demand we are running them every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 1.30pm onwards. The billing is very different to a standard appointment due to the specialised training Dr Mitchell has done and the use of extra equipment. It is a preventative top to toe physical check up requiring patients to fully undress. There is a booking fee which has been in place since 2011 to streamline these clinics which is nonrefundable if appointments are missed. Please enquire at reception for a factsheet if you think you would like to book this type of appointment.

They should be viewed as a preventative check and if there are specific skin lesions you are concerned about please book a standard appointment to have that issue dealt with immediately.

FLU VACCINATIONS

Who is eligible for the funded fluvax? Anyone over age 65 yrs, or 15 yrs if ATSI; anyone who has a chronic medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, heart problems, COPD, renal issues. If you are unsure about your eligibility please ask at reception when booking. **Our private fluvax will cost \$25** and we would suggest either a fit-in appointment which is <5 minutes and therefore a lot cheaper than a standard appt or if seeing the GP for an unrelated matter don't forget to ask about your eligibility. The fluvax may be considered a tax deductible expense depending on the advice of your accountant and the work you do.

TRAVEL MEDICINE

I am amazed at the number of patients who plan expensive and complicated overseas trips and then at the last minute belatedly think of travel vaccinations. Please seriously think of this issue at least 6 weeks prior to any planned trip as some locations do have recommended vaccinations that take 3 courses to get fully immunised over a 28 day period or longer. Also depending on your general fitness, past medical history and specific activities you plan to do, there may be a need to cover topics like altitude sickness for trekking, or malaria prophylaxis or prevention of traveller's diarrhoea or prevention of DVT when flying or other paperwork needing to be filled in for travel insurance purposes. A standard 10 min appt won't be enough time to cover everything. **DON'T LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE !!**