

Who is at risk of type 2 diabetes?

- people > 45 yrs who have an immediate family member with type 2 diabetes
- people > 55 yrs
- women who have had gestational diabetes
- men in general
- people who are overweight

What is your waist measurement? Men should be < 90 cm and women < 80 cm to reduce the risk of you developing type 2 diabetes.

If you have not had a recent fasting blood glucose test consider asking the GP next time you present. Type 2 diabetes develops slowly and the symptoms may not be noticed or recognised. Symptoms can include excessive thirst and urination, unexplained weight changes, weakness and fatigue, blurred vision, skin infections and slow healing of wounds. Sometimes there are no symptoms at all, which is why it is more important you know all the risk factors.



www.diabetesinfamilies.com.au

PREVENTING DIABETES

Several studies around the world have shown that three out of five people with pre-diabetes (impaired glucose tolerance) can prevent or at least delay getting type 2 diabetes by making lifestyle changes such as increasing their activity level, eating a healthier diet and achieving a modest weight loss (5–10 kg). Major clinical trials in USA, China, India, Finland and Japan have shown that 'lifestyle interventions' with group or individual counseling are very effective in helping people change their diet and get more exercise. The question is, how long do the 'intervention' benefits last when the professional support ends and you are on your own? A [recent report](#) in the *Lancet* suggests that a period of active lifestyle intervention can produce a significant reduction in the incidence of diabetes over the long term.

DNA POLICY CHANGE

Any outstanding 'Did Not Attend' DNA accounts will be chased for payment. ASFMC is not only providing health care, but is also running a business. ASFMC Management appreciate that at times emergencies do happen, and at the discretion of our Practice Manager we will make an exception. Since we opened our doors in September 2006, we have had more than 400 "Did Not Attend" for appointments. That is a loss of potentially \$24,000 since we opened our business. This impacts on revenue, but more importantly this impacts on our capacity to offer appointments for patients. As we were no longer accepting new patients a few months ago due to an inability to match the demand, allowing DNAs to remain outstanding will no longer happen.

If you receive an invoice for a DNA (which is well known and consistently reminded to patients when booking any appointments) and it is not paid within the following two weeks, ASFMC will inactivate your file, and choose to no longer offer you any appointments in the future. This will also involve any direct family members—children or partners. The fee is \$40, and we accept credit card payments over the phone, or you can come in and pay in person.

As the cost of running a medical clinic continue to rise (just like petrol and food prices for all consumers) we need to ensure we are able to still provide a high level of service without "haemorrhaging money" through either unnecessary expenses or bad debtors. We are trying to proactively become more monetary efficient without resorting to increasing our fees. Please be respectful of that.

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ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE

NEWSLETTER 7/08

Due to excessive demand on our practice capacity we had to make the regrettable decision to stop accepting new patients effective 29th April 2008. This decision had not been made lightly but Dr Mitchell could not continue to provide quality care for our 4000 active patients if we continue to randomly allow more and more patients to access our service.

We are in the process of recruiting other practitioners to work under the ASFMC banner— ASFMC Management would like to welcome new GP Registrar Dr. Katrina Marshall who will be starting work in late July 2008. Due to increased capacity with another GP we are now able to "open our books" again to all new patients.

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**

NO LONGER DOING VISA MEDICALS

Due to increasing frustrations with dealing with Health Services Australia in Darwin, ASFMC Management has made the difficult decision to no longer be affiliated with providing Immigration Medicals. This has come into effect as of 30th June 2008, and **we would appreciate all enquiries need to be directed to HSA—phone 08 8981 7492 in Darwin.**

NOT TOO LATE FOR THE FLUVAX

With health authorities predicting Australia's flu season is yet to peak, experts state it is not too late to vaccinate at-risk patients. The winter season is open and the reservoir of "rubbish" in town at the moment seems excessive. Numerous people are struggling to recover from cold and flu symptoms. **Please remember that the fluvax only costs \$20** and this year's strain of influenza seems to be quite a nasty one.

What are the symptoms of influenza??

- chills, shivering, and fever (temperature > 38C)
- headache
- muscle aches and pains
- sore throat
- stuffy or runny nose
- sneezing
- dry cough
- fatigue, tiredness
- trouble breathing

One of the most effective ways to protect you, your friends and family from the flu is to practise good personal hygiene.

TRAVEL ADVICE

ASFMC has joined "Travel Medicine Alliance" to gain better access to travel resources for our patients. We stock most routine vaccines and can dispense directly from the clinic usually at a lower cost than a private script to the chemist. ASFMC is an accredited yellow fever vaccine provider. We would recommend planning to touch base at least one month before any planned overseas travel. Please bring any previous vaccination records with you so we can update your file.

www.travelmedicine.com.au



CHANGE TO RECALL SYSTEMS

Due to increasing stationary and postage costs ASFMC Management is keen to decrease the administration cost associated with encouraging patients to remember to follow-up with certain medical issues—eg. Pap smear, blood tests, blood pressure checks etc

We are still very keen to remain proactive but in the future recall reminders will be either via e-mail, SMS or phone message. If pathology forms need to be collected, a message will be left stating they are at the clinic for collection. At times we will still send mail (recent examples bone density testing, pap smears final and bowel cancer screening). This is part of ASFMC's mission to continue to provide thorough preventative health care. If your contact details have changed please let reception staff know as we often get "return to sender" on letters sent out which wastes both time and money.

REFERRAL AND PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

Since we opened, Dr. Mitchell has written hundreds of prescriptions, amended medical certificates and written referrals, which were either never picked up, and more importantly never paid for. This means that when remaining after hours to look at the numerous messages, ASFMC Management estimates that perhaps hundreds of hours of unpaid paperwork was done. The new policy means that until items are paid for, they will not be done. Costs remain the same—\$20 for a referral, \$10 for a prescription for each item and \$10 for medical certificates. **Please remember, just because you ask for it, does not mean it will be done without an appointment!!!!**

More recently our reception staff have been on the receiving end of quite rude and abusive language regarding this policy. ASFMC Management does not tolerate this type of behaviour and Dr. Mitchell would like to kindly remind patients that this service has been offered to try and free up capacity for simple repeats scripts, thus saving patients money and also allowing other patients access to appointments. If this continues we will cease to provide that service, and only offer appointments for medical certificate extensions, referrals and prescriptions.

SKIN CLINICS

Due to increasing demands for preventative skin checks, and excisions Dr. Mitchell can only do these as longer appointments on every 3rd Thursday afternoon. Cost is the same as for a double appointment \$115 and includes a "goody bag". Excisions will only be done as the last double appointment of the day on a Tuesday and Friday. **These will only be done if a full skin check has been done prior.** At the moment there is a 6 week wait for scheduled excisions—if Dr. Mitchell feels that a skin lesion is suspicious of a melanoma this will be brought forward and "squeezed in" at an earlier time.

NATIONAL BOWEL CANCER SCREENING

Medicare Australia will send an invitation via mail to participate in the screen. If you chose to take up the offer, a test kit will be sent to you via mail. This simple test can be done at home and then sent by post to a lab for analysis. The results will be sent to ASFMC if you nominate us as your primary care provider. Due to the change in government recently **people who will be invited are those that turn 50 yrs of age, or 55 yrs of age or 65 yrs of age from 1/1/08 until 2010** depending on the term of government. People outside that age range will not be able to take part in the free screening program, but ASFMC strongly recommends all patients over the age of 50 yrs consider a FOB (faecal occult blood test) every 2 yrs, and we utilise the kits from Insure.

National Bowel Cancer Screening Program Info

1800 118 868 or www.cancerscreening.gov.au

SATURDAY MORNING CLINICS

As of 26th July ASFMC will be providing Saturday morning clinics from 0900—1300hrs again. Due to doctor fatigue we stopped providing this service in late April, and now have the renewed energy and enthusiasm to commence again!!! Please remember those appointments are meant to be for medical emergencies that cannot wait until the following week—it is a walk in clinic, no appointments are made. First in, first seen!!