

WHAT IS BLOOD PRESSURE?

Blood pressure (BP) is a measurement of the force your blood puts on blood vessel walls as it travels through your body. High BP is one of the most important risk factors for stroke. Your BP is expressed with two numbers eg. 120/80.

120 = Systolic pressure. It is the force your blood puts on the blood vessel walls as your heart pumps.

80 = Diastolic pressure. It is the force your blood put on blood vessel walls when your heart is resting between beats.

BP does not stay the same all of the time. The levels for normal and high BP are a guide only. If your BP was consistently over 140/90 this is known as hypertension.

What causes high blood pressure?

- A family history of high blood pressure
- Age (BP can rise as people get older)
- Men are more likely to have high BP than women
- Being overweight
- Excessive alcohol drinking
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Lack of exercise
- A diet high in salt



Do you know your numbers??

National Stroke Foundation 1800 787 653

www.strokefoundation.com.au

Eat Well Be Active www.your30.qld.gov.au

Go for your Life www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au

1300 73 98 99, Quitline 13 7848 www.quit.org.au

Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

OPERATING HOURS OVER HOLIDAY PERIOD

We will close earlier on the Monday and Wednesday evenings finishing at 1630hrs instead of 1900hrs starting the week before X'mas until mid January 2009.

Monday 22/12/08 - 0830 until 1630hrs

Tuesday 23/12/08 - 0830 until 1630hrs

Wednesday 24/12/08 - 0830 until 1630hrs

Thursday 25/12/08 CLOSED

Friday 26/12/08 CLOSED

Saturday 27/12/08 CLOSED

Sunday 28/12/08 CLOSED AS PER USUAL

Monday 29/12/08 - 0830 until 1630hrs

Tuesday 30/12/08 Usual hours

Wednesday 31/12/08 - 0830 until 1630hrs

Thursday 1/01/09 CLOSED

Friday 2/01/09 Usual hours

Saturday 3/01/09 Usual walk in clinic 0900—1200hrs

Late Monday & Wednesday evenings will not return until mid January as Dr. Mitchell is on leave. We will still be providing an after hours service for existing patients over this holiday period. This year Dr. Katrina Marshall will be the on-call doctor for that period.

ASFMC Management would like to wish all patients and their families a safe and prosperous New year in 2009.

ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE

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ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE

NEWSLETTER 8/08

ASFMC Management would like to welcome new GP Registrar Dr. Katrina Marshall who started 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 make Rebecca Hyman, our new receptionist (again) welcome—Jodie is still with us but this means Susie as our practice manager / practice nurse will no longer be needed to cover reception.

Merry X'mas and Happy New Year for 2009. Wow—how the year has flown!! We have now been open for over 2 years and continue to grow—currently we have close to 5000 active patients on our books.

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**

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.

We now stock travel first aid kits and medication kits to facilitate safer travel. The smaller kit costs \$80 and include items such as medications for motion sickness, antibiotics, diarrhoea, cold & flus, so that medications you would normally pay for on private prescription are included. The larger kit costs \$140 but includes absolutely everything that might be needed for more "exotic travel". They come in a handy bag that will make squeezing into a suitcase or backpack so much easier. We estimate that these kits are close to 30% cheaper than individual prescriptions for each item, which is why we have chosen to stock them at ASFMC. Please ask our reception staff if you would like to look through what is available in each kit. As there is prescription medication involved, only patients who have been seen by one of our GPs can purchase these items.

We also sell the book "**Travelling Well**" by **Dr. Deborah Mills for a cost of \$15.00.** It covers topics such as what to organise before travel, including vaccinations and medications, as well as individual topics on various diseases, common travel problems and what to do if you become unwell when overseas. We strongly recommend it as a valuable resource for any overseas travel.

To adequately cover all topics for travel medicine ASFMC would recommend booking a longer appointment, as you can see that there is potentially a lot to cover depending on how detailed your planned holiday may be!!!

www.travelmedicine.com.au

Ph 1300 421 142



FEE & MEDICARE REBATE CHANGES

Due to increasing overhead costs, ASFMC will be slightly adjusting our fee structure as of 1st November 2008.

3 = < 5 minutes will remain at \$30

23 = 5-20minutes(standard appt) increased to **\$62**

36 = 20-40minutes(long appt) increased to **\$120**

44 = >40 minutes (x-long appt) increased to **\$180**

2 = after-hours call out to the clinic increased to **\$170**

1 = after-hours home visit **\$200**

The medicare rebate structure has changed as of the 1st November 2008 increasing by 2.3% (unfortunately CPI is much greater). This will mean a standard consult will increase the out of pocket expense by 90 cents. Eg. now costs \$62 (previously \$60) and medicare reimburses the patient \$33.55.

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.

More recently our reception staff have been on the receiving end of quite rude and abusive language regarding the policy change to "pay first before receiving prescriptions or medical certificates". ASFMC Management does not tolerate this type of behaviour and Dr. Mitchell would like to kindly remind patients that this service had been offered to try and free up capacity for simple repeats scripts, thus saving patients money and also allowing other patients access to appointments.

As the unrealistic expectations have continued we have ceased to provide extensions to medical certificates or prescriptions outside of appointments. **This means only referral requests may be honoured outside an appointment if clear documentation states the GP and patient have previously discussed it. This will attract the \$20 fee but prescriptions or medical certificates will not be issued outside an appointment.**

HOW BRAIN HEALTHY ARE YOU?

Research shows that people who lead a 'brain-healthy' lifestyle have less chance of developing Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia.

To help reduce your risk of developing dementia:

- Keep your brain active ~ try things like reading, crosswords, playing board games or a musical instrument, enrol in a formal course or education, visiting an art gallery or museum and challenging your brain at work
- Eat healthily
- Be physically active ~ try things like walking, gardening, cycling, swimming, yoga, dancing, pilates or playing sport or tai chi
- Manage your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, blood sugar and body weight
- Participate in social activities ~ catch up regularly with family and friends, join a club or group, or volunteer
- Don't smoke
- Only drink alcohol in moderation
- Protect your head from injury ~ wear a bike helmet when cycling, wear a seat belt and take care as a pedestrian

Doing all these things can't guarantee that you won't develop dementia, but research shows that they may help reduce your risk and may even delay the onset of dementia. And the great news is they are also good for your overall health and wellbeing.



www.alzheimers.org.au Alice Springs: 08 8952 9799

National dementia Helpline 1800 100 500