



Alice Springs
**Skin Cancer
Clinic**

Skin clinics are now run every Monday morning (in particular due to the large numbers from remote or cattle properties), every 2nd Tuesday afternoon and every Thursday afternoon. Depending on demand these will continue to increase in frequency. We will experiment with adding Wednesday mornings prior to our Xmas closure, and if demand stays high, they will likely remain next year in 2017.

Dr Mitchell has completed another module on Advanced Head and Neck surgery but is not pretending to be equivalent to a plastic surgeon. By offering certain procedures here at the clinic under local anaesthetic though, we can save time, money and stress due to the delays in seeing appropriate private specialists interstate. Other options are always offered so informed financial decisions can be made, and she is not offended or upset if patients are keen to follow up with other resources.

We now stock picato and can dispense this medication, linked to a funded visit to get our practice nurse to apply the first treatment dose. It is a 3 day course, and due to increasing variation in chemist dispensing costs and patients concerns about where to apply it (sometimes not following through 6—12 months after seeing Dr Mitchell in a skin clinic appt) we feel this will better patient compliance and thus ultimately better patient outcomes.

As of 1st November 2016 the Aus govt “streamlined” numerous Medicare item numbers related to skin cancer medicine. One of these was related to how we charge Medicare for biopsies—shave biopsies will no longer be eligible as a way to fully remove skin cancers, even though at times this is in fact an appropriate way to confirm a tissue diagnosis. The biggest change then will be in the skin clinic appointments that it would be rare for a shave biopsy to be offered as it has been in the past, as ultimately histopathology can only be charged if sutures are inserted. The last skin clinic for 2016 will be on 1st Dec 2016 due to Dr Mitchell’s upcoming surgery and they will likely not restart again until the end of January 2017. As always if you have a specific skin lesion you are concerned about please do not wait until the skin clinics restart in the New Year but see someone sooner.



**ALICE DIABETES
EDUCATION**

Are you aged between 40—49? You might be eligible for a health assessment to determine your risk of developing diabetes and other chronic diseases. Current Medicare arrangements mean this type of Intensive hour funded visit can be offered every 3 years. You do not need to be an existing patient but you do have to see Dr Mitchell first to receive the correct pathology request form, and ensure your eligibility. A cost effective way if you are in this age group is to consider a thorough skin check!! Thus there is no need for an extra appointment with Dr Mitchell unless you feel there are other matters to discuss. **Interested?? Then discuss with Lynlee the best way to link you to this service.**



NEWSLETTER

**EDITION 3
Nov 2016**

DOCTORS

Dr Deb Mitchell

**PRACTICE NURSE/DIABETES
EDUCATOR**

Susie Leister RN

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Practice Manager—Susie Leister

Receptionist—Lynlee

PRACTICE HOURS

Monday to Friday 9am —5pm
Sat, Sun & Public Holiday’s - closed

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community to improve Central
Australian Health



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WHAT'S NEW?

Warmer weather is trying to start, and with all the recent rain, wild flowers are beautiful, but the grasses potentially mean a wicked hayfever season for those who suffer. Another chronic disease management item we are proactively offering is funded asthma visits. If you have an asthma diagnosis or know of someone who does, please direct them to Lynlee to enquire about a visit with Dr Mitchell, to then plan funded follow up visits if they are in fact eligible.

Due to the transition and upcoming major surgery for Dr Mitchell in early December 2016 we will be closing Friday 16th December 2016 and last clinical appointments the week prior. Due to the successful transition of the clinic and the extremely expensive cost of locums we will close over the Xmas and New Yr break for this 4 week period like other businesses do in Alice Springs. The clinic will re-open Monday 16th January 2017 with reduced hours and Lynlee here to give results, and answering phones to book appointments. Susie will be clinical in late January and Dr Mitchell availability will totally depend on how her surgery and post-operative recovery goes in January 2017. Unfortunately due to so many variables we are unable to give a set return to work date but as soon as ASM management knows Lynlee can start booking appointments. We sincerely apologise for this unavoidable closure, but are trying to give our current patients as much practical notice as possible to ensure they can plan accordingly.

RELEASE OF INFO REQUESTS

We have reintroduced the usual administration fee of \$50+GST to produce your entire file with a cover letter to the doctor you might be choosing if no longer seeing Dr Mitchell. It would make sense if there is minimal information on your file that it could be sourced directly from the lab or ASH. As we have 15,000 patients on our database and some have not been personally seen for years, we will not be actioning requests from other clinics for medical summaries or other basic information they can either source directly from the Alice Springs Hospital, or Westerns, or you as the patient could easily tell them in person.

POTENTIAL NURSE RECRUITMENT IN 2017

If you know someone who might be interested in working part-time as either an enrolled nurse, or registered nurse in private general practice please encourage them to drop their CV/ resume into Susie our Practice Manager.

At least 50% of what they would be doing will be assisting Dr Mitchell with simple surgical procedures, and being trained in simple skin techniques like picato application. The rest would be related to chronic disease management and travel medicine, with an up to date vaccination training certificate required.

We will be formally advertising in the New Year so feel free to circulate our intent!!



Alice Travel Medicine

We are linked to Travel Medicine Alliance and have been an active member since 2007. Have a look at their website for updated travel blogs and information

www.travelmedicine.com.au

It is our turn to write the blog in December for TMA's website—hopefully I get inspired, so check it out. Influenza vaccinations remain recommended all year round, due to the potential impact “catching the flu” can have, not only on an upcoming holiday but just day to day implications and needing time off from work or school. Our current stock of both types of fluvax will expire end of Jan 17 and next year's strains are usually released late Feb or March 17.

If you have private health insurance please remember to check with your individual fund what you might be able to claim back from various vaccinations. Depending on your occupation certain vaccinations would also be legitimately tax deductions. We always provide you with an itemised invoice so please don't forget to check as this can dramatically reduce your out of pocket expense. Currently the NT govt is funding measles vaccinations if not immune so this is offered on blood test requests to confirm protection.