



## Managing Medications Research

Prescribing medicines is an integral part of modern medical practice. The range of medications available for different illnesses continues to increase and while the medical staff at Bulli Medical Practice are confident they manage prescription medication to the highest standard they are open to quality improvement.

Bulli Medical Practice and respected local pharmacist, Margaret Jordan, have received a grant from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to investigate the management of prescription medications in patients over the age of 65 years, particularly with respect to kidney function.

Participation in the study is voluntary (not obligatory) and if you are interested and consent to participate, Margaret will review your medication profile and your renal (kidney) function from previous blood tests performed at Bulli Medical Practice. If there are any recommendations based on her findings, Margaret will inform the medical staff in a report. All details collected are de-identified and there is no patient information that is passed on to any third party.

We are excited to be participating in this important project and we hope that it will contribute to the ongoing quality improvement of medicine prescribing within our practice.

## Women's Health

Drs Julie Blaze and Helen McLean recently attended 'The Annual Women's Health Update' at the University of NSW.

Professor John Eden gave an excellent talk on the pros and cons of various hormone therapies which will assist in tailoring medications to individual women's needs particularly in the area of HRT.

Dr Terri Foran gave a very informative talk updating our knowledge on contraception. Each year there are several new contraceptive options launched on the market and it was great to get expert advice without any pharmaceutical company influence.



There was an interesting talk on nicotine replacement and smoking cessation highlighting that different approaches are needed for men and women. Women metabolise nicotine faster than men so the effect of a Nicotine Replacement Patch wears off more quickly. This is important information when trying to help a woman to stop smoking.

We strive to refer patients to specialists we trust and think will best serve patient needs. Attending seminars of this nature is a great way to keep up with the latest advances in medicine as well as finding out the best person to refer to.

## Patients Self Check-in

Many patients have tried the new self check-in via the tablet on the reception desk, however some have experienced difficulties. Please note these instructions:

- ◇ The self-check-in will advise you after you have selected "Let reception know I'm here" whether "Your arrival has been noted" OR
- ◇ If "No appointment found" you will need to see Reception staff to be checked-in.

Alternatively, you can check-in via the Doc Appointments app on your mobile phone.



## Dr Nathan Beckman GP Registrar

I am really looking forward to a great year working at Bulli Medical Practice. I grew up in Stanwell Park and went to Bulli High School, completing my Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry and Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery at Wollongong University.

I am a local lad through and through, with a solid knowledge of the local community. I have a particular interest in helping people to maintain a high quality of life by focusing on preventative health care so they can make the most of the beautiful area we live in for as long as possible.

My other interests are paediatrics, accident and emergency and aesthetics, but I love nearly all aspects of medicine. When I'm not working I'll be surfing or diving around the northern beaches of the Illawarra.

### Staff & Community News

- ◇ Dr Rockey Lui will be absent for the next three months. We wish him well for his recovery from a shoulder operation.
- ◇ Welcome to our new GP Registrar, Dr Nathan Beckman, who commenced in February.
- ◇ Dr Harkness is on extended maternity leave.
- ◇ Congratulations to our Student Doctor, Suzanne Davies, on her recent marriage.
- ◇ Congratulations to Brooke McLean who was voted Team Member of the Year 2014 by her colleagues.
- ◇ Welcome to our new Doctor, Dr Louise Delaney, who is commencing in March.

## Influenza Season 2015

It's that time of year again when we prepare for the influenza season.

Just a few facts about influenza:

- ◇ Influenza viruses are mainly spread by droplets made when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also be spread through touching surfaces where infected droplets have landed.
- ◇ A new influenza vaccine is prepared each year to best match the strains predicted for the coming influenza season.
- ◇ Influenza can occur throughout the year but usually peaks in winter.
- ◇ The symptoms are fever, chills, cough, sore throat, muscle aches and joint pain, headache and fatigue, sometimes nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea can occur (more common in children than adults).
- ◇ Influenza can be prevented by an annual influenza immunization each year before winter.

The influenza vaccine is free for:

- ◇ All individuals aged 65 years or older
- ◇ All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 years and older
- ◇ Pregnant women
- ◇ Individuals aged 6 months and over with medical conditions predisposing them to severe influenza

Bulli Medical Practice keeps the influenza vaccine in stock for those wanting to purchase it at a cost of \$25.

Remember, if you think you may have influenza:

- ◇ Cover your face when you cough or sneeze
- ◇ Wash your hands thoroughly and often
- ◇ Stay at home until you're well
- ◇ Call ahead to see a Doctor.

Due to changes in two of the virus strains in the influenza vaccine, deliveries of the vaccine may be delayed this year.

### Opening Hours

**8am - 8pm Monday to Friday**  
**8am - 12 noon Saturday.**  
**All urgent appointments will be seen on the day of request**  
**Onsite patient parking available.**

**For services after hours contact**  
**Wollongong Radio Doctor: 4228 5522**

## Guide to Doctor Availability, Autumn 2015

	MON		TUES		WED		THUR		FRI		SAT
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM
Dr Julie Blaze	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		*
Dr Jeff Hall	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		*
Dr Peter Garbett				✓	✓						*
Dr Jemima Grant	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			*
Dr Saroja Gunasekera	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	*
Dr Amy Harkness	on extended leave from Bulli Medical Practice										
Dr Amy Ho	on maternity leave from Bulli Medical Practice										
Dr Anastasios Karakaidos	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	*
Dr Rockey Lui	on leave from Bulli Medical Practice										
Dr Helen Maclean			✓	✓			✓	✓			*
Dr Nathan Beckman	✓	✓					✓	✓			*
Dr Louise Delaney				✓						✓	

\*Not every Saturday, doctors work on a rotational basis for Saturdays. Please check with reception.

For more information on our doctors, their qualifications and areas of interest, please visit the website. We have provided the timetable above as a guide to which doctor works on which days, as this may help you when scheduling your next appointment.

Please note, the roster changes regularly, as doctors take holidays from time to time. For further information regarding doctor availability, please check our Facebook page Bulli Medical Practice and Travelvax Centre.

## Weight Management Program

It's now over a year since we launched the Bulli Medical Practice Weight Management Program. There are currently 30 people actively participating and the total weight lost is in excess of 280kg.

We are pretty happy with this outcome and have learnt a great deal. Everyone has a different story to tell and there is no single approach to weight loss that will suit everyone.

Many patients have told us they find the regular follow up and detailed personal support a great help. We encourage patients to learn how to make healthier food choices and portion sizes. We often consume a lot more energy than we need each day and sometimes food is used to relieve boredom, stress and other emotions.

Our program participants were able to keep losing weight over the festive season and still participate in celebrations. It's often about being mindful of how we eat and exercise and taking time to think rather than mindlessly consume.

Several program participants are now in the maintenance phase and check in every month or two. Like other health issues such as high blood pressure, a visit to the GP a few times a year can help you to keep you focused in weight loss and keep your results to target.

## Dermatology Update Course

Dermatology (the discipline of medicine that deals with the skin) is an important area of General Practice and accounts for up to 15 percent of consultations. Patients are often concerned about specific spots (or lesions) as well as rashes, itches and changes to their nails and hair. An annual check for skin cancer is recommended for people over the age of 30 (or earlier if there is family history or specific risk factors).

Dr Jeff Hall attended an update course on general dermatology in Melbourne in February, which is part of a Certificate in Primary Care Dermatology.

“There are exciting new approaches to the management of common skin conditions like eczema, acne and psoriasis. These conditions can be chronic and cause long term patient distress.

“While there are no new “cures” identified, there are improved medications and simple lifestyle approaches to management which can significantly improve control and the patient's quality of life.”

Dr Hall has also completed a Certificate in Primary Care Skin Cancer Medicine via the University of Queensland.

## Privacy & Medical Records

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of the practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised members of staff. The Practice adheres to the national privacy principles. A copy of our privacy policy is available on request at reception.

## Reminders, Recalls & Results

We are committed to providing preventative health care and may send you a reminder notice from time to time. If you do not wish to be a part of this system, please let the staff know at reception. Note that we also participate in government reminder systems such as the Childhood Immunisation Register and the Pap Smear Register.

Please telephone the Practice between 12 noon and 2pm weekdays to find out the results of any tests that have been ordered by our doctors. Patients that require immediate action in relation to test results will be contacted by the Practice to arrange an urgent consultation so that they can discuss the test results with a doctor.

We are moving towards an electronic reminder system. If you would like to receive text or email reminders please inform the reception staff and ensure they have your current email address and mobile telephone number.

## Feedback & Continuous Improvement

We value your feedback and encourage you to complete a general feedback questionnaire available in our waiting room (which you can deposit in the secure box) or by emailing [feedback@bullimedicalpractice.com.au](mailto:feedback@bullimedicalpractice.com.au). We endeavour to respond to your suggestions as soon as possible and to continuously improve our service. From time to time we might also ask you to complete a confidential evaluation as part of AGPAL accreditation.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the care that you receive from Bulli Medical Practice then please let us know. Talk to either your doctor or the receptionist and we will try our best to help.

We believe problems are best resolved within the Practice as this helps us to continuously improve. If however, the problem is not resolved, you may wish to contact the NSW state government authority for dealing with medical complaints. The address is: Health Care Complaints Commission, Locked Bag 18, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

## Restriction of Co-claiming

Recent changes by Medicare do not allow co-claiming of GP consultation items when billing chronic disease management ie GP Care Plans and Team Care Arrangements for the same patient, on the same day.

If you are booked in to see your Doctor for a Care Plan and/or Team Care Arrangements and you wish to consult on another matter at the same appointment, payment for the additional consult cannot be claimed from Medicare.

If you wish to continue with the additional consult on the day this will attract a non-rebatable time-based fee determined by your Doctor.

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to speak to our reception staff or your GP.

## Referrals

Referrals from a General Practitioner are valid for 12 months unless otherwise stated.

An indefinite referral to a Specialist may be given for a specific condition. If the referred condition changes or consultations to the referred party are for a new condition then a new referral is required.

A referral allows for the Specialist consultation to be rebateable by Medicare. Referrals cannot be backdated and must be dated on or prior to your appointment date. An appointment with your General Practitioner is required for all referrals.

## Fees Policy

Bulli Medical Practice is not a bulk billing practice. It is the policy of the Practice that payment for consultation is made at the time of your appointment

Please see our website or ask at reception for our full fee schedule. The out of pocket expense for a standard Level B consultation (15 minutes) is \$36.70. We accept cash payments and have EFTPOS facilities (debit and credit card: Visa & Mastercard but NOT American Express).

Medicare rebates may be claimed in person at a Medicare office, or can be sent online directly to Medicare and you will have the option of receiving your rebate via cheque or direct deposit into your nominated bank account.

If payment cannot be made on the day, an account can be issued incurring an administration fee of \$15 which is not Medicare rebateable.