



Bulli Medical Practice

Autumn Newsletter 2017

Influenza Season 2017

It's that time of year again when we start to get prepared for the influenza season.

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.

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)

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

A new influenza vaccine is prepared each year to best match the strains predicted for the coming influenza season.

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 that aren't eligible for the free vaccine which are \$15.

The Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIV) includes all four strains as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and is the vaccine of choice for the Australian Government immunization program and Bulli Medical Practice.

This year we are not expecting the vaccine to be available until early to mid-April and we will be running a Flu Vax clinic in late April/Early May. If you are interested in putting your name on the waiting list for this clinic, please let one of our reception staff know.



Welcome Dr Melissa Overton

Dr Melissa Overton joined the team at Bulli Medical Practice.

Melissa has been living in the Illawarra since 2013 where she worked in Wollongong hospital before commencing training in general practice. Melissa is now completing her Fellowship to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and is a GP Registrar at Bulli Medical Practice.

When not working, Melissa enjoys spending time with her husband, baby daughter and labradoodle as well as cooking, gardening and swimming.

Melissa is available for appointments Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday afternoon/evening.

You can make with an appointment Dr Melissa Overton via our online booking system HotDoc or by calling Bulli Medical Practice on 4284 4622.



Above Dr Melissa Overton



Above Drs Harkness, Blaze, Maclean & Isaac

Women's Health Update 2017

The Annual Women's and Children's Health Update was held on Saturday 18th February.

As usual BMP was well represented with Drs Julie Blaze, Saroja Gunasekera, Helen MacLean, Jemima Grant and Amy Harkness attending.

Two updates that I would like to inform you about are the upcoming change to the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme (PAP smear testing) and HRT.

Changes to PAP smears

Cervical cancer is caused by infection with certain strains of HPV or human papilloma virus. This virus is sexually transmitted. From December 2017 (was originally slated for May but has been pushed back) a new system will be put into place for the early detection and prevention of cervical cancer. The new system will look for infection with the virus rather than cell changes that the virus has caused. The procedure for doing the test is the same as the current PAP smear but if the test for the virus is negative (which will be the majority of women) the test only needs to be redone at five year intervals. This is really good news.

There remains a small group of women who have chosen not to have PAP smears. I have always found this disappointing as in my nearly 30 years as GP I have only diagnosed four patients with advanced cervical cancer and every one of these women had not participated in the PAP smear programme. Two of them died unnecessarily and tragically at a young age. In order to reach the group of women who decline to have PAP smears the new programme allows women to take their own sample with a swab stick. Whilst I can see that this seems very appealing I must emphasise that this way of testing is not as a PAP smear performed by a doctor and I hope that women do not make a hasty decision to choose an inferior test unnecessarily.

Changes to HRT

From September 2016 Prometrium or micronized progesterone has become available to Australian women to use as part of their HRT, if a progesterone is needed.

The menopause remains an undertreated condition. The results of the Women's Health Initiative in 2012 significantly overestimated a link between HRT and breast cancer. Of course there are risks associated with taking HRT, but it is widely accepted that this risk was overstated and that many women were scared off taking HRT for disabling symptoms.

I believe HRT has a role and each case should be looked at individually to determine the risks and benefits. If HRT is indicated and the woman has not had a hysterectomy the HRT needs to contain estrogen and progesterone. The advantage of micronized progesterone is that it is body identical –i.e. pharmaceutical grade, and fully tested (as opposed to bio-identical hormones which are hand-made and untested). Micronised progesterone is safer than non-body identical progesterone and has less side effects. This product is a welcome addition to the medications available to treat the menopause. Prof John Eden recommends that the safest form of HRT is an estrogen patch and micronized progesterone if a progesterone is required.

Dr Julie Blaze, General Practitioner

Below Dr Gunasekera & Dr Grant



After Hours Service

Contact Radio Doctor Illawarra on 4228 5522. All visits are bulk billed. In an emergency call 000.



Guide to Doctor Availability, Autumn 2017

	MON		TUES		WED		THUR		FRI		SAT
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM
Dr Julie Blaze	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		*
Dr Jeff Hall	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	*
Dr Jemima Grant	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			*
Dr Saroja Gunasekera	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		*
Dr Michael Hanson			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		*
Dr Amy Harkness	Currently on maternity leave										
Dr Helen Maclean	✓		✓				✓	✓			*
Dr Nathan Beckman	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			*
Dr Anna Putnis	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
Dr Melissa Overton			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	*

*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.



Above Victoria Practice Nurse and Tayla

Welcome New staff

Tayla is a new reception team member that is working with us whilst juggling studies at university.

Victoria is a new Practice Nurse that comes with many years of experience in High Dependency nursing as well as more recently as a Practice nurse with another local GP practice.

Asthma Reviews

With winter approaching and cold and flu season just around the corner, Bulli Medical Practice will be recalling our patients with asthma for review. In these reviews patients will see both our practice nurse for spirometry and review of their inhaler technique, and then one of the doctors for review.

This visit will only take 30 mins but provide an up to date asthma action plan. Asthma action plans are one of the most effective asthma interventions available as they:

- Reduce absences from work or school
- Reduce hospital admissions
- Reduce emergency visits to general practice
- Reduce reliever medication use and
- Improve lung function

If you are interested in having an asthma review, call one of our friendly reception staff to book.

Staff & Community News

- ◇ Dr Anna Putnis is now available Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- ◇ Dr Michael Hanson is now available Tuesday, Wednesday afternoons, Thursday and Friday mornings.
- ◇ Bulli Medical Practice is now a proud sponsor of the Thirroul Junior Soccer Club. Alex and Keely both play for the Thirroul Thunderbirds Thirds birds.
- ◇ New Bike Racks have been installed on the eastern side of the building. If you ride to the practice, please wear your helmet.
- ◇ Dr Amy Harkness will be returning from maternity leave in May .

Dr Nathan Beckman

Nathan has been caring for people as doctor since graduating from the university of Wollongong in 2010, since then he has worked in various regional hospitals in NSW and Queensland but returned to Bulli to work as a GP.

As a younger doctor he sees lots of children and younger people with acute health issues but he has also trained to manage chronic illness. However he has a special interest in semi emergency and emergency conditions (eg. abdominal pain, chest pain, suspected broken bones, lacerations and severe infections) and still works one day a week at the Wollongong hospital emergency department.

He believes a good doctor;

- Is generous with time. A typical standard consultation should be 10 to 20 minutes.
- Is a good listener. Good communication skills can be at least as important as how well a GP has been trained to diagnose and treat illness.
- Doesn't over-prescribe. Many conditions don't need to be treated with drugs, and a good GP won't fob you off with a handful of prescriptions.
- Doesn't just ask questions, but also does a physical examination (takes your blood pressure, listens to your chest, and/or examines a sore throat, for example).
- Asks about other conditions or problems you may be having, besides the problem that you attended for.

Dr Beckman is available Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Fees Policy

Bulli Medical Practice is a not a bulk billing practice. It is our policy 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 \$40.95. 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 rebatable.

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 & communication policy are 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 now use an electronic reminder system. If you would like to receive text reminders please inform the reception staff and ensure they have your current 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. 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.