



Bulli Medical Practice

Summer Newsletter 2019



Why we ALL must help to STOP domestic violence

White Ribbon Day is on Friday 23 November. It is Australia's national day for raising awareness of men's violence against women, and how to prevent it.

Recent reports of homicide and violence against women in the Australian media have shocked and saddened us all. But the statistics are even more distressing. On average, one Australian woman is murdered by her current or former partner every week.

According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey:

- ◇ 1 in 2 women experienced sexual harassment during her lifetime.
- ◇ 1 in 5 women experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.
- ◇ 1 in 4 women experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner since the age of 15.

Domestic violence not only impact on a woman's physical and mental health, many children are exposed to domestic violence, and experience child abuse, harassment and family violence.

Last week, Dr Jeff Hall presented a men's health seminar to General Practice registrars in Wollongong. 'An important part of my presentation focused on violence prevention,' said Dr Hall.

'Violence against women occurs in all parts of society but risk factors for men include substance abuse, unemployment and having grown up in family with domestic violence.'

What can you do?

'Men's violent, controlling behaviour rarely stops spontaneously and will require acknowledgement and long-term management. I encourage men who have used violence to speak confidentially with their GP who can refer them to a behaviour change program,' said Dr Hall.

'Most women who experience domestic violence seek help from their GP,' said Dr Julie Blaze. 'At Bulli Medical Practice, we encourage women who have experienced violence to make an appointment and talk to their GP. They can also access community-based support services and the 1800 RESPECT hotline or 1800 737 732.'

'We all have an important role to play in breaking cycles of violence,' said Dr Hall. 'We must challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours and promote respectful relationships. We must stop the violence before it starts.'

For more information on how you can speak out and act to stop domestic violence and abuse, visit our website blog, or www.whiteribbon.org.au

For men: 'No to Violence' men's referral service 1300 766 491

For women: Toll free 24 hour hotline: 1800 737 732 for counselling regarding sexual assault, family and domestic violence.

Here's how vaccines are making a real difference right now



Immunisations or vaccinations are controversial and some work better than others. Australia's childhood immunisation rates have reached a record high (94.5%) but the anti-vaccination movement remains vocal. There's plenty of good news about what vaccinations have achieved and the health improvements they'll continue to bring. Here are some current examples.

Successful elimination of Rubella

Rubella is a contagious viral disease. The symptoms in children are usually mild, including fever, rash and sore throat. However Rubella is dangerous for women in the first trimester of pregnancy and results in an 85% chance of miscarriage, stillbirth or other serious adverse effects to the developing foetus.

The rubella vaccine was first rolled out in 1971 for school-aged girls. It was added to the childhood vaccination program in 1989 and is now given with the combined measles and mumps vaccine at one year and then 18 months.

As a direct result of the vaccine, cases of rubella have steadily declined in Australia, with only 10 cases reported in 2017. In late October this year, the World Health Organization officially declared that Australia has eliminated rubella.

Success of the 2018 Influenza Vaccine

According to Department of Health, vaccinated individuals were 68% less likely to present to a GP and 66% less likely to be hospitalised due to all influenza, when compared to unvaccinated individuals.

'Our nurse-led immunisation clinics were well attended this year, and we saw a lot less patients with flu symptoms over winter than in the previous year,' said Dr Julie Blaze.

'The 2018 vaccines included dose increases (Fluzone) and chemical enhancement (Fluad) which were expected to improve the effectiveness of the vaccination by 30%,' she said.

How the HPV vaccine will dramatically reduce cervical cancer rates

The incidence of cervical cancer in Australia is currently 7 per 100,000 women. The rates have significantly declined since the early 1990s as a result of the national pap smear program. However, more dramatic improvements are expected as a result of the HPV vaccination program.

It is projected that if current practices continue, HPV will be eradicated by 2066 and by 2100 the incidence of cervical cancer will be just 3 women per million.

Beating Meningococcal W

Meningococcal disease is an uncommon but very serious infection that occurs when the meningococcal bacteria 'invades' the body from the throat or nose. It can present as meningitis or sepsis.

Between 2014 and 2016, cases of Meningococcal W increased four-fold in NSW. This trend was reversed after the free vaccination program was introduced last year. In 2018 the program is being offered to students in Years 10 and 11 in all secondary schools in NSW.

In 2019 the program will be offered to students in Year 10 in all secondary schools in NSW.

To ensure all older adolescents are protected, those aged from 15 to 19 years who missed their meningococcal ACWY vaccine at school should contact their GP before the end of 2018 for a free vaccine.

Development of new vaccine for coeliac disease

People with coeliac disease experience stomach upsets, chronic fatigue, iron and other nutrient deficiencies. Current management involves a strict, lifelong gluten-free diet.

Australian researchers have developed a vaccine targeting the HLA-DQ2 disease gene present in approximately 90% of cases. The vaccine, Nexvax2 successfully passed a first phase trial in 2011 and recently entered the second phase of testing. The vaccine is designed to restore normal gluten tolerance and would revolutionise coeliac disease management.

Guide to doctor availability, Summer 2019

	MON		TUES		WED		THUR		FRI		SAT
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM
Dr Julie Blaze		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		*
Dr Ben Bartlett	✓	✓			✓	✓					
Dr Nathan Beckman								✓	✓		✓
Dr Rebecca Goodman	✓**	✓**	✓**	✓**	✓	✓					
Dr Jemima Grant		✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	*
Dr Saroja Gunasekera	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		*
Dr Jeff Hall	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓**	✓**	*
Dr Michael Hanson	✓**	✓**	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓**	✓**	*
Dr Amy Harkness					✓	✓			✓	✓	
Dr Helen Maclean	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			*
Dr Anna Putnis	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	*
Dr Cameron Warren			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	*

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

**Every second week. Please check with HotDocs or 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.

More options for weight loss with the help of your GP and practice nurse

Obesity is a disease of energy regulation that requires ongoing management just like other chronic illnesses.

Our Weight Management Program includes 12 weekly visits with the practice nurse, monthly reviews with your doctor and referral to allied health partners.

Five patients recently completed the 12-week program and moved to fortnightly visits. They lost a total of 39.2 kgs which is an average of 7.84 kgs each, with one patient losing 12.3 kgs.

These patients also celebrated centimetres lost from their waist, decreased blood pressure and marked improvements in overall health.

An additional seven patients are still participating in the 12-week program and have already lost a total of 24.7kgs which is an average of 4.1 kgs each. One patient has lost over 11 kgs already.

Alternative Weight Loss Program

Another option for short-term weight loss is a meal replacement-intervention. This process involves a very low-calorie meal replacement over an initial three month period. These interventions should be medically supervised, particularly if there are other health issues

such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

In interventions such as Opti-Fast, all meals can be substituted with a meal replacement shake, soup or bar. This induces an altered metabolic state where fat is burnt more quickly.

This results in initial rapid weight loss which can bolster confidence to make the sustained dietary and exercise changes that are needed for long term weight management.

We now have GPs and practice nurses who are Opti-Fast accredited. Please speak with reception if you are interested in joining our Weight Management Program, or to your GP to find out about Opti-Fast.

Staff & community news

- ◇ We wish our patients and their families a happy and safe holiday season. Please note, we will be closed on the Christmas and New Year public holidays. Check our website for details.
- ◇ Welcome to our new medical student from the University of Wollongong, Eloise Williams.

Fees policy

Bulli Medical Practice is 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 \$43.40 however an increase may occur in November. 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.



Karen Ruskin, Senior Practice Nurse, has retired after nearly 23 years at Bulli Medical Practice. Staff and patients bid a sad farewell at a morning tea in late October. Karen is pictured above with Margaret Feneley, wife of the late Dr Bill Feneley who was Karen's initial employer. Below, Karen is pictured with Drs Julie Blaze and Jeff Hall.



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

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 a consultation so that they can discuss the test results with a doctor.

We are committed to providing preventative health care and participate in government reminder systems and registers.

We offer a SMS reminder system. If you would like to receive SMS reminders please inform reception and ensure they have your current mobile telephone number. If you do not wish to be a part of this system, please notify reception.

Feedback & continuous improvement

We value your feedback and encourage you to complete a general feedback form (which you can deposit in the secure box at reception) 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 then please let us know. Talk to either your doctor or reception staff 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.