



Bulli Medical Practice

Autumn Newsletter 2019

10 tips to avoid traveller's diarrhoea on your next overseas trip

'Traveller's diarrhoea is the most common medical complaint for overseas travellers and while it is usually not life threatening, it can significantly disrupt your holiday plans,' said Dr Julie Blaze.

Traveller's diarrhoea can occur shortly after arrival, when your body is exposed to new and unfamiliar bacteria and viruses. Most cases of traveller's diarrhoea are caused by bacteria such as *E. coli*, shigella and salmonella. Viruses like norovirus and rotavirus cause the same symptoms. Parasites such as giardia lamblia are another cause.

Symptoms

- Stomach cramps, bloating or nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Mild temperature
- Weakness
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting.

10 tips to avoid traveller's diarrhoea

1. Only drink boiled or bottled water.
2. Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before eating.
3. Order drinks without ice if you are unsure if tap water was used to make the ice.
4. Be cautious about where you get your fruit and vegetables from and wash them with bottled or boiled water.
5. Use bottled water for brushing your teeth and don't drink the shower water.
6. Only eat freshly cooked food (avoid food that has been sitting in the sun or food from buffets).
7. Avoid eating raw or rare meat or fish.
8. Ensure crockery and cutlery is dry before use.
9. Avoid unpasteurized dairy products, shaved ice or soft-serve icecream.
10. Another option is to speak with your doctor about the pros and cons of preventative medications including the oral cholera vaccine (Dukoral) and over the counter products (such as Travelan).

'The old saying is if you can't peel it, boil it or cook it, forget it,' said Dr Blaze. 'That sounds easy but is actually quite hard to adhere to.'



Treatment

Oral rehydration is the key to recovering from mild to moderate diarrhoea. Rehydration products (eg. Gastrolyte) can be brought from Australia or purchased overseas in powder or tablet form. These need to be dissolved in the correct quantity (usually a litre) of bottled or boiled water. Once your appetite returns, start with small, light meals and gradually build up to a normal diet. Avoid dairy and sugary or fatty foods, as well as caffeine and alcohol.

For mild cases, anti-motility or 'stopper' drugs like Imodium and Lomotil can be used for up to 48 hours to relieve symptoms. For more severe diarrhoea, that lasts for more than 2 – 3 days, with fevers above 38°C, cramps causing severe pain, or blood in your bowel motions then antibiotic treatment may be required.

Travel Medicine Clinic

You can book into our specialised travel medicine clinic led by Dr Blaze on Monday evenings from 4-8pm by appointment. Alternatively, you can book a travel medicine consultation with other general practitioners at other times.

We stock travel medicine kits which include medications for traveller's diarrhoea and antibiotics. We also have an extensive range of travel vaccinations (including Yellow Fever), malaria tablets and insect repellents. A full list of travel vaccines and estimated costs is on our website.

MELANOMA MARCH

Melanoma March is a family friendly event to raise awareness and funds for melanoma research and treatment. The Illawarra event is at Stuart Park from 7.30am Sunday 10 March. Visit wollongong.melanomamarch.org.au.

Melanoma is a form of cancer that develops in the skin's pigment cells (melanocytes). Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and can grow very quickly and spread to other parts of the body if left untreated.

'Australia has the highest incidence of melanoma in the world. On average, 30 Australians will be diagnosed with melanoma every day,' said Dr Michael Hanson. 'The good news is that melanoma is often identifiable at an early stage where simple treatment can result in a complete cure.'

Risk Factors

There are many risk factors that increase the chances of melanoma, including:

- ◇ fair skin
- ◇ high mole count
- ◇ family history
- ◇ pattern of sunburns throughout life, especially during childhood.

Diagnosis

If you notice a strange new mole on your skin or an old mole that's started changing, it's important to see your GP right away. Some people at higher risk require regular, planned skin assessments.

Your GP will conduct a skin check using a magnifying instrument called a dermascope. If they find anything concerning, they may recommend you have a biopsy or refer you to a dermatologist.

An excision biopsy is a quick and simple procedure that can be performed by your GP. You will be given a local anaesthetic to numb the area. Your doctor will use a scalpel to remove the mole and some surrounding tissue. The wound will usually be closed with stitches and the sample sent to pathology for analysis.

Treatment

If pathology results indicate melanoma, your doctor will recommend a treatment plan based on how far the melanoma has progressed together with other factors such as your age and general health.

The most common treatment for localised (early stage) melanoma is surgery. In most cases, this is the only treatment required.

More advanced cases of melanoma where the cancer has spread to other parts of the body may require treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapy or targeted molecular therapy.

Skin Check Clinic

Bulli Medical Practice runs a Skin Check Clinic with Dr Michael Hanson every Tuesday from 2pm to 6pm by appointment only.

Dr Hanson has extensive experience in the field of skin cancer screening and management, having worked alongside clinicians from The Melanoma Institute and dermatologists from the University of Queensland.

In addition, skin check consultations are available with all general practitioners at Bulli Medical Practice.

Contact reception on 4284 4622 to make an appointment for your skin check, or book online via HotDocs.

Staff awards

All our staff and GPs were acknowledged at our 2018 Christmas party last December and we celebrated another happy and productive year at Bulli Medical Practice.

The annual sports award went to Rebecca Couchman's team (Rebecca is pictured below with Kathy Mercer who helped win the award by trekking the Camino).



The employee of the year award this year was shared by Victoria Wright and Alexandria Pritchard (pictured below with Clinical Services Manager Rebecca Jeffery).



Guide to doctor availability, Autumn 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	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	*

*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.

Women's Health Services

Dr Rebecca Goodman has been working as a GP at Bulli Medical Practice since April 2018. Dr Goodman has a keen interest in women's health having worked in Family Planning centres for the last 12 years including Darwin, Newcastle and Sydney.



As part of her women's health expertise, she inserts intrauterine devices (IUDs) including Mirenas. She also provides Implanon insertions and removals, and has extensive knowledge of women's contraceptive needs.

Dr Goodman completed her certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health through Family Planning, and has a Masters in Public Health (Women's Health and Indigenous Health). For many years, she worked as an educator teaching health practitioners to insert IUDs and Implanon.

Rebecca currently works every Monday and Wednesday and some Saturday mornings. For advice and management regarding contraception, sexual health, and women's health issues please book a standard appointment. Appointments regarding IUDs require longer appointment.



Staff & community news

- ◇ Welcome to Maggie and Lauren (pictured below) who recently joined our reception team.
- ◇ Farewell to our GP registrar, Cameron Warren who is now in Kiama completing his rural term.
- ◇ Our practice undertook an AGPAL accreditation inspection in late February. Thanks to all staff, especially Rebecca Jeffery and Brooke Hutchings for all your hard work and preparation. Read more on the back page of this newsletter.
- ◇ Congratulations to Bulli Hospital, celebrating 125 years in March. Bulli Medical Practice is one of the oldest medical practices in Australia and has worked with Bulli Hospital since 1895.

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.

AGPAL accreditation

Bulli Medical Practice was recently assessed by AGPAL, a not-for-profit accreditation provider. We are delighted to announce ongoing accreditation for a further three years.

“To achieve accreditation, we demonstrated that we implement the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) standards including quality care and risk management,” said Practice Manager, Rebecca Jeffery.

“All our staff work hard to achieve this and continue to maintain the standards in their day-to-day work.

“Accreditation is not only about clinical standards. It includes safe use of practice equipment, ongoing staff training and information security,” she said.

Accreditation demonstrates a significant investment and commitment to quality across all levels of the practice team.

“Practices seek accreditation because they want to do their best and view this as another step towards excellence in patient care,” said AGPAL Chair, Dr Richard Choong.



**Accredited
General Practice**

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.