

## Time to get your hearing checked

Hearing loss is Australia's second most common disability after musculoskeletal disease and arthritis. Almost four million Australians have some form of hearing loss, and this will grow as our population ages.

The most common causes of hearing loss are age-related and excessive exposure to loud noise. Close to 60% of young Australian workers aged 15-24 are exposed to loud noise in their workplace. It's important to always protect your hearing by using earplugs or earmuffs and giving your ears a rest from noise.

### Symptoms

First signs of hearing loss include:

- Difficulty understanding conversations in noisy places like cafes
- Difficulty understanding people, especially if they are wearing a mask or not facing you
- Often needing to ask people to repeat themselves
- Hearing muffled sounds, as though people are mumbling
- Turning the TV up louder than other people
- Missing your phone/doorbell ringing
- Constant buzzing or ringing in your ears
- Increased discomfort with loud noises.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, book in to see your doctor.

Your GP can undertake an initial examination using an otoscope to check the outer and middle portions of the ear.

They can rule-out or manage other issues that may affect hearing, such as build-up of ear wax or ear infection. They can also refer you to an audiologist to measure the extent of hearing loss and explore options for ongoing management.

### Don't ignore hearing loss!

Untreated hearing loss is linked to a range of more severe conditions including depression, anxiety and dementia.

Studies have shown that hearing loss can significantly increase the risk of developing dementia – the greater the hearing loss, the greater the risk.



### Management

For most people, hearing loss cannot be reversed, but there are treatments that can help improve or correct your hearing. Options for management may include:

- wearing hearing aids
- getting cochlear implants, and/or
- surgery.

There have been considerable advances in hearing aid technology over the past five years. The earlier people start using hearing aids, the more likely they are to continue using them and to get the most benefit from them.

Check the [Australian Government's hearing services program](#) to see if you are eligible for subsidised hearing services and devices.

### NOVOVAX Covid-19 vaccine

We now offer NOVOVAX, a newly approved vaccine given in two doses, at least three weeks apart. NOVOVAX is approved for use in people aged 18+ as their primary vaccine.

It provides an alternative to mRNA and viral vector vaccines, but NOVOVAX is not yet approved for booster doses. We will keep you updated via our website and Facebook.



## Parenting a new baby

### By Dr Hayley Glasson

Welcoming a new baby into the family is a time of great joy, but is also a steep learning curve which may come with many unforeseen challenges.

When emotions are running high, common issues such as establishing breastfeeding, infant sleep and cry-fuss behaviour can be extremely difficult.

The “Fourth Trimester” is the 12-week period immediately after you have a baby. During this time parents often hear well-meaning advice that can be outdated, contradictory and biased. This can result in confusion, anxiety and stress for parents and their families.

Knowing what is ‘normal’ infant behaviour, and where to find appropriate help and support, is essential in getting through this challenging period.

We are fortunate to have a great network of health professionals and resources in the Illawarra. GPs, particularly those with an active interest in the postnatal period, are well placed to provide comprehensive care for families.

Child and Family Health Nurses, midwives, lactational consultants, parents groups, breastfeeding clinics and paediatricians can also be a wealth of knowledge, experience and support.

Online, there are a number of reputable Australian-based resources, including the Raising Children Network ([www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)), and the Australian Breastfeeding Network ([www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)).

The Possums Clinic ([www.possumsonline.com](http://www.possumsonline.com)), developed by a GP, addresses breastfeeding, infant sleep, cry-fuss behaviour and perinatal mental health, with a strong evidence-based focus.

When weighing up advice, it is helpful to pick and choose what fits best with your long term values and goals. If something does not feel ‘intuitively’ right, it may be because it is at odds with the type of parent you would like to be.

People tend to be very invested in the way they raise their child, but ultimately a thriving baby, strong infant-parent bond, and content caregivers can come in many forms, with no ‘one size fits all’ approach. Although the experts can help guide you, very quickly you will become the expert in your baby.

Flexibility, experimentation and knowing that what works for others might not work for you is key. Accepting assistance and being kind to yourself can also help maintain good perinatal mental health.

It is normal to have mixed emotions in the perinatal period, but if you are at all concerned, reach out to a trusted healthcare professional.

---

**Dr Hayley Glasson** has Diplomas in Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Paediatrics, and recently trained with the Possums Program. She will return from maternity leave to Bulli Medical Practice in late April.



### National Skin Check Day

Drs Michael Hanson, Berlinda Png and Jeff Hall performed 22 skin checks and 4 procedures on Mates Against Melanoma’s National Skin Check Day in February. If you didn’t manage to book in today, make a skin check appointment soon with your GP to ensure early detection and best possible treatment options for skin cancer.

### GP Availability Autumn 2022

The table (right) is a guide to which doctor works on which days. This may help when scheduling your next appointment. Note:

The roster changes regularly and doctors take holidays from time to time. Your best guide to availability is via online booking (via our website) or call us on 4284 4622. Please note:

- Dr Michael Hanson works alternate Mondays and Fridays every second week.
- Dr Jeffrey Hall works Mondays every second week.
- Dr Anna Putnis works alternate Thursdays and Fridays every second week.
- Dr Ben Bartlett is on extended leave.
- Dr Hayley Glasson is on maternity leave.
- Doctors alternate on Saturdays as part of a roster. Please check via Facebook or ask at reception.





## 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 \$46.90.

We have EFTPOS facilities (debit and credit card: Visa & Mastercard but NOT American Express).

Medicare rebates will be sent online directly to Medicare and you will receive your rebate via 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 is available at reception and on our website.

## Bulli Medical Practice

74 Park Road, Bulli NSW 2516

Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm

Saturdays 8am - 12 noon

Closed Sundays.

If you need to see a doctor outside of hours, call:

Wollongong Radio Doctors 4228 5522  
or the GP Helpline 1800 022 222.

In an emergency call 000.

New patients always welcome!

### Book online today:

**[bullimedicalpractice.com.au](http://bullimedicalpractice.com.au)  
or call 4284 4622.**

 **Bullimedicalpractice**

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Despite changes to NSW Covid Rules and easing of restrictions, Bulli Medical Practice will continue Covid-safe practices to ensure the safety of our patients, staff and doctors.

- All staff and doctors will continue to wear masks and we request all patients continue to wear masks.
- We will continue to screen for Covid-19 symptoms at the time of appointment and again on presentation to the practice.
- Afternoon appointments are available at the separate Respiratory Clinic allowing patients with potential Covid-19 symptoms face-to-face access to a doctor and practice nurse wearing full PPE.

## Reminders, Recalls & Results

Please telephone the Practice after 10am 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](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 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.