

Covid-19 vaccine update

As winter draws to an end, we have administered close to 8000 Covid-19 vaccines which is a huge achievement for our patients, our staff, and also the northern Illawarra community.

This has not been without challenges, as Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine is preferred for people under 60 years but unfortunately our supplies have been limited and unpredictable.

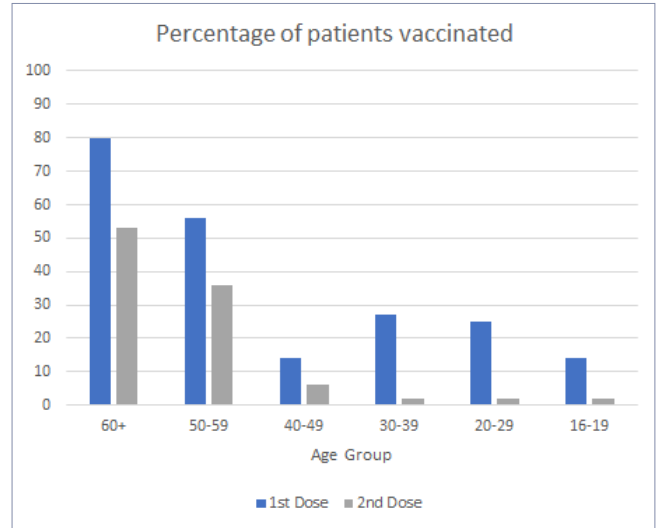
Thanks to our younger patients who've waited longer for vaccines due to the eligibility requirements, and also for their preparedness to take up the AstraZeneca Covid 19 vaccine.

All our staff have stepped up to help with the vaccination effort. For the first time in our long history, we've had to open on Sundays to manage the demand for vaccinations.

Dr Julie Blaze has effectively streamlined the vaccination process, creating a video about what to expect for each patient to view as they wait to receive their vaccine.

Special thanks to Michael Morrell who has volunteered to help on some of our busiest days.

Reception have attended to countless calls and helped manage bookings for our most vulnerable patients with pre-existing health conditions and other priority groups.



Our nurses not only give the vaccination injections, but ensure we comply with all the requirements around safe vaccine storage and administration, as well as record keeping.

Last but not least, special thanks to our GPs who have overseen clinics, sometimes giving up their days off and/or weekends.

The chart (above) provides a breakdown of the vaccinations (first and second doses) achieved for our patients by mid-August 2021.



Oliver and Christine Luke (the first patients to receive the first dose) were among the first patients to receive their second dose. They are pictured here with Dr Julie Blaze, Michael Morrell and Practice Nurse, Alexandria Pritchard.

Osteoporosis - the silent disease

By Dr Berlinda Png

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes bones to become weak and lose their strength. Most people do not realise they have osteoporosis until a fracture happens, as there are usually no signs or symptoms. This is why osteoporosis is often called the 'silent disease'.

Osteoporosis particularly affects women in their middle and later years, although some men are also affected.

Screening

Currently, the most reliable way to diagnose osteoporosis is to measure bone density with a dual-energy absorptiometry scan called a Bone Mineral Density (BMD) scan.

A BMD scan is a short, painless scan that measures the density of your bones, usually at the hip and spine.

You can qualify for a Medicare rebate for a BMD scan if you:

- have previously been diagnosed with osteoporosis
- have had one or more fractures due to osteoporosis
- are aged 70 years or over
- have a chronic condition, including rheumatoid arthritis, coeliac disease or liver disease
- have used corticosteroids for a long time.

Reduce your risk

There are many things you can do to reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis. If you have osteoporosis there are also things you can do to improve your bone health, and hopefully prevent your osteoporosis progressing, including:

- Know your risk - ask your GP about your risk.
- Ensure adequate calcium in your diet.
- Maintain adequate vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is important because it helps your body absorb the calcium in your diet.
We obtain most of our vitamin D from the sun, and there are recommendations for safe sun exposure for sufficient vitamin D production, depending on your skin type, geographical location in Australia and the season.
- Exercise regularly.
- Falls prevention - if you've either fallen before or you feel unsteady and are concerned you may fall, come and talk to us today.
- Stop smoking - as well as the many other health issues related to smoking, it is also linked to reduced bone density.
- Consume alcohol, caffeine and salt in moderation as they can affect your bone density. Alcohol also increases the risk of falling, and the chance of fracturing a bone.

Osteoporosis Management

There is no standard treatment for osteoporosis. Your treatment will depend on your specific needs.

Generally, your overall risk of fracture will help your GP decide on the best course of treatment for you.

GP Availability Spring 2021

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.
- Doctors alternate on Saturdays as part of a roster. Please check via Facebook or ask at reception.

Farewell Dr Emily

Congratulations to Dr Emily O'Donnell who finished her GP registrar training term at Bulli in July and recently had another baby.

Emily joined the practice in February last year, and was indispensable helping us work through a very challenging chapter with Covid.

We wish Emily and her family all the very best. We also wish Emily a wonderful future career as a General Practitioner.



	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SAT
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM
Dr Julie Blaze		✓			✓	✓	✓				✓
Dr John Deady			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Dr Hayley Glasson	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dr Rebecca Goodman	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Dr Saroja Gunasekera			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Dr Jeff Hall	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Dr Michael Hanson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Dr Amy Harkness					✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Dr Helen Maclean	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓
Dr Berlinda Png	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Dr Anna Putnis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Women's health

By Dr Rebecca Goodman

Women's Health Week is celebrated from 6 – 10th September. It provides an important opportunity to reflect on the different health needs of women.

Women often take on the responsibility and care of their entire family's health and put their own needs last. It is important and essential they also set aside time for their own health and wellbeing. We're encouraging all women to make an appointment for their own health check, and ensure their screenings are up-to-date (see table right).

While most women know to start screening for breast and cervical cancers, they often overlook their vulnerability to bowel cancer and heart disease. These conditions cause significant mortality in women and regular screening is essential for early detection and best possible outcomes.

It is important to state that these are screening recommendations but if women have any symptoms of concern it is advised they make an appointment to discuss with their GP as soon as possible.

Health Care Assessments

Women aged 45 to 49 years who are at risk of developing chronic disease and all women over 75 years can have comprehensive health assessments with their GP and practice nurse. These assessments are funded by Medicare and incur no out-of-pocket expenses.

Essential Health Screening for Women

Issue	Age	What/Why	How often
Breast Cancer	50-74	Mammogram (and sometimes ultrasound) where specialised x-rays and images are taken of each breast.	Every 2 years
Cervical Cancer	25 -74	A speculum is inserted into the vagina to take samples of cervical cells	Every 5 years
Heart Health	45+	Cholesterol assessment and blood pressure check	Every 2 years
Diabetes	45+	Fasting blood sugar level check	Every 1 to 3 years
Blood Pressure	40+	Keep in check to prevent the risk of vascular dementia	Every year
Skin Cancer	18+	Arrange initial skin check with GP to determine individual risk	Varies - every year if high risk
Bowel Cancer	50 – 74	You will receive a free test to conduct at home	Every 2 years
Osteoporosis	70+ (or earlier)	Imaging test to measure bone density	Determined by initial assessment and risk factors

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 \$45.25.

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
or call 4284 4622.**

 **Bullimedicalpractice**

Other Practice News

- Dr Ben Bartlett has extended his leave for a further six months and will be unavailable for telehealth or face-to-face appointments.
- Congratulations to practice nurse, Alexandria Pritchard (pictured below), who recently delivered her 5000th Covid-19 vaccine.



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.

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.