

## Reflecting on 2020 and Giving Thanks

Everyone agrees, it was a difficult year! And the threat of Covid 19 continues to affect individuals, families and communities and disrupt our daily lives.

Bulli Medical Practice made several changes to ensure the ongoing health and safety of patients and their families. This included changes to our booking systems, the way patients access the building, parking availability, waiting room space and consultation types.

Since the start of the pandemic, we've provided face-to-face care for high risk, infectious presentations in a separate respiratory clinic. The clinic is manned by a doctor and nurse team wearing full personal protective equipment. Since March, over 1250 patients received treatment in this clinic, including families from the southern Illawarra who were unable to get face-to-face appointments in their local area. We've welcomed over 780 new patients.

We've undertaken over 2166 swabs for Covid 19 via our respiratory clinic and drive through testing facility. This contributed to the cumulative number of tests undertaken in the Woonona/Bulli/Thirroul area (see details in the table below) as reported by NSW Health (as at 23/11/20).

Postcode	Number of Covid 19 Tests
2515	5080
2516	3085
2517	5456

The uptake of telehealth consultations in our practice has remained strong, with a total of 6123 undertaken since March. We also introduced e-scripts, so patients can now receive prescriptions for medications via SMS or email and use them at participating pharmacies.

Precautions around COVID 19 have delivered some silver linings. The number of cases of influenza in the Illawarra dropped from 3900 in 2019 to 395 in 2020. The clinical team at Bulli Medical Practice administered a total of 2547 influenza vaccines.



Practice Nurse Sofia Fairbrother and Dr Jeffrey Hall at work in the respiratory clinic.

Thanks to all our patients for your patience throughout the year, adjusting to the new procedures around entering the practice, and other necessary precautions.

Thanks must also go to our wonderful team of doctors, nurses and administration staff. They've had to make countless changes but always persevered to deliver quality care and professional service.

In 2021, we look forward to the Federal Government roll out of the Covid 19 vaccine. We hope to have more news about this early in the New Year and will keep you posted via our website and Facebook page.

### Christmas/New Year Opening

Thursday 24th December	8am - 1pm
Friday 25th December	closed
Saturday 26th December	closed
Monday 28th December	closed
Tuesday 29th December	8am - 6pm
Wednesday 30th December	8am - 6pm
Thursday 31st December	8am - 1pm
Friday 1st January	closed
Saturday 2nd January	normal hours

## Skin Cancer: Time to Check & Protect

Australia has the highest rates of melanoma in the world. 2 in 3 Australians are diagnosed with some form of skin cancer by the age of 70. Melanoma is the third most common cancer in Australia, with a death every five hours due to melanoma.

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.

### Prevention

Most skin cancers can be prevented by using sun protection:

- slip on sun-protective clothing
- slop on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- slap on a broad-brimmed hat
- seek shade
- slide on sunglasses.

### Self-Checks

Try to become familiar with the look of your skin, so you can pick up any changes that might suggest a skin cancer. Look for:

- any crusty, non-healing sores
- small lumps that are red, pale or pearly in colour
- new spots, freckles or any moles changing in colour, thickness or shape over a period of weeks to months.

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.

### Diagnosis and Treatment

Your GP will conduct a skin check using a magnifying instrument called a dermoscope.

If they find anything concerning, they may recommend cryotherapy or other non-surgical treatments, or biopsy or referral to a dermatologist. You will need to make a subsequent appointment if surgical treatment is required.



**SLIP**



**SLOP**



**SLAP**



**SEEK**



**SLIDE**

## Too Much Festive Cheer?

Whether it's work parties, family gatherings, drinks with friends, chocolates or wine you've received as gifts, it's hard not to over-indulge during the festive season. Some days you may find you're tempted to eat a lot more than needed. When possible, plan to choose smaller portions, skip morning or afternoon tea before a function and strive to do more exercise.

The warmer weather and longer days are good motivation to start walking. Try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise most days of the week. The New Year also brings an opportunity to renew your energy and efforts for a healthy lifestyle.

## Weight Management Program

An increasing number of Australians struggle to maintain a healthy weight range and to find a realistic approach to weight loss. The Weight Management Program at Bulli Medical Practice has delivered results for patients for more than six years. It includes:

- An initial 12-week program tailored to your goals
- Weekly visits with practice nurse
- Monthly reviews with your doctor
- Referral to allied health partners
- Education on topics such as meal planning, eating out, reading food labels, healthy snacks and recipe adaptation
- Meal replacement intervention (see information below)
- Medications to enable weight loss (if appropriate)
- Assessment for surgery (if indicated)
- Ongoing maintenance tailored to your individual circumstances.

The average weight loss achieved by our patients over the 12-week program is 8.64kg. Other reported benefits include lowered cholesterol levels, lowered blood pressure, increased exercise, and improved wellbeing. There are many success stories and patients especially value the accountability of regular visits, the openness of staff and the support provided with maintenance.

### Meal Replacement Interventions

One 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. The intervention should be medically supervised, particularly if there are other health issues such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

For more information, or to join the Weight Management Program, please contact 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 \$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](http://bullimedicalpractice.com.au)  
or call 4284 4622.**

 **Bullimedicalpractice**

## Other Practice News

- We are delighted to announce Dr John Deady will be joining the practice in early 2021. More information coming soon!
- Welcome to Ellie Johnston who recently joined our administration team. Ellie is working part time while studying for a Bachelor of Science (Health and Psychology) at the University of Sydney
- From 23 November, carers/friends accompanying patients to appointments must check-in at reception by scanning the QR code at reception. Psychology, podiatry and physiotherapy patients must also register via electronic check-in.

## 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.