

New patient liaison role

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021, many patients only visited their GPs for management of acute illness or to address urgent matters. People were focused on social distancing, PCR and RAT testing, and getting their Covid-19 vaccinations. Many patients put on hold their regular health checks and management of chronic diseases.

To help patients catch up on disease prevention and chronic disease management, Bulli Medical Practice is trialing the use of a Patient Liaison Officer role. Our current Practice Liaison Officers include Rebecca Jeffery, Brooke Hutchings, Lauren Hart and Rebecca Trevillian (pictured below).

The patient liaison officer will initiate conversations with patients as they arrive for their scheduled appointments. During these conversations, demographic details (such as home address, phone number and next of kin) are checked and updated to ensure accuracy.

They also discuss where the patient is up to with routine health screening (such as bowel cancer screening, skin cancer checks, and cervical screening). They also ask about any chronic disease management requirements and recommendations.

The Patient Liaison officer then makes further appointments for the patient, if required, with either a Practice Nurse or their GP, to ensure their chronic condition is reviewed and managed appropriately.

The types of appointments the Patient Liaison Officer can help to identify and organise include:

- ◇ 75+ Health Assessment – Eligible patients can have annual assessment with no out of pocket expense (Medicare only).

- ◇ 45 – 49 years Health Assessment – Eligible patients can have one assessment with no out of pocket expense (Medicare only).
- ◇ 715 Health Check – Eligible indigenous patients can have these appointments every 9 months with no out of pocket expense (Medicare only).
- ◇ Chronic Disease Management Plan – eligible patients can have regular appointments to assist them to manage their chronic diseases. There is no out of pocket expense (Medicare only).
- ◇ Skin Checks – booked with GPs with a special interest in skin cancer medicine. Can be for an initial skin check and/or a follow up review. There are usually out of pocket fees associated with this appointment type.
- ◇ Cervical Screening – appointments are based on the National Cancer Screening recommendations and made with the patient's regular GP. There are usually out of pocket fees associated with this appointment type.

The Patient Liaison Officer has an important role helping GPs and practices nurses to facilitate urgent appointments and referrals. They can also help patients to navigate complex health care pathways to access services and follow-up.

So don't be alarmed if Rebecca, Brooke or Lauren approach you in the waiting room and invite you to meet privately to discuss your health screening and management.

We will monitor the effectiveness of this new role and value any comments via feedback@bullimedicalpractice.com.au.





Men's Health Week 2023

by Dr Michael Hanson

Men's Health Week runs from 12 - 18 June 2023, with a focus on spreading awareness regarding men's mental health and emotional wellbeing. This can often be overlooked or downplayed by men themselves and others.

Throughout their lifetime, one in five Australian men experience anxiety and one in eight suffer with depression. Depression is a considerable risk factor for suicide and contributes to the higher rates of suicide rates for men compared to women.

Depression Symptoms

Men's experience of depression often presents differently to that of women.

Depression can make men feel sad, irritable, empty and lose pleasure in things they normally enjoy. Unfortunately, outdated definitions of masculinity have made it even more difficult for men to acknowledge or talk about their feelings.

Men are more likely to be aware of physical aspects of depression such as feeling tired or losing weight, rather than recognising changes in how they feel. They are also more likely to abuse alcohol and other drugs, and to withdraw socially when they are depressed.

As a community, it is vital we encourage help-seeking for everyone with mental health issues, but men may require more encouragement due to existing social norms and mental health stigma.

Depression Treatment

Your GP can help in assessing your symptoms and develop a mental health plan which includes subsidised visits to psychologists or counsellors for ongoing support.

As part of a management plan, your GP will assess your physical activity, diet and sleep habits which are important factors in the recovery process. They may also undertake investigations including blood tests and scans, and consider the potential benefits of antidepressant medication.

There are many useful online resources specifically tailored for men via Beyond Blue and Black Dog Institute. MensLine Australia provide online counsellors and support via 1300 78 99 78.

Stop flu this winter!

Influenza (also called flu) is a very contagious viral infection of the airways. It affects people of all ages but is especially serious for older people as well as young children and babies, pregnant women, and people with underlying chronic conditions like diabetes and asthma. Influenza can require hospitalisation and can even cause death.

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect you from serious disease caused by influenza. Influenza vaccines are given each year to protect against the most common strains of the virus. This is in addition to routine boosters for COVID-19 (depending on your age and risk group).

Who can get the flu vaccine?

The influenza vaccine is FREE under the National Immunisation Program for:

- ◇ People aged 65 years or over.
- ◇ People who have medical conditions which put them at greater risk of becoming seriously unwell.
- ◇ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over.
- ◇ Children aged 6 months to under 5 years.
- ◇ Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy.

People who are not eligible for a free vaccine can purchase the vaccine.

To book your flu vaccine, call the practice on 4284 4622 or book online via HotDoc with a practice nurse. Alternatively, flu vaccines can be administered as part of your next appointment with your GP.

Note. Influenza vaccines can be given on the same day as a COVID-19 vaccine.

When should I get the flu vaccine?

Annual influenza vaccine should occur from April onwards to be protected for the peak flu season (June to September). The highest level of protection occurs in the first 3 to 4 months following vaccination. It is never too late to vaccinate since influenza can circulate in the community all year.

GP Availability Winter 2023

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

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 2nd week.
- * Doctors alternate on Saturdays as part of a roster. Please ask at reception.

Asthma awareness

by Dr Helen Maclean

Asthma is a very common medical condition in Australia affecting about 1 in 9 people. It is usually diagnosed in childhood but can develop in adulthood. It often coexists with conditions such as eczema and hay fever and there can be a family history.

Asthma causes narrowing of our airways. The airways tighten and thicken and fill with mucous. This makes it harder to breathe and may cause a cough or a wheeze (whistle type noise). Asthma symptoms come and go, and triggers vary from person to person. Common triggers for asthma includes respiratory infections, exercise, cold air, cigarette smoke, and allergens like grass and pollens.

While there is currently no cure for asthma, it can be well managed. Most of the time, people with asthma should have little or no symptoms. They may have flares or occasional asthma attacks where their symptoms worsen and become out of control.

Asthma management

For good control of asthma, see your doctor regularly. They will help you learn to manage your symptoms and recognise triggers and explain when to take medicines to prevent symptoms flaring.

It is also important to have an Asthma Action Plan which tells you exactly what to do when your symptoms occur and when to seek more urgent medical attention.

The most common types of medicines used for asthma are inhalers (which deliver the medication in a mist-like gas to the lungs) and sometimes tablets.

It is very important that you know how to use your inhaler correctly otherwise the medicine won't make it to where it needs to go – into your lungs! Please consult with your GP, pharmacist, or asthma educator about how to use your device. The National Asthma Council website (nationalasthma.org.au) has many videos which can also help to teach you the correct technique.

Like most things health-related, it is important to keep fit and active. People with asthma should be able to participate in almost any sport or exercise. Scuba diving is the only sport not generally recommended.



	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SAT
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM
Dr Victoria Beyer	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
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 Meaghan Miller-McConochie			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	*
Dr Berlinda Png			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Dr Nikita Robins	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	*

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 \$49.25.

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 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

- ◇ In June Brooke Hutchings will have her 20 year anniversary with Bulli Medical Practice!
- ◇ Ellie Johnston will leave us in June to pursue a career in Speech Pathology.
- ◇ We would like to welcome Tilly to our reception team. Tilly will work as a casual whilst completing her studies at the University of Wollongong in Bachelor of Exercise Science and Rehabilitation.

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.