

NIHRACS Medical Superintendent Message 17 July 2020

Screening and routine checks:

During the past few months with difficulty in seeking timely medical care, I am concerned that many people have been unable to have their regular check-ups or screening tests. For example smear tests and breast checks, skin cancer checks, prostate checks, bowel screening, breast screening and many more routine checks that should be occurring. Prevention is always better than cure. I know that many people have also been unable to see specialists on the mainland who they were seeing for regular follow ups.

But life goes on and unfortunately so do diseases like cancer. If you are concerned that you are overdue for a check-up or that you cannot access travel to the mainland to see a specialist, please book in a telephone consult or a face-to-face consult with one of our doctors. We are doing an increased number of Telehealth consultations with mainland specialists at this time. This includes Teledermatology where we are able to send photos of skin conditions to a dermatologist who will then arrange a consultation with you and a GP. With an ever changing situation on the mainland some of our usual visiting specialists may not be able to visit yet so please come in or call to discuss an alternative management plan with us.

Fire Safety:

A house fire in the community last weekend is a timely reminder that fires can occur easily in a home and can spread rapidly. With using heaters in winter the risk of bedding or curtains catching fire increases. Please make sure that your family and particularly elderly and vulnerable people are safe and have smoke alarms installed in their homes.

Winter Immunisations:

We still have influenza vaccines available in the clinic so please call for an appointment should you not yet have received one. Influenza remains a serious illness in the elderly and patients with chronic diseases. Pneumococcal immunisation is recommended for adults aged 70 years and over and people with certain medical risk conditions for pneumococcal disease. Call for an appointment (24134) should you wish to discuss your eligibility with a doctor.

Dr Michelle Bonnici

General Practice Clinic Update

Due to the current restrictions and the risk of COVID-19 the main entry to NIHRACS is currently locked however the General Practice clinic is still open for business for all your health care needs and our emergency department is still operating.

To decrease the risk of COVID-19 our processes have changed and Medicare is providing funding for telephone consultations to patients who have had at least one face to face consultation with a doctor at NIHRACS in the last 12 months. If the assessing Doctor decides you need further medical intervention they will inform you on what to do next. Please continue to help us to reduce the risks of coronavirus on our small community by taking advantage of our telehealth services.

To book appointments please phone our reception on 24134.

Hours of Operation

Monday- Friday 8.30am – 5pm

Saturday & Sunday Closed

Please note the clinic is closed for lunch from 12.30 – 1.30pm.

Please call 24134 for appointments only during opening hours.

If you require medical assistance outside business hours please phone the hospital on 22091. In cases

of emergency please dial 000.

Child Health Clinic

Child Health Clinic will now be run from the GP Clinic every Thursday, 8:30am to 4pm by Janine. This clinic is for 0 – 5 year olds and includes: Developmental Assessment, Baby Growth Checks, Emotional and Social Development, Breastfeeding Support, Settling/Sleep Support and Introducing solids.

Smoking Cessation Clinic

It's hard to stop, but with help and support, you **can** quit smoking.

Quitting smoking can be one of the most difficult, yet rewarding, things a person can do. Most smokers say they would like to quit, and may have tried at least once. Some are successful the first time, but others try a number of times before they finally give up for good.

It might take time, it can be hard as your body has become dependent on nicotine, but many people have succeeded in giving up smoking. Become one of them by making a quit plan

The clinic will provide a proven approach to assisting people who wish to either quit smoking or cut down. Every cigarette not smoked is doing good for smokers' health. The clinic uses a multidisciplinary approach to match individual needs.

To make a booking for the smoking cessation clinic call the GP Clinic on 24134.

All patient information is treated as confidential.

Health and Wellbeing Weekly Update

A reminder of the key COVID-19 prevention messages:

- Physical distancing
- Stop any Spread – hygiene
- Look after yourself and others
- Know the symptoms

Knowing the Symptoms

One of the key messages in the COVID-19 pandemic period is to monitor yourself for symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, excessive tiredness, diarrhoea or shortness of breath. Other symptoms include chills, body aches, runny nose and muscle pain. Loss of sense of smell or taste can occur.

If you develop any of the above symptoms (even mild symptoms), it is very important that you stay at home and contact the hospital on 22091 – don't delay. You must stay at home until you are given instructions by the health professionals on what will happen next.

If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify both the person who receives your call and the ambulance officers of your symptoms and any recent travel history.

National Diabetes Week

National Diabetes Week runs from 12 – 18 July.

Some of the information “bites” shared through the Health and Wellbeing Facebook page this week are:

- An information sheet on Pre-diabetes – a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. It is a risk factor for the development of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, such as heart disease and stroke. Pre-diabetes affects about 16% of Australian adults. For more information check out the fact sheet from The National Diabetes Service Scheme: www.ndss.com.au
- The four T's are possible early warning signs to look out for indicating that someone may have Type 1 Diabetes. If left untreated Type 1 diabetes can lead to a life-threatening condition called Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA). They are:

- Thirst - are they really thirsty and unable to quench that thirst?
- Toilet – are they going to the toilet a lot (to pass urine)?
- Tired - are they more tired than usual?
- Thinner - have they recently lost weight?
- The Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk assessment Tool. This tool can help you determine your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is a long term or chronic disease where the person has high levels of sugar (glucose) in the blood. It happens when the body doesn't produce enough insulin or when their cells don't respond well to the insulin that is available. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes and affects approximately 1 million people in Australia. You can find various formats of this tool at : <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/the-australian-type-2-diabetes-risk-assessment-tool-ausdrisk>

You can also free call the National Diabetes Services Scheme on 1800 637 700 or speak to your GP at the GP Clinic (ph 24134) if you have any questions.