



## COLERAINE – CASTERTON MEDICAL

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# NEWSLETTER

## September 2018

### Welcome to our Practice

This newsletter is our way of keeping in touch.

It has been with much difficulty over the past 12 months that we try to secure suitably qualified GP's who are prepared to relocate to our rural community and commit to servicing both the clinic and our two local hospitals. This issue is replicated across most of the rural centres in Australia, with a record number of clinics and small community towns struggling to maintain primary health services.

Fortunately we have had Khaled and Yong continue with us through 2018 as they work through their GP Registrar requirements in preparation for commencing their Fellowship exams in February 2019. Khaled, Yong, Brian and the return of Dr Linda Thompson have been supported in the interim by a number of Locums who have been prepared to come and provide a clinical services if only for a short period of time.

One locum, Dr Henderson has been enticed to return for a further 3 months after a 4 week visit earlier in the year to assist with coverage whilst Dr Coulson is on professional leave. Dr Henderson will be with us until November. Dr Henderson will also support our IMG Dr Gaya Ekanyake as she learns the Australian Medicare and referral systems. Dr Gaya has 13 years' experience in Sri Lanka prior to immigrating to Australia with her Husband Shan and two children.

We shortly commence recruiting for our 2019 GP Registrar who we hope will take their rural clinical experience as an opportunity as has Dr Julia Jaensch who has recently taken up a position at Kerang, a community who were at risk of having no clinical services to their small community. We thank Julia for her time and dedication to here patients over the past 2 years and congratulate her on the achievement of her GP Fellowship.

It is also a pleasure to welcome Beccy to our reception team in the Coleraine Clinic who is learning the role quickly.

We will continue to work to recruit more GP's to practice to provide support and services to all our current patients. Please be patient during this time and keep in mind that for a period of time availability of appointments for your preferred GP's may be reduced, so please book ahead where possible.

**SMS Appointment Reminders:** Commencing from January 2017 the clinic now utilises SMS reminders for your appointment time, fees may also be incurred for patients who fail to attend booked appointments. Please update your mobile phone details to ensure we can provide this service to you. If you do not wish to receive reminders via sms please advise reception staff and they will amend your clinical record. Options for this service for recalls is also due to commencing in 2019.

**New patients:** we welcome new patients to the practice. To ensure your details are up to date please make the time to complete an updated patient form when requested by the reception staff. While we appear to constantly ask for updated information each time you visit our practice, this detail does reduce errors and inaccuracies that may hinder payment/reimbursement of accounts by Medicare. Incorrect contact details also create a problem if we need to contact you at any time.

**Flu Season:** This year our flu clinic were run at the start of the season as recommended for best coverage from late May – July. Flu clinics were run across the course of the day. For those who have not yet had their vaccination, supply is now available.

If you are over 65 years of age, are pregnant or have a chronic condition eg: asthma or diabetes you will be entitled to a free government supplied flu vaccine. If you do not qualify for a government supplied vaccine, we will provide the latest quadrivalent flu vaccine for the same price as last year.

**Shingles Vaccine Clinic:** Free Shingle Vaccine are now available for patients who are aged 70 -79 yrs. Please contact the clinic to make a booking for this clinic. We also are able to provide an over 75 health assessment for those eligible at this time.

**Signage:** External signage at both Clinics is being addressed and we hope to have up to date GP information for your convenience as soon as possible. Additional signage within the waiting room is also being installed to provide Clinic information and advising which doctors are consulting on that day.



**WE ASK THAT YOU TURN OFF YOUR MOBILE TELEPHONE WHILE ATTENDING THIS PRACTICE THANK YOU**

**After Hours & Weekends Non Urgent Outpatients** will be seen by the doctor on call, Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays at **9:00am Coleraine** and **10:00am Casterton**. Please present to the Hospital at the these times for assessment. If seeking advice after clinic hours please call the Clinic or Hospital to speak to a triage nurse.

**Coleraine Clinic            5553 2045**  
**Casterton Clinic         5554 2655**

**Coleraine Hospital            5553 2000**  
**Casterton Memorial Hospital 5554 2555**

**In an emergency call 000**

**OFFICE HOURS:**

**Monday – Friday 8.45am – 5.30pm**

**APPOINTMENTS:**

The time allotted for a standard appointment is 15 minutes. If more time is required e.g. Multiple issues **PLEASE BOOK A DOUBLE APPOINTMENT (30 MINUTES)** to avoid delays to other patients.

**CANCELLATION OF APPOINTMENTS:** Please notify the Clinic as early as possible so that your cancelled appointment can be offered to others. If an appointment is not cancelled a fee may be charged.

**HOME VISITS:** Home Visits are provided for patients who are too sick or frail to attend the Clinic. An early booking and an indication of the urgency is appreciated so that the day can be planned and delays are kept to a minimum. Please speak to reception and your GP to arrange this.

**TELEPHONE ACCESS:** Doctors in the practice may be contacted during normal surgery hours. If the doctor is with a patient, a message will be taken and you will be advised by the reception team when it is likely that the doctor will return your call. In an emergency your call will always be directed to the doctor or practice nurse.

Telephone contact with the doctor may attract a fee.

**INTERPRETER AND OTHER COMMUNICATION SERVICES:**

Our practice provides for the communication needs of patients who are not proficient in the primary language of our clinical team/and or who have a communication impairment. Our practice has a list of contact details for interpreter and other communication services including the Translating and Interpreter Service. If you require any of these services please ask our friendly reception team.

**REFERRALS:**

It is a requirement of the Medical Health Act that an assessment of the patient by the referring doctor take place prior to specialist rebate rates being paid. Retrospective referrals can only be written if the referral has previously been discussed with the Clinic doctor. Patients are advised that gap payments may apply on specialist, x-ray and pathology services. Information regarding this may be sought from the relevant specialist. **Please be aware that Private Hospital Emergency Departments charge a facility fee. Ambulance transport fees are the responsibility of the patient.**

**PRESCRIPTIONS:**

In the interests of better health care, repeat prescriptions will generally not be issued unless a patient/doctor contact is made. All patients are encouraged to request repeat prescriptions (for long term use of specific medication) at the time of their consultation, thereby avoiding the need for an additional consultation.

**TEST RESULTS:**

Please telephone after 3pm. This avoids congestion with the telephones, both early in the morning and late in the day. Where test results are not yet available or confirmed by the doctor, you may be requested to call back at a later time.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

All consultations and medical records are held in strict confidence and no information is released without patient written consent. At times clinic doctors are involved with clinical audits with the National Prescriber Service. This involves your own doctor reviewing case notes. No patient identifying material is released. If you do not wish to have your notes reviewed for audit purposes please let the reception team know and your wishes will be noted.

**PAP SMEAR TESTS, COLONOSCOPY, MAMMOGRAPHY:**

A reminder system is available for the above health care checks. Please discuss this with the doctor.

**PATIENTS IN DISTRESS:**

On occasion, due to physical or emotional distress, you may feel the need for extra privacy prior to your appointment. Please inform reception and a privacy space can be arranged. Seating in the garden area located off of the clinic entrance is also available in Casterton. While these are not always available for general use, your request will be accommodated where possible.

**CAR PARKING & ACCESS**

Parking in car parks adjacent to the clinic is available at all times. Should you require a wheel chair to access the clinic please request this at reception.

**PRACTICE SURVEYS**

Practice surveys take place from time to time as part of re-accreditation of this health care practice. Surveys are aimed at collecting your views on the practice so we can continually improve our services. All data collected is confidential.

**DOCTOR – WAITING TIMES** As you are aware there are often times that your Doctor is running late for your appointment. There are many reasons for this ranging from an emergency that requires the immediate attention of the Doctor and/or Nurse, calls from Nursing Homes requiring an immediate telephone response to computer glitches that can often create delays in printing of prescriptions, referrals and most importantly, access to patient clinical information.

How can you assist?

- By being aware that all routine appointments are scheduled for 15 minutes.
- If you require a longer appointment, please ask. We are happy to make these available. Longer appointments may be required for insurance examinations; detailed medical check up; smear tests when another medical problem requires review; excisions; personal issues that require additional time

- By refraining from requesting that another member of your family, along with your appointment, be seen – this obviously takes additional time and creates time delays.

#### **DETAILS OF THE MEDICAL CENTRE TEAM –**

##### **Practice Owner:**

**Dr. Brian Coulson MBBS Dip RACOG, FACRRM,**

##### **Practice GP's**

**Dr Linda Thompson BMBS, FRACGP**

##### **Registrars**

**Dr Khaled Moussa MBBS**

**Dr Yong Yu MBBS**

**Dr Gaya Ekanyake MBBS**

**Practice Manager: Coralie Coulson and Chris Payne**

**Communication Officer: Ellen Brewster**

**Practice Nurses: Rosemary, Rowena, Ellen, Alana, Wendy, Lisa & Abby**

**Receptionists: Karen, Lorraine, Jo, Marg, Lona and Beccy**

**FEES:** Our fees are adjusted annually in line with the CPI Index.

#### **CONSULTATIONS: Explanation of Fee Structure**

**Level A: \$56.95** Professional attendance by a Vocationally Registered GP for a simple straightforward task. eg: Tetanus immunisation. Medicare Rebate is \$16.95

**Level B: \$77.05** Professional attendance by a Vocationally Registered GP where a selective history, examination and management plan are completed in relation to one or more problems. eg: ear infection. Medicare Rebate is \$37.05

**Level C: \$111.70** Professional attendance by a Vocationally Registered GP where the attendance involves the taking of a detailed history, examination of multiple systems, arranging investigations and implementing a management plan, or multiple Level B type problems. The consultation time involved is over 20 minutes but less than 40 minutes. Medicare Rebate is \$71.70

**Level D: \$145.55** Professional attendance by a Vocationally Registered GP where the attendance involves the taking of an exhaustive history, examination, arranging investigations and the implementation of a management plan for a complex problem, or multiple level B and/or C type problems. The consultation time involved is in excess of 40 minutes. Medicare Rebate is \$105.55

#### ***i) Fees charged can vary in keeping with the length and complexity of a consultation and with the discretion of the individual doctor.***

**ii)** In normal circumstances, Pensioner and Health Care Card Holders will be bulked billed. Bulk billing of Commonwealth Seniors Card holders and children under 16 is at the discretion of the individual doctor. Repatriation patients are bulk billed under the L.M.O. scheme.

**iii)** Each Doctor is able to discount their fee in special circumstances. If such circumstances exist, they should be discussed with the doctor.

**iv)** Procedures performed in this practice such as ECG, Spirometry, Vaccinations, 24 Hour Blood Pressure Monitor, Doppler Ultrasound and stitches (suturing) etc attract separate fees.

**v)** Payment at the time of consultation is required. The reception team will assist in processing and submitting Medicare refund claims online directly to Medicare. If you provide your savings bank account details to Medicare the refund will be put in your bank account with approximately 48 hours. This reduces the waiting time considerably for a refund of your rebate from Medicare by cheque.

