



wellnews



Volume 14 Number 2

The newsletter of
Wellness on Wellington

Winter 2012

Our aim at Wellness on Wellington is to provide as comprehensive a range of health care services as possible. We're therefore delighted that we can now add yoga to the list. From April 19th a weekly yoga class will be available at the surgery. An information leaflet is available from reception and more information can be found in this newsletter.

We're concentrating in this issue on "getting it right", so we discuss when and why it's important to keep coming back to the doctor if you're not getting better, why pregnant women should fear the flu, but shouldn't fear cancer and why all of us should get up and get moving as much as possible.

Should you ever have any suggestions on how we can do things better within our practice, we always welcome feedback, comments and constructive criticisms. Compliments are also gratefully received!

Try and try again

The great fear in medicine, for both patients and doctors, is missing a diagnosis of cancer.

Patients often think of cancer but are sometimes too scared to even ask the question "Could it be cancer?"

Doctors often think about the possibility of cancer, but what is possible is very different from what is likely. Therefore we often don't like to talk about the remote possibility of the condition until we feel there is a significant chance that cancer may be the cause of the patient's symptoms.

Diagnosing cancer can be very simple or quite difficult. Some cancers are quite easy to diagnose. In most cases they will be found within one or two visits. These include

- Breast cancer
- Melanoma
- Testicular cancer
- Endometrial (uterus) cancer

These cancers are easy to pick up because their typical signs are quite distinct and present early. For example

breast and testicular cancer usually present as a lump. The patient notices the swelling, comes to the doctor and tests are almost always arranged, unless the lump is quite clearly and obviously not cancer.

Only in rare cases will the test come back negative but the lump still turn out to be cancer. With breast cancer, for example, an ultrasound and mammogram may be enough to rule out cancer but often a needle biopsy may be needed.

Similarly, endometrial cancer (the lining of the uterus) usually presents with abnormal bleeding, and melanomas present as new (or changing) irregular moles.

All these cancers are easy to pick because their early symptoms are easy to detect.

But other cancers can typically take three or more visits before they are found. These cancers usually present with vague symptoms that could have many, many causes. We therefore need to go through a process of refining our

questions, different examinations and progressively more specific tests to find the cause of those symptoms and uncover what may be a cancer.

Classically the following cancers can be very hard to diagnose:

- Pancreatic cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Stomach cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Lung cancer

These cancers all have vague symptoms which can have many causes. For example stomach, pancreatic and ovarian cancer present with vague abdominal pain or tiredness or mild nausea or some swelling in the abdomen. Those same symptoms can be caused by constipation, stress, thyroid problems, ulcers and dozens of other causes, and those problems are much, much more common than cancer.

Lung cancer can present with a cough—but almost always that is caused by asthma, a chest infection, post-viral cough, indigestion or many other causes.

As you can see sorting these problems out, without ordering lots of unnecessary, expensive tests (some of which have their own side-effects) can be no easy matter. We certainly don't want to miss anything, but we don't want to over-investigate minor problems either.

So, the process of diagnosis can take time, and we encourage you to keep coming back—even if your tests are negative. If your symptoms haven't improved, we need to think about your problem again and again.

Wellness on Wellington
1101 Wellington Rd, Rowville
9780 8900 - all hours, every day.
www.wellonwell.com

We are open every day of the year:

Monday - Friday	8.00 am - 9.00 pm
Saturday - Sunday	9.00 am - 5.00 pm
Public Holidays	9.00 am - 1.00 pm
(Christmas & New Year Day 10.00 am -12.00 noon)	

For patients of this practice with urgent problems after hours, a doctor from the clinic can be contacted by calling the surgery and following the instructions on the answering machine.

Save a life—
your own or your family's!
 Update your home phone, work phone,
 mobile phone and address at reception!

Relax, stretch and heal

We are delighted to add Yoga to the many health related services available at Wellness on Wellington. Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years and has been shown to have health benefits. Our yoga-instructor Karen Skiadis tells us more:

Yoga is a systematic and ancient practice, combining physical postures, meditation, breath work and philosophy for living to empower you to operate at your highest potential, both on and off the yoga mat.

Yoga postures work intelligently with the body, to bring all aspects of our self into a healthy and balanced state. Each body, or individual, is affected differently, according to his, or her needs. Whichever part or area is over-used will be relaxed, and whatever is underused will be stimulated.

Yoga postures stimulate the nervous system glands, digestion, circulation, and organ function of your system if it is sluggish, or they will relax you if you are feeling overworked. Different postures challenge us in different ways. Those requiring strength and



balance encourage us to get in touch with our inner strength as we strive to perform the posture fully and correctly. In this process our will power develops and our mind is cleansed, promoting clarity of thought and intention. Postures requiring flexibility challenge us to become soft and open, to let go of any holding on in the body and any limitations of the mind.

Through the practice of yoga, we become more in tune with our emotions. We learn when to listen to them or when to move on. Highly emotional people experience a shift away from the emotional state being the centre of importance, people with blocked emotions who hold their feelings in and find it hard to express themselves and of their connection to the whole, which allows for release of fear and open expression.

Yoga sessions are run at Wellness on Wellington on Thursday with extra classes to be scheduled based on demand.

Please ask the receptionists for an information flyer and to arrange a booking.

Get up and active

Fascinating research from Australia published in the prestigious Archives of Internal Medicine shows that sitting kills. groups over 45 and regardless of weight, smoking or other health problems.

The study sent questionnaires to over 200,000 Australians aged over 45 and then followed up their survival rates over the next few years.

The researchers then grouped the responses into four bands. The most active group were those who sat for less than four hours each day. People who sat between 4 and 8 hours a day had about a 2% higher chance of dying. Those who sat from 8 to 11 hours per day had a 15% higher chance of dying and the final group who sat more than 11 hours had a 40% increased chance of dying.

Most interestingly, those results were roughly the same for both men and women, for all age



The most interesting finding of all was that people who exercise lots but sit for long hours per day, still have a higher risk of dying than people who do the same amount of exercise but don't sit as much. In other words, it isn't only enough to exercise, you also need to try and minimise the amount of sitting you do.

The study adds to a body of research about sitting. Another study has shown that people who sit need to get up at least every twenty minutes to lower their risk of dying. Luckily for the doctors, we get up about that often to call in our next patient—but what do you do at your workplace?

Save the mother or the baby?

Every mother wants to do the best for their baby, but sometimes pregnancies don't go to plan. One of the most frightening things that can happen is a woman finding out she has cancer whilst pregnant. Often the choices are stark—have chemotherapy which may cause major abnormalities to the baby, or have a termination so that the cancer can be treated.

Recent research suggests that the issue isn't quite so scary. The researchers looked at 68 women who had 236 cycles of chemotherapy and delivered 70 babies.

They looked at their IQ, neurological and cardiac development, their general health and development, their hearing and their general behaviour at birth and regularly afterwards. The results showed that babies born prematurely were more likely to have developmental problems. But there was no effect on their other health markers. This suggests that it might be riskier to induce an earlier delivery than it is to keep the pregnancy going even while the mother receives chemotherapy.

This is of course a rare and complicated matter, and if it ever befell you it would be dealt with by conferences between oncologists (cancer experts) and obstetricians. Every case will have its own issues. Still, its reassuring to know that the fear of having to choose between saving the mother's life or the baby's is probably never going to be necessary.

It might be riskier to induce an earlier delivery than it is to keep the pregnancy even while the mother receives chemotherapy.

From the medical press

Each issue we bring you a few interesting developments in the world of medicine with references so you can read more.

Ice blocks can be used as a quick and often effective treatment for nose bleeds because ice in the mouth decreases blood flow to the lining of the nose by as much as 23%.

UK doctors say children with nosebleeds can be encouraged to suck on flavoured ice blocks and this may be more effective than the use of ice packs on the nose.

www.bmj.com/content/344/bmj.e2573



The cut-off birthdate for entry to school in Canada is December 31. Thus, children born in December are typically the youngest in their grade. Researchers wanted to see if relative age within a grade affected the diagnosis or treatment of ADHD.

They looked at nearly a million children over an 11 year period and found that boys who born in December were 30% more likely to be diagnosed as suffering ADHD than boys in the same class born in January. For girls the difference was 70%. Similarly December boys/girls were 41%/77% more likely to be given ADHD drugs than their January peers. This suggests that some kids are being overdiagnosed with ADHD and therefore over-treated, even though their behaviour is age appropriate, because they are being compared to children who are older.

www.cmaj.ca/content/early/2012/03/05/cmaj.111619.abstract

Parents (and doctors and nurses) worry about the risk of severe allergic reactions like anaphylaxis after immunisation, but a UK study showed how rare it is with no cases recorded after more than five million routine shots, and only seven suspected cases in the UK over a year. Two of those cases occurred with patients using non-standard vaccines (like single component measles vaccines). Of the others, most occurred more than 30 minutes after they had their injection.

Most children were treated with intramuscular adrenaline and all made a good recovery without need for admission to intensive care.

The authors suggest standard waiting time of 10-20minutes be maintained except for patients with a history of anaphylaxis who should be watched for an hour.

adc.bmj.com/content/early/2012/01/23/archdischild-2011-301163.abstract

Protect the mother, protect the baby, protect the child

Winter flu season is upon us and we have already immunised most of the people who recognise they are at high risk—the elderly, those with chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart and kidney disease etc.

There is however one other group who is at high risk of both catching flu and of severe consequences if they get sick. It is

immunisation of 1000 women will prevent one or two admissions to hospital

a group that we think of as being fit and healthy, yet they are considered one of the most important groups to immunise against the flu—pregnant women.

The Department of Health and Aging are particularly encouraging pregnant women to be immunised this year and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) strongly agree. In a recent announcement, RANZCOG stated that immunisation of 1000 women will prevent one or two admissions to hospital with flu. Considering that many of these hospitalisations will result in a miscarriage, injury to the baby or maternal death, the value of immunisation becomes clear.

As a “high-risk” group, the vaccine is provided without

charge to pregnant women. Please ask your doctor to arrange this.

There is also much conversation in the press about whether flu vaccine is safe to give to children. This controversy resulted from a number of children in 2011 suffering seizures after being given the vaccine.

It is important to realise that there are five different companies making flu vaccine for the Australian market. Although they are all meant to be identical, there are some differences in the manufacturing process.

Noone is sure why, but one brand in particular—Fluvax, made by Australian company CSL—was responsible for the seizures last year. Furthermore, they haven't been able to

prove their safety in kids this year.

Therefore, children under the age of 5—and preferably up to the age of 10—should not receive Fluvax as their brand of influenza immunisation. The other four brands have been shown to be safe.



Community corner

Parenting is one of life's great joys, but also a challenge. Because we love our children, most parents wonder if we are doing it right and wish we could do it better. Some parents struggle with anxiety, guilt and feelings of discouragement. To inspire parents, our neighbours, Rowville Baptist Church, will be hosting a guest speaker who seeks to encourage and support parents and their families. On Mother's Day (10am May 13) Eric Wieckmann will speak on improving self-esteem and overcoming life controlling problems.

Wellness Whispers

WHO'S NEW

Proving that press deadlines wait for no-one and that children will act to their own timetable, we are delighted to announce that **Dr Catherine Bacus** delivered a little boy whilst the last issue of *Wellnews* was at the printers!

Nathan than was born on February 2nd at 3.02am (Catherine arriving at the hospital with barely 20 mins to spare!!) weighing 3355g and with a full head of lovely Filipino black hair.

Catherine has already returned to work two half-days per week. We wish her and Filbert years of joy, pride and restful nights!

Congratulations also to our paediatrician **Dr Beth Thomas** on the birth of her third child. Genevieve was born on March 15th and weighed in at an impressive 4 kilos. Beth will return to consulting at the surgery on June 8th.

We are delighted to announce that our nursing team has expanded with the addition of a highly experienced nurse **Teresa Schulz**.

Teresa graduated in 1993 from Victoria University with a Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing), and

has since completed post-graduate studies in Clinical Nursing (Wound Management) and Management. She has previously worked in the hospitals, particularly in gastroenterology, gastric surgery and general surgery. For the past twelve years she has been readying patients for hospital admission, preparing them and their families for discharge back home and worked in nursing administration. She joins us keen to return to one-on-one hands-on patient care in the community setting.

Teresa has lived in Rowville for the past 18 years, and is a busy mother of two - a 5 year old daughter and an 18 month old son.

As noted elsewhere in the newsletter, we have now added yoga to our services. Our yoga instructor is **Karen Skiadis** who tells us "I was born in England and moved to Australia in 1969. I grew up in Knox and started classical ballet at age 4 and love it as well as jazz. I still dance today. I fell in love with yoga 17 years ago so in 2006 I studied an advanced diploma of yoga teaching and have been running

classes in gyms and community centres ever since."

We also welcome **Brenda Taylor**, a psychologist who will be joining our existing team. "I moved to Melbourne from New Zealand when I had just started primary school. I am married with two young children who keep us on our toes. I love travelling and reading although there's not much time for that at the moment.

I started my journey in becoming a psychologist over 20 years ago and, while studying, have had another career in training and e-learning. I have worked for almost every industry imaginable as consultant. I graduated with my Masters in Psychology in 2010, but before that I had the opportunity to work in primary schools and in Work Rehabilitation. I have enjoyed working for schools for the last couple of years helping adults and children. I have a special interest in anxiety of adults and children, post-natal depression, infertility, parenting, stress and weight management, eating disorders and workplace issues, but can deal with many other issues too."

Finally, long-standing patients of the practice will

be delighted to hear that **Dr Peter Tribe**—still in New Zealand, and still hopeful of returning soon—has become a grandfather. Peter's son Brent and partner Leisa have a

little girl, Charlie Christianna. We wish him lots of joy from his first grandchild and hope this will speed the way for an earlier return!

SKIN CLINICS

Patients often attend for an appointment and then at the end ask for their moles to be checked. Whilst we can give a quick glance at a mole while walking down the corridor, it isn't a proper examination, and we prefer to do things properly.

All of our doctors are happy to do skin checks but we ask that you book an appointment specifically for this purpose as a proper skin check takes time. Several of our doctors are now running dedicated skin clinic sessions which involve a sun-exposure history, a comprehensive skin examination, biopsies of some lesions to see if they are dangerous and follow-up arrangements to remove anything suspicious. Please ask reception to make an appointment with your doctor for a skin check.

A quick glance at a mole while walking down the corridor isn't a proper examination

The information in this newsletter is general in nature and cannot be relied upon in any particular case. Serious conditions may appear minor and vice-versa. We therefore advise that if you have any concern about your health, you should consult your doctor at the earliest opportunity.