



# wellnews



Volume 16 Number 2

The newsletter of  
Wellness on Wellington

Winter 2014

This edition of *wellnews* is about help—how we can help you, how you can help us and how to avoid people who are just pretending to be helpful.

We've had a large number of extra staff join us in the last few months including additional GPs, specialists and allied health practitioners. We are delighted to add occupational therapy services to our team and hope to be joined by a speech therapist very soon. The combination of these professions, our psychologists, paediatrician and paediatric surgeon means that nearly all paediatric problems, even of a complex nature, can be dealt with in-house, a validation of our motto "All your health care needs treated in one location".

We're also broadening our psychology services to include group therapy for patients with anxiety or depression and for those who wish to concentrate on mindfulness. Further groups will be added progressively in the coming months—along with an increase in all our medical services.

## Help us help you

Our aim at Wellness on Wellington is to help you as much as possible—but we can do a much better job if in some ways you help us.

First—please do keep your contact details up-to-date. At least once a month we need to contact a patient urgently and find that we do not have an easy method of finding them. Invariably this is when we are trying to follow-up on a patient with serious test abnormalities or are checking to see how someone is when they are particularly unwell.

Please let us know whenever there are changes to your address; home, work or mobile numbers and keep your Medicare card details up-to-date.

We also had an incident recently where we rang a patient to see if they were OK but there was no answer from their home phone (and they had no other!).

We tried to ring their daughter who was their designated emergency contact—but we found that her number was dis-

connected. So we ask that you please also keep us informed of any changes to the phone number of your next-of-kin or other emergency helper.

Please also be understanding if our staff repeatedly ask you questions about your address, date of birth or phone numbers. We have an obligation under the accreditation standards of general practice to do a three-point identity check of patients whenever we see them—

regardless of how well we know them—and of course it's a good way of us refreshing any information that has changed.

Second—when phoning for results, please do so after 1pm. The phones are very busy in the mornings when patients are ringing to make appointments and it is difficult for reception staff to chase through files to find what you need. This is particularly important as

often the doctor hasn't even had a chance to check or annotate your result before lunchtime.

Many practices don't give any results over the phone. They require patients to come in—even if everything is normal. We think that's an unnecessary waste of your time and potentially quite expensive. However to allow us to continue to provide the convenience of phoning for (most) results, please do call late in the day.

***We can do a much better job helping you, if you help us.***

Finally, please think about other patients. If you have a complicated issue to deal with, please ask for a double-appointment to reduce the time patients after you are kept waiting. If you have many problems you want addressed please ask for a longer appointment, or understand we may need to deal with your issues over several visits.

Similarly, if you can't attend your appointment or you feel better, a phone call as early as possible before your visit-time will allow us to allocate that appointment to someone else who is sick and will need it. Just failing to show up is very inconsiderate both to us and to others who are unwell.

These few simple steps will go a long way to ensuring we can provide you with the best possible care.

**Save a life—  
your own or your family's!**  
Update your home phone, work phone, mobile phone and address at reception!  
**Please also update the contact details for your Emergency Contact.**

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

**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.**

## Woes with your toes

**Winter is here, and so is ingrown toenail season! Our podiatrist Michelle Davies explains:**

When the cold and wet weather hits, we bring out our boots and closed toe shoes again. Unfortunately, this change in footwear can sometimes lead to a nasty problem with ingrowing toenails. In the podiatry clinic, we often see an increase in painful nails at this time of year.

An ingrown toenail occurs when a spike of nail pierces the skin next to the nail, and leaves an area that can become infected. The big toenail is the most commonly affected nail, but the other toenails can also be affected. Common causes of ingrown toenails include: poor nail cutting technique, ripping or pulling the nails, fungal nail infections, tight footwear, trauma to the nail or a nail that naturally curves in too much. An ingrown nail can be very painful - even the smallest knock to the area can make your eyes water! The sweaty and hot conditions inside a shoe do not help with bacteria build up, and this can lead to the skin becoming infected. The toe can become red, hot and swollen, with a pus discharge. Nasty stuff!

Thankfully, treatment from a podiatrist can very quickly relieve the pain of an ingrown nail. The type of treatment will depend on the severity of the problem, but may include cutting away the nail spike and applying an appropriate dressing. If infected, antibiotics prescribed by a GP may also be needed. The antibiotics will usually settle the painful

toe down, but unless the offending nail spike is removed, the problem will likely recur. Chronic ingrown toenail problems may require more in depth treatment, and a minor surgical procedure performed by the podiatrist can provide permanent relief.

As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. So how to prevent ingrown toenails?

Trim the nails straight across and do not cut down the sides of the nail. A file can be used to buff any sharp edges.



Wear well fitting shoes that don't press on the toes.

See your podiatrist early if a nail starts to become painful. Prompt treatment can help to prevent a chronic problem occurring.

## Working together

When people think about seeing a psychologist they usually imagine going to individual sessions—just themselves and the psychologist. However, psychology therapy groups have long been considered a successful way to receive treatment for various mental health issues, or simply to learn new life skills for managing stress, relationships, and emotional distress.

Though the idea of sharing with a group of people can feel daunting, the benefits of hearing from others who have similar experiences to yourself, and learning about thoughts, feelings and relationships as a group, can often improve treatment outcomes. The psychologist who acts as group leader is trained in managing the dynamics of the group, which means that expressed emotions, interactions between members, and the content of what's spoken about is managed and worked through.

Members learn in the first session about the 'rules' of the group in terms of confidentiality, behaviour and safety, attendance, and participation expectations, all of which help support each person in the group to get what they need from the experience. Groups can be designed to provide treatment for issues such as depression and anxiety. Alternatively, groups can be about achieving a

particular goal, such as learning and practicing meditation, developing new interpersonal skills, managing emotional distress, or parenting.

For many patients, Medicare rebates are available for 10 group session visits with a psychologist per year, in addition to any individual psychological treatment you may be receiving. This requires you to have a Mental Health Care Plan completed with your General Practitioner.

Wellness on Wellington is commencing a group for people who experience Anxiety and Depression, facilitated by Clinical Psychologist Kelly Watt-McMahon. The group runs for 10 one hour, weekly sessions on a Monday evening and commences in early August. With a Medicare rebate you are less than \$10 out of pocket per session. There will be a limited number of bulk bill places available (conditions apply).

If you would like to hear more about this group please ask your doctor, the reception desk, or contact Kelly directly on 0419 832 156.

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***The benefits of hearing from others who have similar experiences to yourself can often improve treatment outcomes***

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## Helping themselves instead of helping you

We have had a number of calls from patients telling us they've been contacted by companies inviting them to take part in a variety of health screening activities. Sometimes these invitations are accompanied by financial incentives such as offering multiple tests for a reduced price.

The latest we have heard of is being marketed as "stroke prevention" and includes tests like an ultrasound to rule out an aortic aneurysm, an ECG to rule out atrial fibrillation and a Doppler to assess peripheral artery disease.

Our strong advice is to avoid these companies. Almost always the tests are unnecessary. If they are needed—we can arrange them through the Medicare system at a lower price, or often bulk-billed with no out of pocket expense at all.

Screening is generally not a useful exercise and should only be done in the context of your family history, past history and personal risk factors. A company which offers one standard package for everyone is not thinking about you but about themselves. Even worse, if anything does show up, they just tell you to see your doctor—but often don't even provide us with the results!

If you have any concerns about your health—you should always speak to your doctor first!

## 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.

Parents of obese children often fail to realise their children have a problem—even whilst seeking help. Thirty percent of parents attending a tertiary care paediatric obesity clinic felt their children's health was excellent and that their weight

was not a concern. Over 40% were not interested in changing their children's activity levels and only 60% were interested in changing their child's diet. Advice from doctors made no difference to how parents felt

about activity levels.

Parents who were themselves overweight or obese were those least concerned about their children's weight.

[http://www.andjrn.org/article/S2212-2672\(14\)00496-1/abstract](http://www.andjrn.org/article/S2212-2672(14)00496-1/abstract)

## How could an Occupational Therapist help me?

At Wellness on Wellington we aim to constantly expand the health services we offer, and are very pleased at how we succeed. We'd therefore like to welcome Alethea Leendertz to our team. Alethea is a highly trained occupational therapist, with extensive experience with both children and adults. We've long wanted to add an occupational therapist to our staff and are delighted to have found someone so skilled.

But what does an occupational therapist actually do?

Occupational therapists use the word "occupation" to include everything we do—everyday tasks around the house (such as dressing, bathing and cooking), outside (like going to the shops or participating in leisure activities) and the things we do at work.

Occupational therapists identify and assess areas that clients may be having problems with. These difficulties may be the result of a

physical medical condition such as arthritis, or a mental health condition—for example, depression.

Occupational therapists help people of all ages by finding out why they cannot do what they would like or need to do. They start with a comprehensive assessment and will work out ways in consultation with the client or carer to regain or improve their independence.

Where appropriate, a home visit to assess the tasks, problems and solutions more closely, is performed.

Solutions may involve:

- Teaching a different way of completing a task,
- Recommending changes to make an activity easier,
- Recommending devices or equipment to assist,
- Modifying the set-up of a home, classroom, workplace or another environment.

Almost anybody who finds a task difficult may benefit from seeing an occupational therapist.

If you answer yes to any of the following questions:

- Are you struggling to get in or out of bed?
- Do you have issues getting on and off toilets or chairs?
- Are you having difficulty getting up and down the stairs?
- Do you have problems accessing your bathroom safely?
- Is it hard to manage your own personal hygiene needs?
- Are you struggling with dressing tasks?
- Is it difficult to make meals?
- Is it difficult to go shopping?
- Are you having difficulty accessing your community?
- Are you struggling with fatigue and/or breathlessness?

then you may benefit from seeing an occupational therapist.

Children may benefit if they have difficulties with fine motor skills (such as writing or art), gross motor skills (like running, sport, balance), social development skills or the ability to organise their thinking or behaviour. Children with ADHD or autism spectrum problems—and their parents—can learn a great deal to help manage their issues.

If you would like to see our occupational therapist, please call reception for an appointment with Holistic Home Health Occupational Therapy.

Finally, we'll let Alethea, introduce herself.

"I grew up in Cape Town, South Africa and hold a Masters-degree in Occupational Therapy. I am currently a PhD student at Latrobe University.

Prior to relocating to Australia in 2008, I was a Lecturer in Occupational Therapy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. For the past 20 years, I have worked in most areas of occupational therapy clinical practice that includes rehabilitation, aged care, paediatrics, mental health and occupational therapy education. I bring my enthusiasm for evidence-based practice within home-based care to my occupational therapy practice."

***Almost anybody who finds a task difficult may benefit from seeing an occupational therapist.***

## A word about our fees

Some patients have been quite concerned about when we will introduce the \$7 co-payment mooted in the federal budget. So far the co-payment legislation has not yet gone to the Senate (and we expect will be modified there). In the meantime, we continue with our current billing policy.

It is worth noting that despite the health minister saying that GPs will be earning \$2 more on consultations and therefore can afford to not charge the co-payment to pensioners, he is hiding the true figures. Currently, when we bulkbill a pensioner or child the rebate is \$47.90. Under the proposed legislation, if we don't charge the full co-payment, it will be \$32.05—a 33% drop.

A reminder that although we are a private billing clinic, as a courtesy to pensioners and health care card holders we bulkbill most consultations at the surgery between 8am and 6pm weekdays. And because young children are sick often and it's hard for parents to distinguish between minor and major illnesses, we extend a similar policy to children aged 15 and under.

For the above groups, home visits, weekend and evening consultations, some complex consultations and all procedures (such as suturing, removal of moles, managing fractures etc) are privately billed, though at a discounted rate for health care card holders.

# Wellness Whispers

## NEW STAFF

We've been joined by lots of new staff in recent months—GPs, specialists and lots of allied health.

**Dr Angela Luangrath** is a paediatrician with over 9 years experience working in child and adolescent health. She enjoys looking after children and adolescents with a wide range of health problems such as allergies, asthma, constipation and toileting problems. Her special interest is looking after children and adolescents with developmental and behavioural difficulties, such as autism, ADHD, sleep problems, tantrums and learning difficulties.

Angela trained in Melbourne at Monash Medical Centre and was Senior Paediatric Fellow at the Royal Children's Hospital. Angela has previously worked overseas in Asia and the Pacific Islands. In her spare time she enjoys gardening and reading.

We've been fortunate to be joined by a very experienced GP—**Dr William Kinsella**. William graduated from University College Dublin (Ireland) always knowing that he wanted to work in general practice. He spent four interesting years in Northern Ireland before travelling. Since August 2009 he worked in the northern suburbs of Melbourne till he joined us.

He recently completed a diploma of dermatology through Cardiff University (UK) and enjoys the challenges in preventative health, assisting people in achieving their goals and in working towards healthier lives.

In his free time he loves to travel and spend time with his new wife and son Liam, as well as participating in fun runs.

The highlights have been his wedding and the birth of his son within recent months.

We are very sad that **Dr Katherine Tham** has had to return to England for family reasons and that **Dr Catherine Baccus** has decided to reduce her clinical workload and concentrate more on teaching at Monash University. They will both be very sadly missed. However we are delighted to welcome **Dr Anna Collins**:

“Having recently returned to live in Australia I am delighted to be joining the team at Wellness on Wellington. I grew up in Yorkshire, England

before attending Newcastle Upon Tyne medical school. During my training as a junior doctor I spent several months working in an Emergency Department in Australia which was a fantastic opportunity before returning to the UK to complete my GP training. I enjoy all aspects of this speciality and strive to give my best clinical care. Outside of work, I enjoy being outdoors, especially playing hockey. I am really looking forward to this in Melbourne, which will certainly be better than in English weather!”

Our registrar **Dr Kateena Vogel** has had to rotate to another practice to carry on her training, but we look forward to her return to our clinic. Our new registrar is **Dr Elizabeth Coman**. “After graduating from Monash University in 2010, I've spent the last few years at Monash Health expanding my skills in many areas. Finding I enjoyed all aspects of medicine, I decided to work towards becoming a GP, and to assist with this completed extra training in women's health and paediatrics.

In my spare time, I love playing hockey, cooking (and eating) and spending time with friends and family.

Having grown up in a small town in North East Victoria, I love the community feeling of general practice and look forward to getting to know everyone at WoW over the next six months.”

## NEW BABIES

Congratulations to **Dr Kris Coniglio** on the birth of her (third) son—Elijah, who was born at 3.86kg on June 3rd. And to **Dr Mihiri Weerasooriya** whose (second) son Sean was born on June 17th weighing 3.35 kg.

Latest reports are that all mothers, babies, father and siblings are doing fine and we look forward to seeing them all back soon.

## MULTI-TALENTED

**Dr Joanne Pollott** never ceases to amaze us with her broad range of interests and skills. Apart from her clinical skills, Jo performs with the prestigious Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir (see [www.rmp.org.au](http://www.rmp.org.au) for upcoming performances) and was recently certified as a Crossfit Level 1 Trainer, a testament to her hard work. Congratulations on all counts!

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.