



# wellnews



Volume 20 Number 2

The newsletter of  
Wellness on Wellington

Winter 2018

We have two aims at Wellness on Wellington. One is to make good health better. The other is to make good health easier. Regarding the latter, we are now able to accept requests for repeat scripts and referrals to specialists online. See the article below for details.

Regarding the former, one of the most exciting things to happen to our practice in years was when we received a call in late April advising us that we had been selected as finalists for the AGPAL Chair Practice of the Year Award. More information on why this award is so prestigious on the back page.

Some things in medicine are recurrent—like needing to get the flu shot and asking patients about allergies. Turns out however that these aren't as common as we used to think. And other things are once in a lifetime—like the need to prepare yourself and your family for your inevitable passing. We have articles on all these subjects in this newsletter.

We also have an article from our podiatrist/orthotist Mr Brennan Jenkins who writes about moon-boots. Turns out, these are just as useful here on planet Earth!

## Making good health easier!

For years, Wellness on Wellington has tried to make administrative services as convenient as possible. For example, a large number of patients now book their appointments online through our website or using the wellonwell app.

We also encourage patients to receive their reminders via SMS rather than post, as it is quicker and more efficient.

We are now delighted to announce another service that will be available online—requesting repeat scripts.

From May, patients will be able to send a request to their doctor

for a repeat of a regular medication using our website or app.

Because our primary concern is your good health, we have instituted some strict rules about which scripts and for which patients will be written using this service. Please take the time to read the Frequently Asked Questions on the website which explain our policy regarding online script requests.

***We aim to make good health better and to make good health easier.***

But in brief, we will only respond to an online script request from our regular patients, only for their regular medications and only if the patient is being regularly

seen for review of their condition.

Certain medications like strong pain killers and sleeping tablets won't be provided using an online request, and other medications may be provided for only one month, without any repeats until you return for review. These restrictions are designed not to frustrate you but to ensure that your health is being cared for in the best possible way.

The turnaround time for scripts is not instant, and you should discuss with your regular GP how long they expect script requests will take to be filled.

In certain circumstances, a repeat referral to a specialist may also be written in response to an online request. Please see the website for details.

We hope that you will find the ability to request scripts without an appointment efficient and convenient. Please talk to the staff if you have any questions or suggestions about this system.

**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.**

**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.**

## Cephalosporin allergy

A routine question at your first visit to the doctor—and at many visits thereafter—is “Do you have any allergies?”

It is a frightening thing to think that a medication which is prescribed to heal, can in fact cause serious damage in the event of an allergic reaction. In fact most of the time that people think they’ve had an allergic reaction, they just had a side effect and that doesn’t exclude using that medication in the future.

Nonetheless, some reactions can be serious or even life threatening. The commonest medication that people report being allergic to is penicillin but there are lots of other anti-

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***There is no blanket cephalosporin allergy—if you’ve reacted to one, it is still safe to try other medications in that family***

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biotics and other medications that can cause allergic reactions. Even worse, we’ve thought for a long time that if you are allergic to some medications, you are also likely to be allergic to all the other drugs in that family, or even in other, somewhat similar families. For example, the traditional teaching was that if you were allergic to any medication in the cephalosporin family, you were probably allergic to all cephalosporins and even had a 10% or more chance of being allergic to penicillin.

Turns out—that’s not the case. A recent study showed that there is no blanket cephalosporin allergy and that if you’ve had a bad reaction to one drug in the class, it is still safe to try other medications in that family. Of course it is still possible to react to more than one medication—but it means that in most cases of a reaction to a cephalosporin we can keep other members of the class, and most importantly, continue to use penicillin, which is an incredibly important antibiotic in a wide variety of conditions.

One consequence is that we are going to have to update our allergy lists again. If you’ve been allergic to a medication in the cephalosporin family, it may be necessary for you or us to do some homework and try and identify exactly which cephalosporin was at fault. We will avoid that one—but not necessarily the others.

## Mental health matters

It’s no secret that mental health is just as important as the physical side of things. We know that depression, stress and anxiety can impact on quality and quantity of sleep, blood pressure, the risk of heart attack, headaches, bowel symptoms, breathing problems and so very many more physical symptoms.

Though mental health issues are no longer considered shameful or a topic to avoid discussing, many people still feel embarrassed to reveal that they aren’t feeling quite right. It’s important therefore to know that not a day goes by



without every GP seeing several people who are coming in precisely for that reason. We certainly won’t think any less of you and are always keen to help you deal with whatever mental health issues—major or minor—are troubling you.

Sometimes we can do that just by having a simple consultation. Just talking to someone objective is often enough to provide clarity to you—we are just the sounding board.

In more serious cases, we can see you regularly to help you work through issues and help clarify what exactly are the problems, the possible solutions and the path to get there. Sometimes that will involve making changes; at other times it will involve learning to accept what can’t change.

When we feel that we are not able to help you, we will gladly refer you to a psychologist (or rarely, a psychiatrist) for additional expertise and help. We are delighted that we have been joined by **Melissa Friehe**, a registered psychologist who has experience in the full range of mental health issues, including children, adolescents and adults. She has an interest in helping children manage their emotions and behaviour, especially in the setting of ADHD.

With Melissa joining us, we have increased availability for appointments with psychologists, both male and female. Whilst a referral is not essential to see a psychologist, it is usually helpful to see your GP first. Apart from deciding if and which psychologist is most appropriate for you, we can also prepare a Mental Health Treatment Plan, which will outline a path to recovery, and provide six or ten visits to a psychologist with a Medicare rebate.

## Why are flu shots so confusing?

Life used to be so simple. As soon as the flu shot became available, you went in, got the injection and were protected for the rest of the year.

But in 2018, life is so much more complicated—so much so, that even the nursing and medical staff need to double check to make sure that each patient gets the right dose and brand of flu shot. Here is the low-down:



All children between the ages of six months and five years are entitled to free flu vaccine. The first year that a child gets the flu shot, they should have two injections a month apart. After that, they just need one shot per year.

Children over the age of five can also get flu shots but these are not subsidised by the National Immunisation Program. Patients over the age of five who have a

chronic illness including asthma, heart or lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease or immunosuppression are also entitled to free flu vaccines.

Everyone else should consider getting a flu vaccine. Not only can flu badly affect anyone, even if they are otherwise healthy, but it prevents you transmitting the virus to those who are more frail and will suffer badly from an infection.

This year, all the people listed above will get quadrivalent flu shots—an injection that protects against four strains of the flu virus.

As has been the case for many years, everyone over the age of 65 is also entitled to a free flu vaccine—but this year they will receive the new “super-tri”, a more powerful version of a vaccine that protects against three strains of the infection.

Why three strains and not four? Because in most cases, patients over the age of

65 suffer from viruses in the Influenza A family. The new vaccine (there are two brands) provides either a higher dose of vaccine or combines the vaccine with another agent that generates a stronger immune response against FluA. In previous years we have found that the flu vaccine immunity fades after three or four months. It is expected that the new, supercharged trivalent vaccine will provide immunity right through till the end of the flu season.

However patients under the age of 65 should have the quadrivalent vaccine which covers a wider range of viruses.

Why does all this matter? Well, as last year showed, flu infection can kill directly or by increasing the risk of heart attacks, pneumonia and other diseases that are fatal. Most worryingly, 90% of those who die are over the age of 65, which is why it is so critical that that age group be immunised.

## From the Medical Press

Apropos of our article on the importance of flu vaccination, did you know that catching the flu increases your risk of a heart attack by six-fold?

See [http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1702090?query=featured\\_home&](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1702090?query=featured_home&)

Once again, prostate testing is in the medical news. A single screening test finds lots of extra cancers, but does not reduce the risk of dying of prostate cancer over a ten year period.

See <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2673968?redirect=true> re PSA testing

Just a social smoker? One cigarette a day is about half as bad for you as 20 cigarettes a day—there is just no safe number of cigarettes to smoke.

See <https://www.bmj.com/content/360/bmj.j5855>

## What is a Moon Boot?

Moon Boot is the common term used to describe a Controlled Ankle Movement (CAM) Walker. It is a brace that is professionally fitted and aligned to immobilise the ankle and foot.

Moon boots are often prescribed for management of a fracture or serious ligament injury of the foot or ankle. By reducing, but not eliminating all movement, they allow healing of the bones, whilst encouraging blood flow and early rehabilitation.



Moon boots are very useful because they can reduce or eliminate the need for crutches, are easily removed for washing skin & dressing changes which results in less skin irritation and smell. They allow you to get back to work and daily life more quickly and may reduce the rehabilitation you need after an injury by allowing you to resume walking sooner. Finally, moon boots are individually fitted to remove weight bearing from vulnerable areas, which means

they reduce the level of pain you may feel from your injury. Generally your doctor will assess your injury and determine if a Moon Boot is suitable for your healing and recovery. The selection and fitting of the correct moon boot is done by a podiatrist or orthotist. The sole height of the walker and change in walking may create problems at other joints such as the knees, hips or lower back. This may be reduced by wearing a supportive and cushioned shoe with a similar heel height to the walker on your unaffected side. For warmth/hygiene, you may wear a sock beneath the liner and over the compression. Do not remove the liner from the walker as this is set to fit only you. If required you can return for refit/adjustment by appointment.

***Moon boots are very useful because they can reduce the need for crutches and are easily removed for washing***

Before discontinuing use of the walker you should visit your Doctor or Complete Feet for discharge or rehabilitation. Often an x-ray and examination is required to

gauge if sufficient healing has occurred. You will then be provided with a personal treatment and rehabilitation plan if appropriate, as the foot and ankle will be weak following the injury and lack of movement. This is highly important as the risk of re-injury is very high if rehabilitation is not completed.

## Paperwork—and why you want to spend time on it

We hope you have a will which lays out your wishes after you pass away. If not, we strongly urge you to see a solicitor to discuss this—it is a critically important matter to your peace of mind and your family's long-term well being.

We also hope you have an enduring power of attorney form which provides authority to a trusted family member or friend to make medical or financial decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to make them. Although there are now combined forms for medical decisions and financial decisions, it's probably better to have separate ones for each. If you have previously completed those forms they are still valid. If you have not previously completed a power of attorney, you can search for Victorian Medical Power of Attorney form or download a new, free form from

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/Api/downloadmedia/%7B11E5E37D-2E46-4FE3-81C9-238B68F5F541%7D>

We do recommend that you keep a copy of your Power of Attorney for yourself, give a copy to your attorney, to your solicitor and, if you have completed a medical form, please give a copy to us.

***We recommend you have a will, a medical power of attorney and an advance care directive***

Finally, we hope that you have completed an advance care planning form. This is a document that outlines to both your attorney and your medical team what interventions, care and treatment you want to receive in the event of a catastrophic medical event like a stroke or loss of consciousness where you can't express your wishes any further. It also outlines what you want if you suffer a terminal illness like cancer. You can of

course change any aspect of your wishes as you go along if you are capable of doing so, but in preparing an advance care plan while you are still in good health means that those who will make decisions for you in highly stressful times have a clear idea of what you would want. Again we would

recommend giving a copy of your plan to your doctor, solicitor and the people closest to you.

You may want help completing an advance care plan form (which is available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/Api/downloadmedia/%7B0C822060-56EE-48EB-BC39-9FE46FC10F71%7D> ). If so, we suggest you book a double appointment with your GP to go through the options carefully.

# Wellness Whispers

## STAFF COMING AND GOING

We have lots of new staff to welcome including three new receptionists who have joined our team.

**Bek Smith** has worked in healthcare admin for 3 years whilst studying and completing VCE and a Diploma of Beauty Therapy. “I currently live in Boronia and am enjoying the short drive to work. I like to visit my mum on the weekends and binge watch TV shows. I am hoping to fit in well here at WoW.”

**Cassie Ruffolo** tells us “After completing my Bachelor of Health Science, I spent a short period at a medical clinic in Frankston. I enjoy spending time with friends and family and love walking along the beach with my dog.” Cassie is looking forward to working with the team at Wellness on Wellington.

We also welcome **Tiana Spence** who has commenced with us a receptionist trainee. Before joining WoW, Tiana worked in childcare and as a waitress. “I grew up on a farm and have been riding horses since I was two and a half. I love camping and all outdoor activities as well as country music and Aussie HipHop bands.” We warmly welcome all these staff to our wonderful receptionist team.

We also want to welcome back nurse **Michelle Johnson** after a period on maternity leave.

We are deeply saddened that **Dr William Kinsella** will be leaving the practice in June and returning to Ireland, although delighted that his wife Margaret has been appointed to a senior consultant role in a paediatric intensive care unit in Dublin. William has impressed every staff member and patient with whom he has been in contact with his warmth, compassion, skill and dedication. He will be deeply and sorely missed by everyone at WoW.

## CONGRATULATIONS

We are delighted at how many staff babies we have welcomed to the world. Congratulations to **Dr Lona Brown** on the birth of Harper on February 20th, weighing 3.12 kg, a sister to Harry and Hunter.

Congratulations then to **Dr Tim Tai** on the birth of baby Eric, brother to Angus. Eric was born on March 10th and weighed 3.40 kg. Congratulations also to **Dr Anna Collins** on the birth of Emily on April 6th, weighing 2.67 kg. And finally and fittingly, to obstetrician **Dr Jaclyn Wloszczowski** who gave birth to Alannah on Mother’s Day, 13th May at a petite 2.38 kg. Everyone is well and thriving.

## PRACTICE OF THE YEAR—ALMOST!

In late April, we received the wonderful news that we had been chosen as one of the finalists in the AGPAL General Practice of the Year Award, ranking us in the top five practices in the country! The selection process was rigorous with a large number of nominations received.

AGPAL is the body responsible for accrediting the safety and quality of nearly all general practices in Australia. Prizes are awarded in several categories including small practices, rural practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. However we were nominated in the Chair’s award, (the equivalent of the Open section) and so were judged against all practices in the country. Several hundred practices were nominated, but only five were chosen for the finals.

**As finalists, we are ranked in the top five practices in the country!**

The selection is based on a practice’s achievements in safety, quality care and commitment to excellence. It’s particularly pleasing to us that we should be

recognised in these three areas which are the pillars on which our dedication to patient care rests.

The award title is a little unusual because although it is entitled “Practice of the Year”, the award is actually only bestowed every two or three years, depending on when AGPAL hold their conference. In this case, the award covers best practice in Australia for the years 2015-2017, but is awarded and designated as the 2018 award.

We are delighted to have been recognised by the body that judges the calibre of clinics to be amongst the very best, and remain committed to doing our best to continually improve beyond our current standard.

At the awards dinner on May 18th—where we certainly danced better than any other practice—we were unsuccessful at being crowned with the top prize, but we remain delighted to be considered amongst the very best in the country. And we have something to aim for next time!



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.