

Keeping Healthy This Winter

In Winter the days are shorter, the weather is colder and we tend to stay indoors where it is warm. Winter can also increase our risk of illness. Here are some tips to keep healthy this Winter:

- Most common infectious diseases are spread by germs on our hands. Remember to wash regularly, sanitise, wipe down frequently touched surfaces and cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm.
- Flu vaccines and Covid Boosters –after 18 months, more than 150 vaccination clinics and over 15,000 doses, we are holding the last few fully booked clinics. The SA Health Vaccine Clinic in Victor Harbor and some local pharmacies are still offering these services.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and don't forget to drink plenty of water.
- Being active for 30 minutes each day can help you feel more energetic and make your day more fun but don't forget rest is important too!



A FRIENDLY REMINDER

Please remember to let our reception staff know if you have changed your contact details or if you have a new Medicare or concession card.

Welcome Dr Lara Van Der Wielen

Goolwa Medical Centre warmly welcomes Dr Lara Van Der Wielen. 'Dr Lara' is a GP with a special interest and accreditation in skin cancer.

Lara has been working at GMC as a regular duty doctor one day per fortnight. She will now be working from our clinic three days per week, mainly in the capacity of skin checks, surgical skin cancer / mole removal procedures, biopsies etc.

GMC now has access to DermEngine, an advanced web based system for capturing, storing and analyzing total body images to evaluate skin conditions, changes in spots etc.

How melanoma looks can vary greatly. If you have lots of moles, a melanoma usually stands out and looks different from other moles. The first sign is often a new spot or a change in an existing mole:

- **size** – the spot may appear, or begin to grow larger
- **colour** – the spot may become blotchy with different depths and shades of colour (often brown or black, but about 20% of melanomas are "amelanotic" and appear as red, white, light grey, pink or the colour of your skin)
- **shape or border** – the spot may increase in height, become scaly, have an irregular shape (scalloped or notched) or not be symmetrical (the halves may look different)
- **itching or bleeding** – the spot may itch or bleed very easily
- **elevation** – the spot may start as a raised nodule or develop a raised area, which is often reddish or reddish brown.

Source: (<https://www.cancersa.org.au/cancer-a-z/melanoma/>)



Care Plans

We now have 5 Care Plan Nurses on our team to help co-ordinate the implementation and review of your care plan needs. Talk to your GP for further information!



*Care Plan Nurses
Julie Bridges
Meagan Wittchen
Claire Yeoward
Carolyn Hollingworth
Sue Jones*

Did you know?

The human body contains 30,000 billion red blood cells.

Enamel, found on our teeth, is the hardest substance in the human body.

Humans have 46 chromosomes, peas have 14 and crayfish have 200!



Our Practice Moving Forward

We are not a routinely bulk billing practice, however charges always remain at the discretion of the individual Doctor.

During the ongoing COVID times we have strived to provide additional services such as vaccine clinics out of hours. These clinics, free to you, have required a large investment in labor which comes at a significant cost.

Since our inception as a private practice over 30 years ago, Goolwa Medical Centre (GMC) has aimed to provide the best quality service, and this has often been at the Medicare Rebate rate only (i.e. bulk bill). Unfortunately, the amount set by Medicare is not sufficient to cover all costs required for a progressive practice.

The patient rebate from Medicare was frozen from 2014 until 2018 and for the last 30 years has failed to keep up with the rising costs of running a clinic. These costs continue to rise, and your patient Medicare rebate now represents only half of the full cost of your GP care. Bulk billing is no longer sustainable in Australia and many practices will struggle to survive. Gaps are now essential. Please understand, the Medicare rebate is your payout from the Government to help you pay for your healthcare. It has nothing to do with the actual cost of your healthcare, which is significantly more than your rebate amount. In other words, every time your general practitioner bulk bills your consult, they accept a significant reduction to what the Australian Medical Association recommends they should charge.

At the moment, your rebate stands at \$39.10 for any consult lasting between 6 to 20 minutes, which has to cover room rental, disposables and other overheads, nursing salary, receptionist salary, compulsory medico-legal insurance, income protection, superannuation, income tax, mandatory professional development etc.

Attracting rural doctors within our community is, and always has been, a challenge for our practices. We must remain current to encourage our doctors to remain in this great region and provide them with a competitive income compared to other regions.

Our practice has commenced new programs and services in 2022, from our Covid clinics, skin clinic, our diabetes education program and the DVA CVC Program which is being led by Dr Jared Frampton, DVA Advocate.

Our GP's are hard-working, community minded individuals and our partners are small business owners who provide employment to over 20 local individuals.

We are not a routinely bulk billing practice, however charges always remain at the discretion of the individual Doctor.

Please be understanding when/if your doctor charges you a gap for their service, and please be kind to our reception staff, they are simply following a required process for your health care.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide you with the best possible, professional medical service and quality of care.