

MISSION BAY DOCTORS – AUTUMN/WINTER NEWSLETTER

Flu vaccines are in! Flu is hitting the hospitals already

Australia has reported an early start to this year's influenza with 7,000 confirmed cases by late March. They have 3,000 deaths a year from flu, which is at best an unpleasant illness which can keep you in bed for a week, and at worst can be fatal. And when we talk of "across the ditch", we are a global village these days, so are vulnerable to any new strains emerging.

The strain causing the most trouble with admissions to hospital here seems to be Influenza A, H3, which is in the vaccine we are giving. It was *NOT* in last year's vaccine. We do recommend flu vaccine for all ages (kids and young people are at risk, not just sick or older people). However, for people over 65 or with chronic conditions like asthma it's free. And you *CANNOT* get flu from the vaccine. End of story.

GARDASIL: FREE! (Age 10-26) and strongly recommended

Great news...From 1st January 2017 the new 9-valent Gardasil vaccine will be FREE for all young people under 27, male and female. 9-14 year olds will only need two doses as they develop better immunity; for 15-26 year olds it will be 3 doses. This vaccine greatly reduces the chance of developing HPV-related cancers, which seem to be assuming the nature of an epidemic in young and middle-aged people.

We'll be sending out texts and letters to remind people; there is a programme in schools or you can do the shots at our surgery. Parents – please be aware that not every young man or woman is excited about having injections; and do your bit to encourage your children. We have! All the doctors and nurses at MBD have had their own children immunised – an evidence-based way to help prevent very nasty cancers including mouth and throat (more common in males), cervix etc.

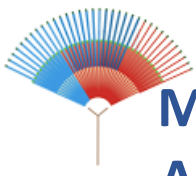
Your test results

When you go for blood tests or X-rays you will be told or called in if the result is abnormal and needs acting upon. Lots of people are ringing or emailing for their results – if you like to know these you can instead:

- Make an arrangement with your doctor when you have the test
- Ask the lab/radiology rooms to send you a copy of the results
- Ask if you can be upgraded to level 2 on Connect Med (where you book appointments www.connectmed.co.nz) so you can see results. This requires coming in with ID.

Yes, our nurses are superhuman....

...but they do have a LOT of telephone calls to make and respond to. Please try and keep chats brief and make a nurse or doctor appointment if you have a lot to discuss or ask about.



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Hepatitis C – more good news😊

This type of hepatitis is now completely curable in over 90% of people. Until recently it could cause progressive sickness, liver cancer, and death (it is the leading cause of liver transplants); but now there is a 12 week course of treatment which is usually a cure. The only trouble is.... We don't KNOW who is a carrier of this virus which can destroy their livers, and lives. We are trying hard to test people who might be at risk for this. If you have...

- ever received a tattoo or body piercing using unsterile equipment
- had a blood transfusion/blood products before 1992
- ever used needles
- ever lived or received medical treatment in a high risk country
- ever been in prison

....please ask for the test. Don't be offended if we ask some personal questions when checking on your health or ordering tests – we just don't want a single person to miss this life-saving treatment.

Kia ora! Bonjour! Ciao! Namaste! नमस्ते

Recent studies confirm that for people who speak more than one language, or learn a language, the development of dementia is delayed by 4-5 years, on average. For many cultures speaking 2 or 3 languages is the norm but English-speaking children who are “immersed” in another language score highly in many tests of brain function. And even short language study at any age, or refreshing a language you once knew, can change your grey matter and give you vital cognitive reserve, delaying symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. If you are interested in this, listen to the two BBC Discovery Podcasts on bilingualism. Kia kaha!

Receptionist resignation

It is with sadness that we are announcing the resignation of Vanessa Skilling from our Reception team. After many years in New Zealand (and ten years working at Mission Bay Doctors) Vanessa is moving home to UK. Many of you will have worked with Vanessa over the years and will appreciate the outstanding service Vanessa has provided. Let us all wish Vanessa good luck for her future endeavors and bid her a cheerful farewell.