

Dr Sarah Dalziel Dr Neil Poskitt Dr Andrew McMenamain Dr Sally Hoskins Dr Robyn Parker Dr Ron Vail

It is only one month until spring, however as I write this after a night of heavy rain and wind—I am reminded that it is still very much a winters day.

We have had a very busy few months, with the late arrival of influenza vaccines fewer people appear to have taken the opportunity to have this protection from the winter flu. The MOH has extended the date for subsidised influenza vaccinations until the 31 August, so if you qualify (65 and over, pregnant, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease), please phone and arrange an appointment with one of our nurses.

Practice News

Dr Sam Whittaker, our new registrar joined the practice in early June. Sam will be with us until early November, we are enjoying having him here with lots of positive feedback from both patients and staff.

Natalie (nurse), had her baby in June, a healthy and happy daughter named Madison.

Frances, our lead nurse, became a grand mother for the first time and has just returned from a month in San Francisco where her son and daughter-in-law live.

Yvonne Chadwick, the Practice General Manager is retiring in September. Yvonne was a strong force in moving the practice from the old rooms to the Redwood Centre. She will be very much missed by both Doctors and staff.

Doctors consulting days

Andrew McMenamain—All day Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Neil Poskitt—Monday, Tuesday morning, Thursday morning and Friday afternoon

Ron Vail—All day Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Sally Hoskins—Monday afternoon, Tuesday morning, All day Wednesday and Friday morning

Sarah Dalziel—Monday and Tuesday mornings and all day Thursday

Robyn Parker—Monday morning, all day Wednesdays and Fridays

If you can't get into your own Doctor we will always offer you an appointment with one of the Doctors. rostered on.

Urgent Clinic— for one urgent problem only
Monday to Friday 8.30—11.00am
No appointment necessary

Medication reviews—why do you need to have them? Dr Andrew McMenamin explains our practice protocol.

Some times patients ask why they are asked to see the doctor just to get a repeat prescription for a medication they may have been on for years. The doctors are guided here by the principles of safe prescribing - medications must always be prescribed safely, which means the right medicine, at the right time, for the right reason. Medicine availability is constantly changing – some older medicines become superseded, and sometimes even newer ones are withdrawn due to safety issues. Guidelines change frequently – a particular condition may have a substantial change in the recommended treatment. And patient’s medical conditions change – a medication or a dose may become in appropriate as a medical problem deteriorates, or improves, or the patient ages and develops additional illnesses. The choice of medication type and dose is a sometimes like a juggling act. A juggler can’t just throw the balls up in the air and then not watch where they go – in the same way the doctor needs to keep an watchful eye on the patient, the medication and the illness. Although your Specialist may have indicated to you that you will be on a particular medication ‘for life’, only your GP will have the full knowledge of all the medications that you are currently on and the Specialist will expect your GP to manage this going forward.

The time frame for medication reviews varies – some stable conditions with well established medications can warrant a long time between doctor visits, while others, such as some heart medications, diabetes and mental health medications, may need to be watched closely.

This medical centre has a policy for the safe prescribing of medications that our nurses refer to when a prescription request is made, which was agreed by all the Principal doctors, for everyone's safety

A reminder too - if possible, please request your prescriptions by email using the email address TeNgaeMedicalCentreNurses@rgpg.co.nz , and always, whenever requesting medications, whether by phone or email, indicate the name of each medication clearly, and let us know how to contact you if needed. Please do not ask for “all my regular pills” as there may be medications in your regular list that use on an “as needed” basis and this can lead to confusion and wastage.

Understanding your Cholesterol Blood Test Result by Dr Robyn Parker

Your cholesterol or lipid blood test results will most likely be done by your Doctor as part of a risk assessment for heart disease and strokes. For those of you who have had a heart attack or a stroke, you will very likely be on cholesterol medication and testing is done to check the medication is working and you are on the correct dose.

Cholesterol is fat made in our livers and it is required for every cell wall in our body as well as being needed to make several hormones. However, too much cholesterol deposits and builds up on our arteries causing blockages to blood flow causing heart disease and small clots can travel causing problems such as strokes.

To understand your Cholesterol Blood test result, I have explained below the different measures and cholesterols that are in the test -

- Total Cholesterol – all the cholesterols in your blood
- Triglycerides – this fat is a source of energy but extra fat your body doesn’t need changes into triglycerides they store and transport fat in the blood, a ‘bad’ cholesterol
- Low Density Lipoprotein or LDL – transports cholesterol to organs to help make cells, when too much is circulating it builds up on artery walls, ‘bad’ cholesterol
- High Density Lipoprotein or HDL – picks up and transports cholesterol back to the liver and the liver gets rid of it, ‘good’ cholesterol
- Total Cholesterol/HDL cholesterol ratio, or TC/HDL ratio – this ratio is what is used in measuring cholesterol as a fact in heart disease risk

Cholesterol levels as recommended by the National Heart Foundation of New Zealand are:

- Total Cholesterol <4.0
- Triglycerides <1.7
- LDL <2.0
- HDL >1.0
- TC/HDL <4.0

If you would like more information on how to reduce your cholesterol, talk to either your GO, one of our nurses or check out this website <http://www.heartfoundation.org.nz> or www.healthnavigator.org.nz