



Welcome to our Summer 2017/2018 newsletter

We like to keep our patients up to date with practice events as well as providing the latest medical News. If something important medically happens in our area, we will let our patients know by email update. Visit our website for previous newsletters and useful links: www.shoalbaydoctors.com.au

*We hope all our patients and their families have a happy and safe
Christmas and New Year.*

Our opening hours over the Christmas week are:

Saturday 23rd Dec to Tuesday 26th December – Closed

Wednesday 27th Dec to Friday 29th December – Open

Saturday 30th Dec to Monday 1st January 2018 – Closed

Tuesday 2nd January – Open again at usual hours

How NOT to get Dementia

In a retirement community this is a pressing issue. Take a look at a recent article posted on our website to see what you can do. www.shoalbaydoctors.com.au

In summary there is no magic wand but by keeping yourself physically and mentally fit as you get older, eating well, not smoking and not drinking too much, you can substantially decrease your risk of getting dementia by up to 50 %.

Cervical Screening Tests (CST)

From December 1st, how we check for cervical cancer has changed and is no longer called a pap smear. That will take us all a bit of time to get used to. The examination and procedure is no different (sorry to say) but now instead of taking a sample to be looked at under the microscope for abnormal cells we take a sample to check for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). If you are HPV negative you will not need another test for 5 years. If you are HVP positive what happens next depends on the type of HPV detected - either repeat the test or Specialist referral. As cervical cancer is associated with HPV and takes some time to develop Medicare will only pay for women to have Cervical screening from the age of 24 years and 9 months UNLESS they are immune deficient or started having intercourse at age less than 14.

Until the system has been running for a while and all women have had HPV testing you will continue to get a recall telling you to have a check 2 years after your last pap smear and you should then attend as advised for a check up and HPV check.

Remember never ignore a symptom.

Cervical cancer is actually quite rare compared with breast, ovarian and uterine cancer and as the interval between recommended checks has now increased it is really important to check out symptoms such as pelvic pain abnormal bleeding and bleeding after intercourse.

One of the good things about having a 2 yearly pap test was that it gave your doctor or nurse a chance to catch up with any issues that you might have with reproductive health and check them out. We have found all kinds of important diagnoses during “routine pap visits”, ranging from ovarian cancer and breast cancers to vaginal abnormalities causing difficulties with sexual intercourse.

Women may wish to come in for a regular gynae/sexual health check up even if they are not due for cervical screening, and that may be a wise thing to do in some cases.

Summer Sun

We freeze thousands of premalignant skin lesions, excise hundreds of skin cancers and dozens of melanomas every year. Don't become one of our statistics. Whilst some cancers are unavoidable, sun protection reduces the chance of skin cancer in all age groups. **So remember the Cancer Council recommendations!**

Five ways to be Sun Smart

- Seek shade
- Wear protective clothing that covers your arms and legs and body
- Wear a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face and neck
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses
- Apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen every 2 hours.

Remember to take extra care between 10am and 3pm when UV Index levels reach their peak.

I've been to Bali too

Lots of us have, and in general it's a much safer place than it was when Redgum wrote the song over thirty years ago. People will tell you that they didn't have any shots and didn't get sick and no doubt that is true... But it might have not turned out so well for them. Travel medicine isn't about telling people they are or are not going to catch a particular disease, it's all about knowing what the potential problems/ diseases could be at your destination and making an assessment of your risk and then deciding how to reduce that risk, whether by vaccination or some other means such as avoiding mosquito bites or taking malaria tablets.

Things can change quickly too. For example, there is an outbreak of Diphtheria in Indonesia at present and there is some risk for travellers to Bali. Diphtheria is virtually unheard of in the West – it is a nasty disease - it causes a respiratory infection which basically leads to death by choking in some patients.

We are members of various Travel Medicine Organisations and receive daily bulletins from Shoreland (probably the best travel information available in the world for doctors) about disease movements and what's happening in travel health. We pay to belong to these specialist travel sites and organisations.

Most GPs don't pay for any such advice and rely on information which is much more simplistic and may be out of date.

We therefore like to think that we provide our patients with the best possible current travel advice.

We found out about Diphtheria in Indonesia last week. We are letting you know this week, so that if you are travelling to Bali over summer you might want to come in and get your Diphtheria vaccination status checked and/or have a shot. Diphtheria vaccine is part of the Tetanus vaccine by the way (you cannot get Tetanus vaccine without Diphtheria in Australia) so if you are up to date with Tetanus you are good for Diphtheria.

BEST WISHES and HAVE A HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

From all the Doctors, Nursing and Administration staff

5 Government Road
Shoal Bay NSW 2315
Phone: 02 4981 2600
Fax: 02 4984 2806

125 Gan Gan Road
Anna Bay NSW 2315
Phone: 02 4981 2600
Fax: 02 4982 2592