



PRACTICE NEWSLETTER NO.2

Flu Vaccination:

The annual flu vaccination is scheduled to start mid-April this year. The first two weeks are reserved for high priority people, namely those over 65 or who have chronic conditions. If you are eligible for a funded vaccine you are in that priority group.

The roll-out of flu vaccinations to practices last year was badly-handled. Our reception staff took an unacceptable level of abuse from patients who thought our lack of vaccines was our own fault. I can assure you it was not. The Ministry of Health has acknowledged their shortcomings and assured us of a reliable supply this time.

That means we will be able to complete our flu vaccinations before the mid-year start of Covid vaccination. Unfortunately covid vaccines cannot be given at the same time as other vaccines.

Staff Changes - Doctors:

Doctors Dr Marissa Kelaher has just joined us as a permanent doctor. She is an experienced GP with an interest in lifestyle medicine.

It has taken us a long time to replace the doctors who retired, chose to specialise, took maternity or other leave. However we now have a full complement and the doctors we have are well worth the wait.



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Staff Changes - Reception:

There will also be some new faces in reception as some of our long-serving receptionists retire. Helen Fleming will be replaced by Helen Jarvie. Helen comes from a pharmacy background so has a lot of customer service experience to draw on.

We regret the number of recent staff changes. We know our staff stay with us for a long time and build up relationships with patients that can't be replicated quickly. We understand that dealing with new people can be frustrating or distressing, especially if you are sick or in pain. If you would like to know more about our new staff members, their photos and profiles will be up on our website soon.

Covid Vaccination:

This has already begun, but is being rolled out in three stages.

The first stage is immunisation of all border workers and their contacts. This is being done by a dedicated unit who have the facilities to administer the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine which requires storage at low temperatures. The next stage is immunisation of all frontline health workers. This has not started but preparations are underway. The final stage is immunisation of the general population by general practice staff, starting with anyone at higher risk. This will not start here any earlier than July. Priority was given to countries with high rates of transmission. Fortunately this is NZ and we benefit from having data on the safety and efficacy of the millions of doses given so far.

Vaccination is free for all New Zealanders and we strongly recommend it. If you have doubts or questions talk to our doctors and nurses.