

# HEALTH MATTERS

## ST PETERS FAMILY PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2009

ST. PETERS FAMILY PRACTICE  
ACCREDITED GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTICE  
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PRACTICE PRINCIPAL: DR. ADAM PEDLER  
ASSOCIATE DOCTOR: DR. MARGARET TAYLOR  
PRACTICE MANAGER: LYN PEDLER  
PRACTICE STAFF: DEBBIE CURTIS  
EVE CARSON  
PRACTICE NURSE: ISLA YIANNOULLOU

### PRACTICE HOURS:

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8.30 AM – 6.00 PM

### AFTERHOURS:

DR. PEDLER PROVIDES PERSONAL AFTERHOURS COVER MONDAY TO FRIDAY, EXCEPT BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10.00 PM AND 7.00 AM WHEN CALLS WILL BE DIRECTED TO OUR LOCUM SERVICE. WHEN DR PEDLER IS NOT AVAILABLE, AFTER THESE HOURS OR ON WEEK-ENDS, OUR PAGING SERVICE WILL OFFER YOU A HOME VISIT FROM OUR LOCUM SERVICE OR DIRECT YOU TO AVAILABLE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS.

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### IN THIS ISSUE

- *Meet our new new practice nurse who is busy with Home Health Assessments for over 75's and the H1N1 Vaccine Program.*
- *Great patient co-operation with swine flu triaging.*
- *A new practice website and a new look waiting room.*
- *Dr. Pedler advises on how to treat Hayfever this Spring and optimise chances of Exam Success for our younger student patients.*
- *Dr. Taylor gives insight into why health authorities are worried about Iodine Deficiency.*

### PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW PRACTICE NURSE



ISLA YIANNOULLOU

Isla has taken over the role of practice nurse from Lisa who has moved away to live in the country. Isla is a Scottish name, pronounced “I-LA” (with a silent “s”) and she is as delightful as her accent!  
Isla graduated from Stirling University in Scotland with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2004. The following year she applied for an Australian work sponsorship visa which took her to the Royal Adelaide Hospital where she worked for 4 years before joining us in private practice. Isla has had a successful swimming career, representing Scotland in synchronised swimming, competing and teaching extensively. She married last year and has made Adelaide her new home. Isla’s role is to work closely with Dr. Pedler in areas like home health assessments, wound management, vaccination and blood collection, triage and education in diseases like asthma, diabetes and healthy lifestyles. At this practice we have always believed in the importance of preventive health care, and today this is being recognised by the government as they introduce reform and incentives to keep you educated in healthy lifestyle choices.

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE PRACTICE NURSE**

One of my first initiatives will be to continue visiting our over 75 year old patients in their homes to conduct our **Annual Health Assessments**. This has been a very successful program in the practice aimed at preventing illness and accidents, keeping you as healthy as possible and at home for as long as possible, and it is also a great way for me to introduce myself. Dr. Pedler strongly encourages you to participate in this free health assessment as it includes questions which he may not always have time to discuss in detail with you and your family. I will be contacting many of you over the next several months to arrange an appointment time and I look forward to meeting you.

The government is planning to introduce a **H1N1 Vaccine Program** in response to the current influenza pandemic. The vaccine is expected to be available in October. In the first instance it will be available to patients with underlying chronic disease. As soon as we have exact details on a roll out date, we will contact you to participate in the vaccination clinics I will be running.

## **FROM THE RECEPTION DESK**

We have had quite a few cases of confirmed **swine flu** in our practice, but patients have been very cooperative with our efforts to curb the spread of the virus between staff and other patients in the surgery. You have responded really positively to using the antimicrobial hand gel before entering the surgery, and alerting our staff on the telephone of any flu like symptoms you have! On the odd occasion we have isolated patients to their cars and sent Dr. Pedler to consult them in the car park! We know this is not ideal but these methods have been very effective in curbing the spread of infection in our surgery.

With your comfort in mind, we have replaced the chairs in the waiting room and added a few new decorative touches. We hope you like the changes!

We have also upgraded our **practice website** and changed address to [www.spfamily.com.au](http://www.spfamily.com.au). From here, you can access detailed information about the practice, download hand-outs and information on our services, access public health information and associated websites and download copies of this and previous newsletters.

Dr. Pedler is leading our practice team to participate in a collaborative program with other general practices to review, compare and improve our systems and service. Over the next few months, as a part of this program, we may ask you to participate in a survey and would be very grateful for any feedback you can offer. We will keep you informed of the process and the outcomes!

## **FROM THE DESK OF DR. ADAM PEDLER**

Itchy eyes, sneezing and a runny nose are often a reminder that Spring has arrived!

Research shows that **Hayfever** is on the rise with the number of sufferers doubling in the last 25 years. The Medical Journal of Australia reports that nearly 1 in 5 Australians and a quarter of all 25-44 year olds suffer allergic rhinitis. If you suffer badly you will know it's not just the cold-like symptoms that are so debilitating, it's the sleep disturbance, fatigue, impaired cognitive function and inability to perform daily tasks that can make life miserable. In addition to all the usual treatments with antihistamines and low dose cortisone nose spray you may like to consider Acupuncture.

I have been successfully treating my patients with **Laser Acupuncture** for over 25 years. I do not use needle therapy as the laser is equally effective and being non-invasive, and not painful, it is ideal for children those of us who just don't like the idea of needles. The normal treatment regimen is 3 twenty-minute sessions, one week apart, followed by a booster session at 6 months or at the start of the next season. The good news is that most people are able to give up drugs completely after a course of acupuncture and this makes it very appealing!

Many of my younger patients and St Peters College boarders are coming into **exam time** and I wish them luck with their studies and preparation. When my son did Year 12 I wrote an article on how to optimise success with good health and it was well received. I will make sure there are copies available at reception for those parents and students who might be interested during this very stressful time.

## FROM THE DESK OF DR. MARGARET TAYLOR

Health Authorities are very concerned about widespread **Iodine deficiency** in our population and that of other developed countries.

As a component of the thyroid hormones, iodine is essential to human life. Because the thyroid hormones regulate the speed of metabolism in every cell of the body, an iodine deficiency can have a devastating impact on your health and well-being.

Iodine deficiency leads to hypothyroidism, which causes a variety of symptoms including fatigue, weight gain, weakness and/or depression. It usually comes on very slowly in adults and is hard to detect. Lack of iodine has a devastating effect on the developing brain of the foetus and the newborn child. If there's not enough iodine, the infant can't make enough thyroid hormone to keep up with the needs of the growing brain. If the deficiency is severe the child may get a condition called iodine-deficiency disorder (IDD), with poor control of body movements, hearing problems, an IQ ten to 15 points below normal, and a greater incidence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). IDD is the single most common cause of preventable mental retardation and brain damage in the world today. Once the damage is done, though, it's irreversible.

A teaspoon of iodine is all a person requires in a lifetime but because iodine cannot be stored for long periods by the body, tiny amounts are needed regularly. Normally iodine gets into crops and grazing animals and we ingest it in our diet. But in mountainous areas, iodine is often leached out of the soil.

From the 1960s, dairy farmers used iodine based compounds to sterilise milk containers and milking teats, which contaminated the milk. This caused Iodine levels to get dangerously high in the 1990s and dairy farmers were forced to limit their use of iodine. Over the last five years they've switched to chlorine-containing cleaning products instead.

At the same time, our tastes have been changing. For health reasons, we drink less milk and we eat less salt, and the salt we do use is mostly not iodised. Salt in prepared foods – now the major source of our salt – is almost always not iodised. So over the last five years or so, inadequate intake of iodine is emerging as a public health problem once again.

So if you're pregnant or breastfeeding you need to get more iodine in your diet. You need an extra 100 - 200 micrograms a day and you can get this by:

- Drinking between 500 mls and one litre of milk a day.
- Using iodised salt (though you shouldn't eat more salt than usual). Sea salt is a poor source of iodine.
- Eating food rich in iodine. Seafood and seaweed (such as kelp and nori), is especially high in iodine. Other food sources of iodine include yogurt, cow's milk, eggs, strawberries and mozzarella cheese.

Alternatively, you can take iodine supplements, as part of multivitamin supplements. Most contain between 50 - 150 micrograms of iodine and you need 100 - 200 micrograms of iodine a day. Extra iodine may harm people with a history of thyroid disease, so check with me or Dr Pedler before taking iodine supplements.

