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Immunisation news

New pneumococcal vaccine

A new pneumococcal vaccine providing better protection for older Australians over 65 and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people over 25 is free (government funded) and can be booked with our nurses.

If you already had a pneumococcal vaccine (sometimes called a pneumonia vaccine), you are eligible for the new vaccine which covers more strains. You must wait at least 12 months after your last pneumococcal vaccine before booking.

Pneumococcal disease is caused by infection with the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and is especially serious for young children and older people.

Infection can cause a variety of diseases including:

- pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- otitis media (infection of the middle ear)
- meningitis (infection of the membranes around the brain and spinal cord)

2026 has seen many scheduled vaccine changes for older Australians. There are more government funded vaccines, especially for winter illnesses to prevent hospitalisations and serious complications for Australia's ageing population.

Older Australian Vaccine Checklist

- ☐ Influenza vaccine
- ☐ COVID-19 booster vaccine
- ☐ RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) vaccine
- ☐ Pneumococcal vaccine
- ☐ Shingles vaccine

You can view your Immunisation History Statement through myGov (Medicare) or discuss with your doctor or one of our nurses at your next routine appointment.

For more information on how to access your immunisation history statements, visit: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-to-get-immunisation-history-statements



Staff news

Introducing our newest staff member – Dr Juliana Prick

We're proud to welcome Dr Juliana Prick (pictured left) to Woonona Medical Practice.

Dr Juliana Prick completed a Master of Science in Medicine and a Master of Health Law in the Netherlands before relocating to Australia in 2018.

Before commencing her General Practice training, Dr Prick worked across several hospitals in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions, including Wollongong, Shellharbour and Nowra. During her GP training, she also completed placements in Berry and Kiama.

Her areas of special interest include:

- Lifestyle medicine, weight management and preventive health
- Antenatal care
- Child and adolescent health
- Women's health, including Implanon insertion and removal
- Geriatric medicine

In addition to her regular consultations, Dr Prick, together with several of our female GPs, offers dedicated one-hour menopause consultations for new patients. Please contact our reception team for further information or to book an appointment.

Dr Prick welcomes both new and existing patients and consults Tuesday to Friday, as well as on selected Saturdays.

Welcome back – Dr Dominique Gallagher- Avery

We're proud to be welcoming Dr Dominique Gallagher- Avery (pictured right) back to Woonona Medical Practice after a 6-month rural term.

Dom is delighted to be returning to Woonona Medical Practice and looks forward to reconnecting with familiar faces while meeting new patients of the practice. Dom will be back in the practice working Monday, Wednesday Thursdays, Fridays and selected Saturdays.



How will I benefit from attending a health assessment?

Taking care of your health isn't just for when something goes wrong

Most of us attend GPs and doctors when we feel unwell or are worried about something.

However, at Woonona Medical Practice, we firmly believe in a holistic approach and trying to optimise future health.

We like to get to know our patients as well as possible and for our patients to feel comfortable with us. That way, when things do go wrong, we are best placed to help with all the background information we need.

Sometimes it is helpful to think of your body like a car. You need regular maintenance (check-ups and preventative screenings) to keep it running smoothly and prevent major breakdowns.

Or think of your health as a garden. You need to weed out unhealthy habits (like smoking, poor diet) and nurture healthy ones (like exercise, good nutrition) to keep your garden (your body) thriving.

In other words, taking care of your health isn't just for when something goes wrong. It's about staying ahead of the game.

If you have never attended for a health assessment before, it also ensures that we have comprehensive baseline information. That way, if something changes in the future, we know that isn't normal for you.

A health assessment offers a structured evaluation of your physical and mental well-being, and identifies areas that need attention before they get out of control.

Ask your doctor, nurse or reception if you are eligible for a bulk billed health assessment.



Looking After Your Mental Health

Every year, 1 in 5 Australian adults and 1 in 7 Australian children experience a mental illness

If you've been feeling anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, persistently low in mood or irritable, or you've noticed changes in your sleep, energy, or ability to cope, you're not alone.

Early support can make a real difference, so book an appointment to discuss your concerns with your GP. Your GP can assess your mental health, discuss treatment options, and, if appropriate, prepare a Mental Health Care Plan.

This can provide access to a Medicare rebate that helps cover part of the cost of seeing a psychologist, making treatment more affordable.

When booking an appointment to discuss your mental health or if you'd like to consider a Mental Health Care Plan, please book a long appointment so there's enough time to explore your concerns and develop the right approach for you.

If you or a loved one needs more urgent care, you can call:

[The Illawarra Community Mental Health Team](#) on 1800 011 511.

In an emergency, call 000

or attend your nearest emergency department:

[Wollongong Hospital](#)
Darling Street, Wollongong

[Shellharbour Hospital](#)
15-17 Madigan Boulevard, Mt Warrigal

[Shoalhaven Hospital](#)
2 Scenic Drive, Nowra

[Milton-Ulladulla Hospital](#)
106 Princes Highway, Milton



When should I go to an urgent care clinic?

In most situations, your usual GP is the best person to see

In most situations, your usual GP is the best person to see as they know you and your health and are able to follow up as needed.

Woonona Medical Practice is open:

- Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 6:30pm
- Saturdays, 9am - 12:30pm

Every morning, we open appointments for urgent issues, and will always try to see sick children. If you call us early enough, most days we would be able to get you an appointment on the day.

If you are not able to book in with Woonona Medical Practice, and the problem cannot wait, you can go to Bulli Hospital's Urgent Care Centre or the Corrimal Medicare Urgent Care Clinic.

Urgent care when you can't see your GP

Bulli Hospital's Urgent Care Centre and the Corrimal Medicare Urgent Care Clinic are both useful places to seek care when Woonona Medical Practice is closed and the problem is urgent but not serious enough for the Emergency department at Wollongong Hospital.

Corrimal Medicare Urgent Care Clinic
(46-50 Underwood St, Corrimal) is open :

- Daily, 7am - 9pm

Bulli Hospital's Urgent Care Centre
(22 Hospital Rd, Bulli) is open:

- Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm
- Weekends, 8am - 4:30pm

Please be aware they are not able to offer follow up appointments, and often will ask you to see your GP for this.

If tests are ordered by urgent care, do make sure they have sent a copy of the results to your GP.