

Blog 9.9.2022

Spring and renewal. Sunshine and being open again for business. It's wonderful!

I really have missed seeing my patients. From Monday we all have appointments available for in patient consultations. Please remember these are 15 minutes long in total and if all the lockdown absence means you have a list of issues you may need to book a double consultation. Masks are needed at the surgery. This is a legal requirement. They need to cover the nose, and fitted. Scarf and cloth masks without filters just don't cut it. If you have problems accessing masks we can give you one, so just please ask.

We still have the option of telephone consultations. After all they can be very convenient -try bundling toddlers and children into the car because you need to be seen at the doctors and you will know what I mean. Or being down in Coromandel on holiday. They are suited to some types of consults, especially the infectious ones, and if you have a fever/sore throat/body aches etc we really don't want you spreading it around the waiting room, so a telephone consult first is the way to go.

If needed and the doctor says you have to come in and be seen, then as is current it will count as one, not two consults. That is by ringing first you will not be penalised financially. And telephone consults are \$10 cheaper.

The receptionist will give you the option when you ring for an appointment: " Would you like a telephone consultation or do you want to come in?" How many of each type of appointments will be available is a work in progress! We will keep tweaking the appointment templates until we get the balance right. So it is possible the receptionist may say something like " Dr Ranche doesn't have any more in-surgery consultation spaces left today but there is a telephone consultation space at 4.30pm if you would like that? Otherwise we can book another day...

We still keep urgent spaces in the day. So if it is urgent according to a nurse, you will be seen. Then the receptionist will say "I will just get a nurse to talk with you". The receptionist is not medically trained and can't take responsibility, but you can tell her the problem so she can work out how urgent it is to get a nurse or even a doctor to speak with you, or even call an ambulance for you, especially if she has to interrupt them because they are tied up with other patients. The nurses also often say to come in and see them, and they will triage, that is, sort out all those basics that are needed, like temperature, oxygen levels, peak flow in asthmatics, urine testing for infection, and then grab a doctor to come and see the patient. Babies who are sick and under 12 months always count for urgent spaces. And children under 5 especially where there is a sore ear also rate highly. Accidents like gashes that need dressing and maybe stitching, chest pains and tight asthma count highly too.

What is not urgent is a problem that has been going on for days and while it hasn't got worse you are now finding time to come and see a doctor. Please respect these urgent slots: this is how we try to be available to all our patients all the time and so we can provide a complete service. Some things like child convulsions, bad burns and

badly bleeding cuts are walkins: come in straight away. The nurse will sort it.

While covid-19 is still around we would appreciate it if there is as few people as possible in the waiting room. We still love having carers come in with the patient, and we are happy to see partners and support people when they are needed. But please can other people not come in to the surgery? Sometimes we deliberately want to see a whole whanau. It might be best if groups like this stay outside in the carpark and wait for the receptionist to call them all in: that's why we all have large surgeries big enough to do this, but there are ways we all can minimise the risk of catching viral infections from each other. In the surgery consulting rooms, windows are open and the aircon will be on warm or cool to enable good air circulation and stop the build up of virus particles in the air. And masks are on.

Down the back we have a surgery – one of those we were using as an immunising room- where we will see sick people and admit them from the back door just at the top of the stairs so they do not mix with others in the waiting room. The doctors and nurses down there will be in PPE gear too. Please tell the receptionist if you are sick and so be kind to other patients who may have serious underlying illnesses as well as ensuring your doctor doesn't get sick and unavailable for a week or two! Our core team at the surgery hasn't had covid-19 yet, and that includes me.

So welcome to the updated webpage with this blog. Finally with the load lightening due to less covid-19 in the community and more medical staff, plus a decent fortnight of rest and recoup which as just amazing for me [and grateful thanks to Dr Lance O'Sullivan for making this possible], welcome back to some semblance of normality.

Ma te wa, Dr Jacqueline and all the team at Tiakina Te Ora