

Blog 20th January 2023

Welcome to the first blog of what has to be a better year than the last one! It's sunny and warm today and I'm looking forward to my second swim of the year later today. It's not been summer enough for me until now. I hope everyone is rested after the holiday break and looking forward to getting back to school, work and at least a better approximation on normalcy.

There is not a lot of news really. The Covid wave over summer of the further dumbed down Omicron variant seems to be nearly over. This BA 1.1 conformed to expectations in that it was milder again. Many patients had very few symptoms other than tiredness and a bit of an annoying unproductive cough. It did not seem to even cause much of a sore throat and no-one I talked with lost their sense of smell and taste even temporarily. It was more infectious. From exposure to symptoms [known in medicine as the prodromal stage] in one patient was 22 hours. She lives alone and only went out once- to the supermarket and forgot her mask-in the days before getting sick.

I realise many are no longer testing unless required to by their workplace on a daily basis as they are essential workers or need to work in close contact with others in small poorly ventilated rooms. Sewerage testing tells us that this is happening. Less than 50% who have Covid notify via the app or online so weekly numbers no longer reflect the numbers of people who have Covid. Usually we find out that day as we are notified by the Hubs set up by Public Health for this purpose.

If you don't want to notify your illness, or don't know how to, or have not access to smart phones or computers, it is important to us that you at least tell us. Then we can ring you and help out medically. We can monitor you daily if you are really sick and if you have underlying medical conditions that puts you more at risk. We can loan you medical equipment to help monitor your illness so we can judge better whether more medical intervention is required, not just hospital admission but antiviral medication, asthma medication and antibiotics for bronchitis and sinus infections. It does not cost you anything and we are proud we have been able to help all our patients this way, even through the weekends and public holidays.

Most of our patients who have had Covid tell us it took them at least a few weeks to get over the tiredness even if they haven't had secondary infections like sinus and bronchial ones, or have a bad flare up of their asthma. This is not what has been defined as Long Covid. That is when this goes on more than six months. Post viral fatigue is common especially with influenza and it reminds us to go back gently into exercise and build it up gradually over the next 3 weeks at least in case our heart has been affected too. A good rule is to exercise at no more than 80% of what you usually do [speed, distance, weights] and to stop after the first 10 minutes. Ask yourself then whether you feel better or worse. If worse stop! Try again tomorrow. If better continue on at 80%. Please share this with those members of your family who are in the 17-29 year old group. Remember their brain is not yet good at evaluating consequences of their actions and they tend to be impulsive. After all they think they

are bulletproof which is why armies around the world are composed of this age group.

There are some changes as usual coming up at the practice. Dr Andrew Chen has nearly completed his six month residency with us, and finishes at the end of the month. He has been lovely to have, and will be a fine young GP in the community. He is replaced by Dr Daniel Lowe. More about Dr Daniel in the next blog once he has joined us. Our nurse Rachael starts studying for her the papers of her Masterate in Nursing in February, she already is a registered prescriber as many patients will know. After completion she will be a fully qualified Nurse Practitioner, able to independently see patients and work alongside doctors with her own patient list. Go Rachael! She will continue to work on Thursdays and Fridays at our practice while she is studying.

We have a major change coming up in our computer services which should make them run butter. Appserv our cloud provider, was bought out by SPARC. Their program is based on a Citrix platform which causes heaps of problems, including the frequent crashes that are so disruptive during consultations. We are changing over to a base in Microsoft 365. We do not know yet when this will happen but we are not looking forward to the changeover as our experience in the past is that it can be quite disruptive. It's also expensive. We are being charged \$28,000 for the 'privileged' on top of the usual \$48, 000 a year our computer services cost us. We don't have any choice, and besides the extra learning required, we have little idea how and when this will happen. It is a hard way to run a business. This is why our web page revamp is on hold.

I will be taking another break before summer is over and Dr Lance O'Sullivan will be here for the fortnight working.

It's a new milestone for Tiakina Te Ora. Four out of the five days of the week there will be three male doctors working together. First time ever no female doctors. When I started Tiakina Te Ora in 1986 female GPs were rare, and ones who actually owned practices or were owning partners much rarer. Times change.

Dr Ranche Johnson though will continue to be here on Fridays.

Have a happy and Prosperous New Year, and I hope we continue to strive to be kind to each other.

Yesterday we learned we were losing our wonderful PM who led us through the unprecedented disasters of the Christchurch Mosque shootings, the eruption of Whakaari/ White Island, the Christchurch earthquakes and of course the Pandemic. No wonder it took its toll. I wish her the time and peace to get something back in the tank, like what I will be doing with my break.

Nga mihi ki a koutou. Dr Jacqueline, on behalf of all the team at Tiakina Te Ora.