



Autumn Newsletter 2025

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter!

With the leaves soon to transform and the cool autumn breeze on the horizon, we're excited to share all the latest news and updates with you in this season's edition.

Enjoy the read!

Recent changes in Women's Health Funding

We would like to inform patients about recent updates to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings for hormone-based medications, with a focus on contraception and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). These changes are designed to improve access to essential treatments, with several contraceptive methods and HRT options now listed on the PBS, reducing out-of-pocket costs for eligible patients. This is especially beneficial for those seeking more affordable and accessible options for family planning or managing menopause-related symptoms. Unfortunately, your current script for these items will not just be accepted as a PBS script and you will need an appointment with your GP to change your prescriptions. Eligible products include Yaz, Yazmin, EstroGel, Prometrium and EstroGel Pro. Silinda is soon to follow.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss how these changes affect your treatment, the team is here to provide guidance and support. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the practice for more information or to review your options.

In a similar vein a new Medicare rebate for a Menopause assessment has also been announced, with more details hopefully available prior to the start date of July 1st, watch this space!

Skin Checks – Not just for Summer

Even during the winter months, it's important to continue regular skin checks as skin cancer can develop at any time of year, regardless of the season. Cooler weather may lead people to spend more time indoors and cover up, but sun exposure during summer or even through winter's cloudy days can still cause harm. Regular skin checks help to identify any unusual moles or changes in existing spots early, when they are more treatable. Skin cancer is highly treatable when detected early, so making skin checks a year-round habit is key to protecting your health. If you notice any changes in your skin, or haven't had a check-up in a while, we encourage you to schedule a visit with your General Practitioner. The GP is able to provide skin checks, spot checks, monitoring, biopsies, excisions and other nonsurgical treatments.



Flu shots are now available

Please check the Terrigal Medical Centre website for dates and times.

We kindly ask that you **do not call the practice** to book an appointment as flu clinic information will be available through our website.

<https://www.terrighalmedicalcentre.com.au/>

New COVID-19 booster targets new strains of the virus

A new COVID-19 booster vaccine was released on 9 December 2024 and is now available. If you are eligible and are now due you can contact the Terrigal or Avoca Beach Medical Centres to arrange a booking with a nurse/and or your GP.

Further information about covid vaccines - <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination>

3 Patient Identifiers – those questions we always ask!

When you call the practice with an enquiry relating to your medical record, arrive at the practice for an appointment or are collecting documentation, it is important that we ask a few simple questions to verify the right person is matched with the correct patient health record.

Unfortunately, errors can occur when:

- patients have similar names
- through simple human error when entering or updating your details
- a patient may only hear their first name while waiting to be seen, there are 2 'Johns' in the waiting room at the same time

To make sure we get it right, the Receptionists, Nurses or Doctors will ask you at least 3 Patient Identifiers.

If you do not want to announce your personal details in the waiting room ask the receptionist for the opportunity to write it down instead or use our self-check in system located at the entrance of the reception area. Note: Medicare or Health Care Cards are not accepted identifiers as some patients may have more than one person on a card.

We appreciate your patience when we ask you these questions.



**** What's Changing with Bulk Billing and What It Means for the Practice ****

You may have heard about the recent changes proposed to Medicare's bulk billing incentives. While these adjustments aim to improve access to care, the increases are modest and unfortunately don't come close to covering the rising costs of running a quality general practice. Costs such as staff wages, medical supplies, technology and clinic overheads continue to grow each year—yet Medicare rebates remain well below the true cost of delivering care.

Because of this, the Terrigal and Avoca Beach Medical Centres will continue to operate as private billing practices. This means that while we still process your Medicare rebate, an out-of-pocket fee will apply for most consultations. This allows us to maintain the time, attention and quality of care that you and your family deserve—including longer appointments, continuity with your regular GP and a strong focus on preventative health.

We believe in building long-term relationships with patients and there's strong evidence that this kind of ongoing care leads to better health outcomes.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support as we work to deliver the best possible care in a challenging funding environment.

