



As I am writing this it is blowing a howling easterly gale with cold rain but I am told that it is officially summer! I guess that must be true as we now have our summer roster organised as we (to quote Michael) gird our loins for the summer season.

Doctors for Summer

As many of you will already know **Sandie** has decided to move on and finished working at Whangamata Medical Centre on 9 December after 5 years back at the beach. She will be very much missed as part of our GP workforce and we wish her all the best for the future. Patients who have been enrolled with Sandie will be transferred to **Jessica** but are welcome to see any of the GPs at WMC.

Jessica will now be our main women's health care provider, although Cunera is still with us until the end of January.

Yvo and **Cunera** have both become valued members of the WMC team and will be missed when Yvo leaves mid-January followed by Cunera at the end of January. However they are both here to help out over the busiest part of the summer influx. We celebrated Dutch Christmas with them on the 5th December when Sinterklaas (Santa Claus) traditionally delivers his gifts in Holland (I suppose that gives him just 20 days to get more gifts ready for his journey to New Zealand).



We hope that some of the general practice experience they have gained during their time in New Zealand will be helpful for them when they return to Holland. We have enjoyed having them both in the practice.

We are very pleased to welcome **Dr Rory Miller** back to Whangamata. He will start work on 15 December and will be contributing to the WMC GP workforce for about 6 months. Rory's experience in emergency medicine was very helpful for all of us when he worked here in the beginning of the year. He will also be contributing to the after-hours care provided by the practice.

Tony continues to enjoy his semi-retirement and this summer will job share with Jessica affording him a bit more time for leisure and family activities.

Michael continues to fill his days with an extraordinary workload as well as overseeing practice management and providing ultrasonography services.

All going well we will have sufficient GP services to cover the extra demands of summer and into the New Year.

Dr Donna Berry

Many of you will know Donna, who has been a Practice Nurse at WMC for many years. She has now qualified as a doctor and is starting her specialist training for general practice. We are all very proud of her achievement and wish her all the best for her future in general practice. You may recognise Donna on the right of this picture. You may, or may not, recognise some of the other WMC staff at a recent end of year outing at Hobbiton.



L-R: Glenda, Ali, Debbie, Michael, Mandy, Jessica, Donna

Holiday Season Office Hours are:

(December 27 thru end January)

Monday to Friday 8.30 to 6.00pm

Saturday & Sunday 9.00 to Close *

Public Holidays 9.00 to Close *

* *Dependent on patient demand*

Note: *An after-hours charge will apply on weekends and public holidays*

**A doctor is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year
(07) 865 8032**



Emergencies (Dial 111)

Four GPs and three WMC Nurses recently completed a 6 day Primary Response to Medical Emergencies course.

We now feel even more confident that, in conjunction with other emergency response services we are ready to respond to any emergency that happens in our area. Providing emergency care on-site or at the Medical Centre can make a major difference to patient outcomes.

One example of this is that we are one of the few practices in New Zealand authorised to administer thrombolysis treatment (treatment that breaks down a clot in a heart artery reducing the risk of heart muscle death and improving survival following myocardial infarction).

Some patients are surprised that when a 111 call is activated for a medical or trauma emergency a doctor arrives on the scene together with St John ambulance personnel. This is because we carry pagers and respond to all serious emergencies when requested by Ambulance Communications. Generally there will be no cost to patients for the GP services in these situations.

Skin Lesions

Summer is a reminder that we need to be extremely careful about exposing our skin to UV light. We recently held our annual free skin check clinics and are once again surprised at the number of skin cancers that present at these checks. You do not have to wait for a year to have a skin check. If you notice any lesion that is new or has recently changed, or if you are just not sure about your skin, ask your GP for a check. When we magnify skin lesions with a dermoscope we can tell whether or not they are benign or should be further investigated or treated.

Any lesions that look like these skin cancers below should be checked.



Summer Health Issues

As well as the increase in a variety of trauma from water based recreational activities, such as surf injuries, embedded fish hooks, surf board wounds, diving and alcohol related injuries there are some specific summer hazards to be aware of.

There is still a health warning in place for toxic shellfish poisoning for some of the Bay of Plenty. Although this does not currently include Whangamata there is no guarantee that PSP will not spread as it has done in previous years.

Shellfish health warning issued for part of Bay of Plenty coast : 28 November 2014



A health warning has been issued for the Bay of Plenty coastline, from Mount Maunganui, including Maunganui Beach and Pilot Bay, to Whakatane Heads.

Routine monitoring within this area has found increased levels of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) toxin in shellfish samples while water samples have shown increased levels of the algae that produce the PSP toxin.

"Levels of toxin found in shellfish from this area are now above a safe level. Residents and visitors to the Bay of Plenty are advised that there is now a health warning in place and signage will be erected in the affected area," says Dr Neil de Wet, Medical Officer of Health for Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service.

We strongly advise against the collection of shellfish from Mount Maunganui and along the Bay of Plenty coast to Whakatane Heads. The warning includes all islands and estuaries along this part of the coastline.

The health warning applies to all bi-valve shellfish including mussels, pipi, tuatua, cockles, oysters, scallops as well as cat's eyes, snails and kina (sea urchin). Shellfish in the affected area should not be taken or eaten. Shellfish containing the toxin don't look or taste any different from shellfish that are safe to eat. Cooking or freezing the shellfish **does not** remove the toxin. Paua, crayfish and crabs can still be taken but as always, the gut should be removed before consuming. Consumption of shellfish affected by the PSP toxin can cause numbness and tingling around the mouth, face, hands and feet; difficulty swallowing or breathing; dizziness; double vision; and in severe cases, paralysis and respiratory failure. These symptoms can start as soon as 1-2 hours after eating toxic shellfish and usually within 12 hours. Anyone suffering illness after eating shellfish should seek urgent medical attention.