**OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER**

**PLEASE NOTE: FEE CHANGES FROM 1ST OCTOBER MAY APPLY  FOR SOME PATIENTS.**

**Due to the Medicare changes for some MBS items commencing October, we have had to return to Mixed Billings for some.**

**Moreland General Practice will continue to Bulkbill:**

**Pensioners, Healthcare card  holders , children <16 years, Chronic Disease Management plans and reviews, follow up  reviews, including  calls directed by your doctor in  regards to  results, reminders and recalls.**

For all other patients **FEES MAY APPLY** for both Telehealth (Telephone consults) and Face 2 Face consultations.

For all Telehealth consultations - You can pay by credit card over the phone following your appointment. Your doctor will either transfer the call to our reception staff or - they will call you later on the same day to finalize your account.  The [out of pocket costs](https://www.doctorsofsouthmelbourne.com.au/appointments/#fees) are the same as with in-person appointments.

If you are going through financial difficulties, please do not hesitate to discuss this with your doctor.

#### ****TELEPHONE CONSULTS (TELEHEALTH)****

While the COVID-19 lockdown is upon us, you can choose to undertake GP appointments over the phone. Telephone consults are an excellent option for:

* those wanting to limit their public exposure; and
* people who feel that their flu-like symptoms could put others at risk.

If we can’t adequately deal with your issue over the phone, we may ask you to come into the clinic following your initial phone consult. Your GP will explain further if this applies to you.

You can book a telephone consult by calling us or [booking online](https://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/south-melbourne-VIC-3205/doctors-of-south-melbourne/doctors).

**Convenience and efficiency: How phone consults work**

Your GP will call you as close as to your appointment time as they can.

If you don’t pick-up the phone, they’ll leave a message to call the clinic back. Please try to return their call within five (5) minutes or reschedule for another time.

We can post prescriptions and pathology forms to you, or fax them to your local pharmacy or pathology collector.

**The five essentials for a smooth telephone consult**

To get the most from your phone consult, please consider these simple tips:

1. Make sure your phone is charged and you have ample data.
2. Head inside and sit alone in a quiet room (if possible).
3. Have any documents on-hand to which you want to refer.
4. Please be patient if your GP doesn’t call you bang-on your preferred appointment time.
5. Relax and enjoy receiving first-class medical advice in the comfort of you our own home.

**FACE TO FACE APPOINTMENTS**

Face to Face appointments are still available when needed.  To avoid you having to be in the clinic for a length of time, your doctor will do a telephone consultation (as part of your consultation)  prior to you attending and will determine  if you can be seen in clinic or in our car park clinic.

Patients needing to attend for childhood immunisations, antennal visits, wound dressings etc, will always be able to attend for a face to face consultation after their initial  telephone consultation with their doctor, or unless doctor directs otherwise ( and no telephone consultation is needed prior).

**TESTING FOR CORONAVIRUS**

We recommend you contact the clinic, have a telephone consultation with one of our GP’s and then they will decide if you need to be booked into our  car park clinic Results are taking approx 24-48 hours to return .

**CONSULTATION FEES**

As we work our way through this pandemic, there will be **no bulkbilling on a** Saturday or Sunday and there may **be out of pocket charges** associated with different types of consultations. This enables us to continue providing the highest quality care.

**EXTRA PRECAUTIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL**

We’re dedicated to treating patients for all respiratory complaints; however to do this, we continue to implement changes and extra precautions. **These include:**

* **Splitting our practice into two teams** ( in case, any member from the team  becomes infected, leaving the other team to continue working to provide health care to our patients)
* Asking patients **screening questions** upon phone bookings and on arrival to the clinic.
* Offering a **separate car park clinic** to swab any existing patients with flu-like symptoms.
* **Ceasing our on line booking (for in house appointments only)** until further notice so that patients are screened when calling the clinic.
* Patients between the ages of **40- 75 years** should consider a Cardiac **Risk Assessment** during COVID – 19.
* **Brief Car Park appointments** for Patients wanting to have their Blood Pressure checked – but don’t feel comfortable coming into the clinic.

**WE CAN ALL HELP**

We all need to take note of these precautions to ensure that our clinic stays open to treat the sick.

If just one infected person comes to the clinic, they can potentially infect vulnerable patients, or doctors and staff, which may cause one of our entire teams to stop working for two weeks. This means, patients may not get treated, as the unnecessary pressure will be placed upon the other team here to see all patients.

Your help in complying with our coronavirus plan will help us get through these challenging times together.

Kind Regards

The Moreland General Practice Team.