**Staff Changes**

Unfortunately, our lovely young English doctors, Dr Matthew Barns and Dr Vicky Barns are leaving us at the end of February to continue their journey through life. They have been a great asset to the practice bringing new ideas from their experiences overseas. They have always had wonderful feedback from their patients. We will all miss them very much but wish them all the best in their future adventures.

We will continue to provide medical support to Matthew and Vicky’s patients.

We are actively trying to recruit new GPs into the practice, but this has been made more difficult due to the Covid 19 outbreaks overseas. To date we have had no applicants from New Zealand as there is a serious shortage of New Zealand GPs.

**New Nurse**

Shjara Dakin has joined our nursing team at West End. Shjara comes to us as a new graduate from the Northland Polytech nursing course. She brings with her both new ideas and enthusiasm. She has instantly fitted in to the team at West End and we consider ourselves luck to have won the bid to employ her. She was one of the top students in this year graduate nurses.

**Why do we ask you for a reason for your appointment?**

By letting us know the reason for your visit we can ensure that the correct amount of time required to deal with your issue is allocated by the duty doctor. Standard appointments are 15 minutes, but more complex issues may require more than a standard appointment to be properly treated. There is nothing worse than both you and the doctor to run out of time before your issue is completely dealt with or having to reschedule because only a standard appointment was allocated.

ALSO

By giving a reason at the time of making a request for an appointment our duty doctor can assess the urgency of the request and prioritise it.

It is your right to not give a reason and, in that case, you can say it is personal or that you do not want to give a reason.

**Closed Books**

Our books are currently closed. Whangarei has seen a dramatic increase in population growth and is now the fastest growing region in New Zealand. This has caused a situation where there are more people than there are enrolment places in the local medical centres. Almost all medical centres are operating at full capacity and have had to close their books. Please think carefully about moving to another medical centre as you may find that once you disenroll from your current medical centre you may not be able to enrol in another centre and you may be left without medical cover. Medical centres can only provide services to enrolled patients.

To cope with this, we have had to start to use a duty doctor. When you ring for an appointment you will be placed on a triage list. The doctor will then ring you back over the course of the day, so it is important to have your phone available. The doctor will only try to contact you twice as they are pressured for time. In some cases, the duty doctor may be able to deal with your issue over the phone, so you do not have to drive to the centre and wait in the waiting room, saving you time and money. Be assured that if your issue is deemed urgent the duty doctor will give you an appointment on the same day (we reserve several appointments each day for urgent requests). Please call early in the morning with your request as there is more urgent appointment available, as the day progresses there are less urgent slot we can use. Calls after 3pm are placed on the next day’s triage list.

Thank you for your patience.