

Merewether
Ridge Street Surgery
General Practitioners

54 Ridge Street, Merewether 2291
Phone 4963 5187 (all hours) Fax 4963 5078
www.ridgestreet.com.au

Welcome to our practice. Our aim is to provide a high quality comprehensive general practitioner service to our patients. This information sheet provides an outline of the services offered by the practice.

Staff.

The practice is staffed by three doctors who each have considerable experience in general practice and hold a Diploma in Obstetrics in addition to their basic medical degree.

Dr Geoffrey Lambert is available for surgery consultation on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and Monday, Tuesday and Friday afternoons.

Dr Philippa Kennedy is available for surgery consultation Monday, Wednesday, Friday all day, Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.

Dr Vicki Newing is available Monday, Thursday and Friday mornings and Thursday afternoons.

All 3 doctors take turns to work on Saturday mornings.

Our receptionists are **Alison Barrett, Ellen Kotteakos, Cushla Hodgett, & Sue Jensen.**

Appointments.

This practice operates an appointment system for consultations.

Monday to Friday: The surgery is open from 8:15am to 12:45pm, and from 1:45pm to 6pm. During the lunch break a message service will operate, however the recorded message will detail how to contact us if urgent advice is needed.

Saturday: Appointments commence at 9am and continue until all patients booked in are seen (around 12 midday). Saturdays are preferably for urgent cases and those who have difficulty attending on weekdays.

The standard time allotted for each appointment is 15 minutes. **Please let the receptionist know when booking if you think you will need a longer appointment.**

Urgent appointments. Some problems require attention urgently. Our appointment system sets aside several appointments that are reserved for people that need to be seen on the same day. If the surgery is fully booked and you feel urgent attention is required please say so and we'll try and find a time for you. We will endeavour to book your appointment with the doctor of your choice however this is not always possible for urgent appointments.

Running late. Despite our best efforts, sometimes it is very difficult to keep to

schedule. As mentioned above you can help the surgery run to schedule by requesting long appointments where appropriate and deferring non-urgent problems when needed. We know your time is valuable. Feel free to check if we are running late so you can reduce the waiting time at the surgery.

Phone calls. Doctors are usually happy to discuss results of tests etc over the phone but will not interrupt consultations except in an emergency. Leave a message and a return call will be made later.

Management of your Personal Health Information:

Your medical record is a confidential document. It is the policy of this practice to maintain security of personal health information at all times and to ensure that this information is only available to authorised members of staff. We abide by the ten National Privacy Principles available at <http://www.privacy.gov.au/health/index.html>

A “Privacy and Medical Records” information sheet is on display in the waiting room. This provides more detailed information.

House calls.

This practice offers a house call service to patients who are unable to attend the surgery. Patients with chronic medical problems can be seen on a regular basis in their home. There is a limit to the geographical area in which we can provide this service, currently limited to Merewether, The Junction, Bar Beach, Cooks Hill, Newcastle, Hamilton, Hamilton South, Maryville, Broadmeadow, and Adamstown.

Any patient who normally attends the surgery, but is prevented from doing so because of acute illness or some other reason, may also request a home visit, and this will be fitted into the doctors schedule, usually at the end of a surgery session, that is “lunchtime” or evening.

After hours.

This practice provides a 24 hour service. Outside of surgery hours medical care can be obtained through GP Access After Hours. This service is an initiative of local GP’S (including GP’s from this practice) together with The Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, Hunter Health, The Hunter Urban Division of General Practice. **If you need healthcare advice after hours phone 1300 130147.** This service provides telephone advice, GP clinics, and home visits if necessary. There is no fee to use this service.

Obstetrics.

All the doctors in the practice provide antenatal care on a shared care basis. but we are unable to attend deliveries.

Minor Surgery.

Minor surgery such as excision of skin lesions and repair of lacerations are performed at the surgery under local anaesthetic. All reusable instruments are sterilised in an autoclave. Generally it is necessary for the doctor to assess a skin lesion at an initial consultation before booking the excision. Lacerations are of

course attended to as soon as possible. Removal of sutures is included in the fee for the procedure and is therefore “no charge”.

Nursing Homes.

This practice also provides a Nursing Home visiting service. Like the Home Visit service the doctor will generally visit on a regular basis.

Hospital care.

Many acute illnesses can be managed by GPs in a hospital, however the local public hospitals do not grant GPs admitting rights for this so this service is limited to private hospitals. Our local private hospital which we generally use is Lingard Hospital. Some illnesses are more appropriately managed in a large public hospital and public hospital admission is also more appropriate for patients without private hospital insurance. Although lacking admission rights at the public hospital we can often assist in other ways, such as providing health summaries, speaking to specialists etc.

People with a disability.

There is a ramp at the front of the surgery and assistance can be provided if required. Unfortunately our toilets are not wheelchair-accessible. For patients who have difficulty attending the surgery our home visit service is available.

Pathology results.

When pathology items (blood tests etc) are requested, your doctor will generally indicate to you the procedure for obtaining the results. This may be by attending the surgery again or by phone. In many cases the doctor will authorise the receptionists to pass on information to you. The receptionists are not trained to interpret pathology results and will only be able to pass on information as given to them. Receptionists are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as doctors, but if you have any special concerns about the handling of pathology results tell your doctor. Results of sensitive tests such as HIV tests will not be given by receptionists and you must attend in person to receive the result.

Immunisation.

This practice provides a full immunisation service. This visit is also a good opportunity to give a child or baby a checkup. Flu vaccines are recommended annually for patients over 65.

Fees.

For services covered by Medicare we can offer HIC online. Using this system the full fee is payable at the time of consultation, an on-line Medicare claim is submitted instantly, and the Medicare rebate is reimbursed directly to the claimant. The quickest reimbursement occurs directly into cheque or savings account, so to do that we need the BSB and account number. Alternatively Medicare will send a cheque, but this takes longer. We prefer payment on the day, however accounts are available in special circumstances and only for established patients of the practice.

A discount is available for pensioner concession or health care card holders who

are established as patients of the practice. Consultations are charged at approximately \$10.00 above the Medicare rebate. Full fee is still payable on the day, but with HIC online, the Medicare rebate can be reimbursed in 2 to 3 days.

Standard consultation (level B - up to 20 minutes in length)

Fee payable at time of consultation \$65.00

Concessional fee (pensioners) \$47.00

Medicare rebate \$34.90

Level C consultation (more than 20 minutes)

Fee payable at time of consultation \$106.00

Concessional fee (pensioners) \$79.00

Medicare rebate \$67.65

Level D consultation (more than 40 minutes)

Fee payable at time of consultation \$140.00

Concessional fee (pensioners) \$115.00

Medicare rebate \$99.55

Fees for home visits vary considerably depending on the number of patients seen. A typical fee is \$100.00 with \$59.40 rebate.

Patient feedback.

We are always grateful for any suggestions as to how we might improve the service we provide our patients. If you are unhappy with any aspect of the care provided by the practice we would prefer you to let us know about it either by telling your doctor or receptionist or you may use the suggestion box located in the front foyer. If you feel there is a problem you need to take up outside the practice you can contact:

The Health Care Complaints Commission
Locked Bag 18, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012
Telephone 1800 043 159