

April 16, 2020

Gold Coast GP encourages residents to look after their health during the COVID pandemic

With winter approaching, the Board Chair of Gold Coast Primary Health Network, Dr Roger Halliwell, is encouraging any patients with chronic health conditions to continue to see their regular GP, to keep well and healthy.

Dr Halliwell says that with the COVID-19 pandemic, it's now more important than ever before, for patients to ensure their chronic conditions are well managed to not only reduce the burden on the hospital system if they become unwell, but to also reduce their risk of being severely impacted by COVID-19.

"As GPs, we play a critical role in the community to help keep people well and to ensure our patients have their ongoing health needs met," Dr Halliwell said.

"We want our patients to understand that they can still visit their regular GP for their ongoing health conditions and prescription refills. It's a good idea to phone first as there may be other options available, including telehealth consultations through video or telephone.

"It's very important that patients with chronic conditions like asthma, lung conditions, cancer, diabetes or cardiovascular disease for example, continue to see their GP for their ongoing care and management.

"We also want to ensure that people continue to receive their regular medications, blood tests and x-rays and that underlying conditions continue to be diagnosed, as early diagnosis can greatly improve health outcomes."

Dr Halliwell said it was highly recommended that everyone gets the flu injection with Australians over 65 years of age and children under the age of five, eligible for a free flu vaccine through the National Immunisation Program.

There's also a new Australian Government COVID-19 Home Medicines service, where PBS medicines can be delivered to residents free of charge.

Dr Halliwell said that general practice staff are working hard to ensure patient's needs are met during these challenging times and patients should try to be understanding.

"I know that it's a difficult time for all of us, but we need to be supportive of our frontline staff, who are doing their jobs to help keep us safe and cared for," Dr Halliwell said.

"We need to show respect for everyone, including all first responders, health professionals, cleaners, supermarket and administration staff.

"I understand that this is quite a stressful time and if people are struggling with their mental health, there are a number of services available. Your GP can provide referrals or advice, but

there's some great online, phone services and resources available at headtohealth.gov.au," Dr Halliwell said.

ENDS

For additional information/media interviews contact: Christine Bain, M 0417 779 345