

APRIL 2010

Hi to everyone in the Millhouse Medical Centre community

The rain, cold and piercing winds will soon be upon us and the advertisements for influenza vaccination will no longer flicker across our TV screens encouraging us to immunize to prevent the winter flu.

Before I discuss vaccination and other useful strategies to prevent colds, coughs and influenza I would like to update you on the events at Millhouse.



Dr Scott – it's a pleasure to have Scott with us. Scott graduated in 2000 and initially pursued a five year study in surgery. During this time his focus changed from being an Ear Nose & Throat surgeon to becoming a General Practitioner. Scott brings his surgical skills to Millhouse with expertise in minor operations, and interests in musculo-skeletal therapy and family medicine.

Scott is married to Ruth a physiotherapist and they have two small children; an excellent way to learn about child development, parenting and the challenges in bringing up

children.

Dr Else is away on vacation in April visiting her elderly father who is still practicing medicine in Botswana. We wish Else safe travelling and good health in her time away. The **good news is that Dr Therese is returning from vacation** after a deserved break and I know all her patients will be delighted to see her again.

Dr Christine remains on leave following her diagnosis with melanoma and treatment with surgery and radiotherapy. Chris has been set back with another lesion being removed from her back but despite this she is in good spirits. Do keep Chris in your heart and prayers.

130 Millhouse. Applications for building consent have been submitted and hopefully will soon be approved. Following this and the departure of the tenants we can make haste to renovate the property into extended surgery space. **From May onwards** we have a full complement of general practitioners who may have to mix and match their consulting times so on occasions there may be inconvenience in seeing your doctor at your preferred time.

Repeat Prescriptions can now be requested through the Millhouse Medical Centre website www.millhousemedical.co.nz. Just click on the '**Prescriptions**' icon on the left. Fill in the request form listing the wanted medications, then send. This service is for long-term repeat medications for registered patients who have stable medical conditions. Remember **everyone should receive regular medical reviews** at the clinic at least once a year or more often if your condition is less stable. **Please give 24 hours for script processing.**

In the last newsletter I mentioned I would continue discussing the GLUTEN related disease but the Millhouse staff have suggested I revisit preventative measures for the winter **COUGHS, COLDS and INFLUENZA.**



PREVENTATIVE MEASURES for the COLD & FLU **Vitamin D – sunlight**

In the September 2009 Vitamin D Council newsletter¹ Dr Norris Click tells of his experience with influenza at a Wisconsin long-term care facility for residents with development disabilities who are known to be susceptible to viral illness. (Two thirds of child H1N1 deaths in the USA are from children with similar neurological problems.) The centre had 275 patients who had been actively monitored and treated for several years for vitamin D sufficiency as a strategy to prevent infection. During the HINI epidemic one new entrant child and another person were diagnosed with Swine Flu but of the 800 staff members 103 were diagnosed with flu-like illness many of whom were diagnosed H1N1 positive, of these 12 had worked with the infected child. Dr Click commented that it is "**remarkable that only two resident's developed influenza**the spread of H1N1 was not from staff-to-resident but from resident-to-staff and between staff, implying that **staff were susceptible and our residents protected.**"

In the same newsletter GP Dr Ellie Campbell reported that "I have had zero (flu) cases...my patients are universally on (vitamin D) 2000-5000 units (daily). I share an office with another family physician. I aggressively measure and replete vitamin D. He does not. He is seeing one to 10 cases per week of influenza-like illness."

These reports are anecdotal. **However colds and influenza are primarily a winter occurrence at a time of low sunlight exposure.** We know that a high level of Vitamin D (greater 75nmol/litre) **activates the immune fighting white cells** that detect foreign invaders which then produce **specifically designed antimicrobial peptides** against infection, yes your own **natural antibiotics**.



Most of us have not come into contact with Swine Flu so the current **FLU VACCINE containing H1N1 will stimulate your immune system in preparation for possible infection. RING RECEPTION FOR AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE THE NURSE.**

However I would also suggest **during winter consider taking Vitamin D 3000-4000 units daily** (includes sunlight exposure). This can be taken as **cholecalciferol (50,000units) one tablet every 2-3 weeks** and is especially important for those who remain indoors. **During an acute cold or influenza Cholecalciferol 1-2 tablets daily for 3 days may be useful. DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR.**

PROBIOTICS PREVENTS COLDS AND FLU

Last year a five study was published² on 3-5yr old children who were given twice daily one or two probiotics (good bowel bacteria- lactobacillus acidophilus & bifidobacterium lactis) for six months. This simple over the counter remedy significantly **reduced the fever, cough, runny nose and the use of antibiotics with colds and flu. The children also had less days away from childcare.** Probiotics are safe, useful in treating diarrhoea and appear preventative for child eczema and possibly asthma when taken by pregnant mothers.

REDUCE SUGAR and other refined foods

Dr William Ringsdoff³ in the 1960's demonstrated that when healthy young adults consumed two cans of Coke within 45min the ability of the 'infection-fighting' white cells to engulf bacteria was decreased by 50% and persisted for 5 hours. **Stop high sugar food, drinks and fruit juices** and reduce greatly the refined starches of white bread, pasta, rice and potatoes.

SELENIUM inhibits viruses

In China's rice bowl growing region children suffer from Keshans Disease, a heart muscle weakness caused by Coxackie virus, which can be prevented by selenium supplementation. Trials in China have also demonstrated that selenium inhibits hepatitis B and C and in South African the HIV/AIDS virus. **Influenza is a similar RNA virus with mechanisms that selenium can inhibit.** New Zealand is very low in selenium and I suggest supplementation with of 200-250 micrograms per day or **brazil nuts** (3-4 each day) and **garlic** (Kyolic capsules 1-2 daily). In 1973 a Japanese researcher demonstrated that **garlic enhanced the effectiveness of the flu vaccine.**

AND REMEMBER the SIMPLE THINGS.



The common cold and flu are primarily spread by touching surfaces that have been contaminated with infected droplets from infected persons. The virus is passed by the hand to the nose or eye to induce infection. The FLU may also be spread by directly by aerosol droplet contact.

Wash your hands, use **hand disinfectant**, consider **wearing gloves** in crowded places, and use **cough hygiene** (cough into a tissue, elbow, sleeve). **Avoid close contact** with the sick. Get **plenty of sleep**, eat **nourishing food**, **avoid stress**, and enjoying **laughter** and **fun** boost the immune system's effectiveness.

Yours in good health

Dr Ric Coleman

¹ www.vitamincouncil.org/newsletter

² Paediatrics 2009. 124:172-179

³ Diet & Disease. Cheraskin & Ringsdoff (1968)