



Tasman Medical Centre



Welcome to our Spring 2026 Newsletter
Stay up to date with important health information, service updates, and seasonal reminders from the Tasman Medical Centre team.

Appointment Reminders and Missed Appointment Fees:

We understand that traffic conditions can change unexpectedly and delays can sometimes occur. However, we ask all patients to allow extra travel time when attending their appointment to help ensure they arrive on time.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please let us know as soon as you can. Advance notice helps us make the best use of available appointments and reduces wait times for everyone. Arriving on time helps us provide the best possible care for all patients and keeps our clinics running to time.

If you do not attend your appointment, provide insufficient notice of cancellation, or arrive too late for the appointment to proceed, a missed appointment (DNA) or Cancellation fee may be charged.

Hayfever

Skin Checks at Tasman Medical Centre

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in NZ, with rates amongst the highest in the world due to high UV exposure.

The good news: is also the easiest to prevent.

Skin checks are the most effective management for early skin cancer detection and treatment.

Please contact reception for a 30-minute full body skin examination with one of our 'skin doctors' Dr Mark Hatfull or Dr Katy Roff.

Additionally, you **SCAN** your body for lesions.

S-Sore -any skin lesion that is sore, scaly, itchy, bleeding or tender and doesn't heal in 6 weeks

C- Changing - in size, colour, texture or shape.

A- Abnormal- looks or feels different or stands out compared to your other spots or moles.

N- New- has appeared on your skin recently.

Any new moles or spots should be checked, especially if you are over 40.

A 30-minute skin check consultation is \$230.00. Further pricing information is available on the Tasman Medical Centre website.

Minor surgery may also be required, and information is provided after your skin check consultation.

We are already seeing a rise in the number of patients suffering from Hayfever this year. This is an allergy response that commonly causes sneezing, runny nose, throat clearing, watery itch eyes and itchy skin, nose, throat and ears.

When should I see my doctor?

- If your symptoms are persistent (at least 4 days a week for 4 weeks or more)
- If your symptoms are severe (affecting your sleep and ability to do your normal day to day activities)
- You're self-managing without success

How do I self-manage?

- Minimise exposure to allergens
- Nasal irrigation/rinses
- Eyedrops, nasal sprays or antihistamine tablets
- Remove any plants outside windows that may trigger your hay fever
- Avoid spending time outside on high pollen count/windy days or after thunderstorms
- Splash your eyes with cold water after doing an activity that exposes you to pollen
- See a pharmacist for advice
- Visit allergy.org.nz or www.healthify.nz for advice



SUN SAFETY



As devastating as skin cancer is, it is also one of the easiest types of cancer to take steps to prevent. Follow these tips for your whole family to do your best to prevent skin cancer.



Stay in the shade whenever possible. Find something like an umbrella or tree to sit on to avoid being directly in the sun.



Wear a hat with a two to three inch brim in order to shade your face, ears, and neck.



Choose your clothing carefully. Look for tightly woven fabrics. Some clothing even offers UV ray protection.



Wear sunglasses. This will protect the tender skin around your eyes, and can also reduce your risk of cataracts.



You should be using sunscreen all year, not just during warmer months or sunny days. Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin before you go outside, & then reapply every two hours or after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.



Pay special attention to children. They are not always aware of the dangers of sun exposure and can burn easily. Teach them about the dangers of sun exposure, and keep babies younger than six months of age out of the sun whenever possible.



Female GPs at capacity!

We understand that some patients may feel more comfortable seeing a female GP for certain health concerns. While we do our best to accommodate these preferences, it is not always possible due to appointment availability and clinician workloads.

If you request a female GP appointment, our clinical team will contact you to gather some additional information so we can help determine the most appropriate and timely care option.

Please be assured that all of our male GPs are experienced in managing women's health concerns, including menopause, menstrual issues, breast concerns, acne, contraception, and other female health matters. In many cases, an internal examination is not required. If one is needed, a female staff member can be present as a chaperone during the examination.

If a female GP appointment is not available and your concern is urgent, you can:

- Request a nurse or healthcare assistant chaperone during your appointment.
- Bring a support person with you.
- Discuss any concerns with your GP and let them know what would help you feel comfortable during the consultation.

Our priority is ensuring you receive safe, respectful, and timely care while maintaining your comfort.

Staff Update:

You may have seen some new faces within the practice in recent months. We are delighted to welcome Dr Tyler White who joined our team in September. Tyler values thoughtful, patient-centred care and looks forward to getting to know his patients and the wider community at Tasman Medical Centre.

We sadly said farewell to **Liz**, our Health Coach, and thank her for her contribution to the practice.

However, we have also welcomed her replacement **Ally** to the team. Ally provides free 30-minute Health Coach sessions for adults aged 18+, helping patients make positive changes to improve their health and wellbeing, and is also a friendly face to check in with.

If you wish to discuss meeting with Ally, please enquire with one of our reception team.

Ally can support you with:

- Behaviour changes of any capacity / goal setting. E.g., smoking cessation.
- The management of long-term conditions - diabetes, hypertension etc.,
- Weight management - loss, gain or maintenance.
- GLP-1 support.
- Physical activity and nutrition basics.
- Mild - moderate mental health challenges or concerns.
- Social support - e.g., social isolation in older adults. Fostering new connections and social pathways.
- Financial support - navigating WINZ.
- General navigation of community services.



Requests for Medical Certificates

Medical certificates for children:

We are receiving an increase in calls requesting medical certificates for their children on the advice of schools. Generally, these are not required, and school staff should liaise directly with caregivers, as advised by the Ministry of Health.

Scan the QR code or visit:
healthnz.govt.nz and
search school guidance



While we appreciate the concerns and requests from schools to get children reviewed, we will be prioritising acute appointments for children who need medical treatment, rather than schools' needs for medical documentation.

If students are unwell, they should stay home to recover to reduce the spread of illness. When your child is well enough to eat, drink, are fever-free without medication and can concentrate on learning, they are well enough to return. The Ministry of Health requests that schools take reasonable precautions to reduce the spread of infection and have patience while some children may take more than 2 weeks to recover.

If you are concerned about your child, however, please call and speak to a nurse.

Medical certificates for adults:

We hope anyone who is unwell, is receiving the support of their employer while they recover from illness. Due to pressure, we are not always able to provide same day medical appointments and we would encourage your employer to have some flexibility about medical certificate requirements.

If you are unable to see a GP, please ask your manager and check with our team if a phone consult and or a nursing medical certificate may be an option.

We also understand that there can be some time pressures with an ACC or WINZ certificate, please be assured that if you cannot get into see your GP before this expires, it can be back dated. ACC and WINZ have advised that if the appropriate steps have been taken for the appointment to be booked, they will not cancel any payments.

Blood Test Requests

Please be aware, patient-initiated requests for blood tests will not be individually reviewed. Our GPs do not have capacity to review each individual patient requested blood test prior to an appointment. Our nurses are unable to generate blood test forms unless specifically requested by a GP or as part of an annual diabetes review.



Early requests can cause problems:

- If investigations are ordered, it is the referring GP's responsibility to review, interpret and act on the results. Interpreting abnormal results and required follow-up can be very difficult without knowing the reason for the request
- Your current state of health may indicate specific testing
- Awanui Labs require some blood tests to have clinical information - like symptoms or medication before they will process
- Some blood tests require action by the patients – like fasting or withholding medication prior to testing

What to do instead:

- Please discuss directly with your GP at your upcoming appointment, what tests would be recommended. If clinically appropriate, they will arrange at this time. This may include recommendations for follow-up and/or discussions about a treatment plan.

Exceptions:

- If your GP has specifically instructed you to get a blood test done, and the form has not been sent. Please contact reception.
- You are due your annual diabetes review.

Increasing demand due to Flu/Influenza A

Nationally, New Zealand is experiencing a significant demand across all health services due to a surge in Influenza A. This includes general practice, ambulance services and emergency departments.

If you have flu, the best thing you can do is rest and stay home until you are better. Antibiotics can not treat flu as it is a viral infection, rather than bacterial. Most people will have symptoms for **1-2 weeks**, and a post viral cough may last a month. However, some people may experience worsening asthma, pneumonia or other infections.

Our higher risk patients are, babies/Pepi under 1 year, pregnant or those who have recently given birth, people with existing relevant diagnosis such as cardiac conditions, asthma, diabetes, very overweight persons, people aged 65 years and over, and Māori/Pacific aged 55 years and over.

What do I do when I have Flu?

- Stay home to rest and recover. Avoid spreading to others
- Keep up your fluids to replace what you may be sweating out
- Paracetamol, ibuprofen, lozenges, gargles, sinus sprays, cold and flu medication may be suitable for aches and pains, fevers, blocked nose and sore throats etc. Call your pharmacy to see if these are suitable – if you can, have a friend/relative pick these up
- Eat as able, and keep food light/plain
- Wash your hands and cover your coughs and sneezes
- Consider nasal rinses or steam inhalation to help natural clear blockages
- Change your bedding to keep it clean and dry
- Shower regularly

It is not too late to get your Flu Vaccine!

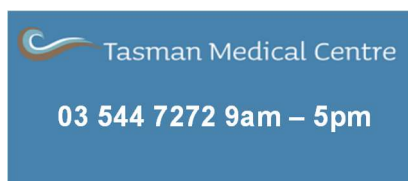
We are delivering Influvac Tetra until December. Coverage is based on the recent severe Northern Hemisphere flu season and includes coverage for two subtypes of Influenza A and B lineages.

When should I seek medical advice?

- You have a high fever that is not improving with cooling measures like paracetamol or showering.
- You have difficulty breathing or chest pain
- You are struggling to urinate despite increasing your fluid intake
- You feel dizzy or like you might pass out on standing
- Bright lights are harsh to your eyes
- You develop a severe headache or stiff neck
- Skin discolouration like a rash of blue/purple tone to your lips, skin, fingers or toes

If your baby or child:

- is breathing fast or noisy or if they are wheezing or grunting
- is very pale
- is drowsy or difficult to wake
- is severely irritable, not wanting to be held
- is limp or unable to move
- has dry nappies or no tears when they are crying, which means they are dehydrated
- has signs of other serious conditions, such as meningococcal (see next page)



Medical & Injury Centre
Emergency Department
Or 111 for urgent medical care



Post Viral Coughs

One of the more long-term side effects of respiratory illness is the post viral cough, which can hang around for a month or so. We had many enquiries and concerns regarding this last season, however for most patients you just need to let it run its course.

If you have a persistent non-productive cough for 6 weeks, make an appointment with your GP (4 weeks in children). Of course, if it is getting worse, or it sounds wet, or you have a productive (wet/chesty/bringing up mucus) cough, please book earlier. A post viral cough usually doesn't cause harm, but they can be very annoying and exhausting.

Helpful Hints:

- Use a teaspoon of honey to sooth your throat
- Anti-inflammatory or local anesthetic sprays and lozenges
- Use a menthol treatment like Vicks Vapour rub
- Nasal saline spray or nasal congestion sprays
- Use a humidifier or steamy shower to add moisture to the air
- Drink warm liquids like tea or broth
- Avoid irritants like smoke, polluted air, cold air, pollen or dust
- Avoid lying flat and prop yourself up with pillows when sleeping
- Hold a pillow or rolled up towel to your chest to help support your stomach muscles and reduce strain
- Use a "huff cough" technique
 - take a breath in through your mouth till your lungs are about 75% full
 - hold your breath for 2-3 seconds
 - breathe out through your mouth with a strong but slow exhale, this can help move the mucus up
 - repeat twice more
 - follow up with a strong cough



Having asthma or hay fever also can trigger a long cough. Use your normal treatment such as:

- Antihistamines
- Nasal saline spray
- Intranasal steroids
- Reliever and preventer inhalers

Ask your pharmacist about nasal sprays, decongestants or cough support. Alternatively, contact Tasman Medical Practice 03 544 7272 for further advice (nurse phone consult fees may apply).

FLU2026
Children aged 6 months
until they turn 5 years are now
eligible for FREE flu vaccines

Talk to your doctor, pharmacy,
or healthcare provider today.

For more information or to book your vaccine, visit
healthnz.govt.nz/flu

Meningococcal Disease causes Meningitis

Don't wait – take action

Even if you think the person has been immunised.

- Meningococcal disease is fast and can kill or cause serious disability.
- Get help **immediately** if you see one or more of the symptoms below.
- These meningococcal disease symptoms may not all show at once.

Symptoms in babies



High fever (may also have cool hands and feet or shivering)



Sleepy or floppy or harder to wake



Unusual crying



Stiff neck



Dislike bright lights



Vomiting



Refusal to feed



Sometimes, red or purple spots or bruises on the skin

Symptoms in older children and adults



High fever and headache



Confusion and sleepiness



Joint pain and aching muscles



Stiff neck



Dislike bright lights



Vomiting



Sometimes, red or purple spots or bruises on the skin

Not everyone with meningococcal disease gets spots. Don't wait for spots to appear before getting medical help.



You can call Healthline free 24 hours a day: **0800 611 116**