



the women's  
the royal women's hospital  
victoria australia

# GP News

## Connecting healthcare for the benefit of patients

### ***Welcome to the first issue of GP News for 2020.***

It's been a challenging start to the year for many communities and our thoughts are with all those affected by the devastating bushfires. Please see below our advice for pregnant women in relation to smoke haze.

Also in this issue a reminder about measles, as well as updates on Shared Maternity Care and statewide referral criteria for gynaecology.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, feedback or suggestions – our contact details are listed at the bottom of this email.

Kind regards,

GP Liaison Unit,  
The Royal Women's Hospital



*The Women's has issued advice to pregnant women around air pollution following bushfires*

## **Advice for pregnant women around smoke haze**

Many cities and communities across Australia are experiencing levels of air pollution from the unprecedented number of bushfires, leaving many expectant parents concerned about the health of their unborn baby.

The Women's is encouraging pregnant women to:

- continue using any respiratory medication normally used;
- try and stay indoors with the windows and doors shut;
- avoid exercising outside;
- seek medical assistance if they aren't feeling well.

"It's important that women who are pregnant are cautious when there is air pollution, and follow the advice of authorities and health professionals," says Director of Maternity Services at the Women's, Professor Mark Umstad.

"While exposure to air pollution in pregnancy has been linked to increased rates of preterm birth and other problems, it's important to remember that the risk only increases when the exposure to air pollution is over a prolonged period of time – this would be over consecutive months, not days."

The Acting Chief Medical Officer and State and Territory Chief Health Officers have released a statement for the general public and health professionals about the use of masks by people exposed to bushfire smoke. You can [read it here](#).

## Measles immunity and vaccination

Be alert for measles infection and please consider if your patients require testing or vaccination. As measles is a live vaccination it is contraindicated in pregnancy.

As per the Australian Immunisation Handbook all adolescents and adults born during or since 1966 should have either:

- documented evidence of 2 doses of measles-containing vaccine given at least 4 weeks apart and with both doses given at  $\geq 12$  months of age, or
- serological evidence of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella.

Adolescents and non-pregnant adults who have been incompletely vaccinated or do not have evidence of immunity to measles are recommended to receive measles-containing vaccine.

## Shared Maternity Care

### Guidelines update

The Shared Maternity Care guidelines are being updated in collaboration with the Women's, Mercy Health, Northern Health, Western Health and Djerriwarrh Health.

Stay tuned for their release in mid-2020.

### Re-credentialing update

We are now processing applications to re-credential as a Shared Maternity Care Affiliate for the 2020–2022 triennium.

Applicants will now be advised by 28 February (extended from 31 January).

Those who have submitted incomplete applications will be contacted by one of the health services before that date.

If you have sent an application, you will not be removed as a Shared Maternity Care Affiliate without first being contacted.

## Statewide Referral Criteria

The Women's is getting ready to implement statewide referral criteria on gynaecology. From 1 February, referral for some gynaecology conditions will be triaged according to new Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) statewide referral criteria.

Please visit [src.health.vic.gov.au](http://src.health.vic.gov.au) for more information.

Referral guidelines on our website will be updated soon.

## Recent news

*Women given opportunity to disclose family violence at pregnancy clinic – [read here](#)*

*Endometriosis research to receive \$9m in funding – [read here](#)*

*Maternity program awarded for improving Aboriginal health – [read here](#)*

## Contact

GP Liaison Unit

Unit Head

Dr Ines Rio

ph: (03) 8345 2064

email: [gp.liaison@thewomens.org.au](mailto:gp.liaison@thewomens.org.au)

Shared Care Coordinators

Tammi Adams and Simone Cordiano

ph: (03) 8345 2129

email: [shared.care@thewomens.org.au](mailto:shared.care@thewomens.org.au)

Primary Care Liaison Officer

Vasvi Kapadia

ph: (03) 8345 3070

email: [gp.liaison@thewomens.org.au](mailto:gp.liaison@thewomens.org.au)

Fast Fax Referral: fax: (03) 8345 3036

GP Quick Access Number ph: (03) 8345 2058

The Women's Switchboard ph: (03) 8345 2000

The Women's Abortion and Contraception service professional line (03) 8345 3061 (not for use by women needing the service).

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