

FEE POLICIES

A medical practice is focused on looking after the health of people and the community. Under our health system doctors must charge patients for medical services - a medical practice is also a business. Our clinic is widely respected for its efficient management and professional service.

It is our policy to be guided by the fees recommended by the Australian Medical Association, although the fee for the consultation is determined by your doctor. Our fees are usually higher than the 'scheduled fee' set by Medicare for the purpose of paying rebates. Since the introduction of Medicare, rebates (the amount Medicare will refund) have not kept up with the cost of living and results in an increasing 'gap', which the patients must pay. This is a government policy and complaints about Medicare or rebate levels should be directed to the Commonwealth Minister of Health or to your local Member of Parliament.

OUR FEES

The fee system imposed by Medicare is complex and the following is just a guide.

Item Number	Description of Consultation	AMC Fee	Medicare Rebate	GAP for Private Patients	GAP for Cardholders
	You may be charged for dressing, bandages or plaster	<div>The Ararat Medical Centre reserves the right to change its fees at any time.</div> <div>Our Fees generally increase on the 1st of July each year in line with the Medicare Benefits Schedule increase.</div> <div>A copy of our current Fee Summary for common item numbers is available; please ask our Reception Team for a copy.</div>			
Level A 3	A consultation requiring little history, examination, treatment of one problem				
Level B 23	This is the usual consultation requiring some detailed history, examination and treatment for one or more problems				
Level C 36	This is for a consultation involving more complex problems or dealing with several problems in one visit. Visits requiring investigations or specialist referral are often more complex.				
16500	Antenatal Visit				
17610	Pre-Anaesthetic Check				
DUTY DOCTOR	DUTY DOCTOR APPOINTMENT (first triaged by Reception & Nursing Staff)	<div>Out of pocket Gap payments apply to all Duty Doctor & After-Hours appointments.</div> <div>This includes Aged Pensioners and Children Under 16.</div>			
URGENT CARE CENTRE AT E.G.H.S.	E.G.H.S. URGENT CARE CENTRE (triaged appointments only)				

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Accounts can be settled by Cash, Cheque, Credit Card or EFTPOS. Payment of all accounts are required on the day of your consultation. Full payment is required for Non-Cardholders while payment of the Gap amount is required for Cardholders. There is a Medicare office in Ararat who will process immediate rebates on paid accounts. If you have any difficulty with the Medicare forms please ask our staff to assist you.

Non payment of accounts will result in restriction of services for non-emergency treatment.

DISCOUNTED FEES

Doctors have traditionally provided medical services at a reduced fee to pensioners, the unemployed, war veterans and those in financial need. A reduced fee may apply, please check with our Reception staff.

Reduced fees do not apply to services provided at the hospital or after-hours, nor with the Duty Doctor service at AMC.

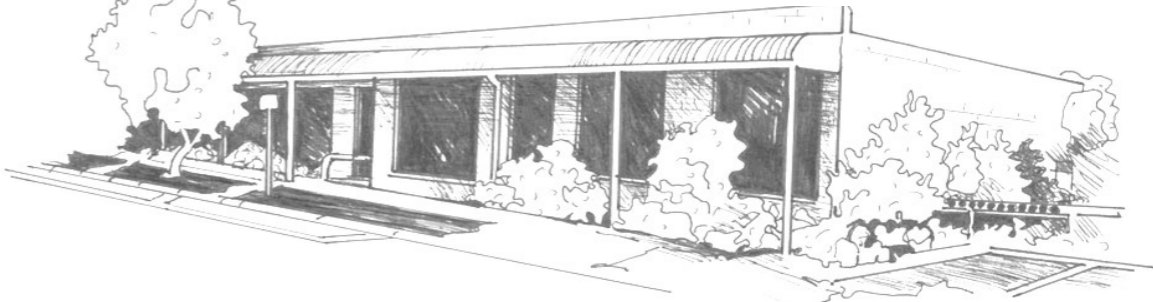
'Health Care Cards' show entitlement to discounted medicines, not discounts on medical fees. If chronic ill health or medical fees are causing significant financial hardship, discuss this with your doctor.

All Aged Pensioners and Children under the age of 16 will be bulk billed for non-emergency appointments.



ARARAT MEDICAL CENTRE P/L

ACN NO. 005 489 314



PRACTICE INFORMATION

THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER

The role of the GP is to provide ongoing care to individual patients and their families, and to look after the health of the community. General Practitioners are trained to deal with the broad range of health, psychological and family problems. We also have access to specialist medical and other health services which may be needed. Doctors within the clinic have special interests in obstetrics, anaesthetics, paediatrics, heart disease, spinal problems, occupational health, public health, women's health and travel medicine. Patients requesting a referral or '2nd opinion' will be treated respectfully. Specialists can be consulted by referral from a GP (from either within or outside our medical group).



THE NURSING STAFF



Our nursing staff are all Division One Registered Nurses and are also accredited immunisation providers. They are all experienced in dealing with emergencies. Nursing staff are available each day and patients are encouraged to talk with them, either in person or by telephone, for reassurance and advice.

THE RECEPTION STAFF

Our reception staff have in excess of 150 years experience between them!! They have an invaluable knowledge of the health system and are here to assist you with the day to day requirements. Our Medical Records Staff looks after your personal health records and ensures results and letters are included in your computerised records. Should you have any queries or questions regarding the security of your records, please feel free to contact the Practice Manager.

YOUR PRIVACY

We are committed to protecting your right to privacy. At the Ararat Medical Centre we believe an individual's right to keep their personal information private is very important. We are committed to protecting and maintaining the privacy, accuracy and security of your personal health information. We have developed a Privacy Policy to explain our commitment to you. Please ask for our Privacy Policy brochure or you could speak to our Practice Manager. If you wish to view your medical records please see the reception staff to make an appointment with your Doctor to discuss them. If dissatisfied you can lodge a complaint to the Federal Privacy Commissioner whose contact details are: GPO Box 5218, SYDNEY NSW 2001 Privacy Hotline: 1300 363 992 Website: www.privacy.gov.au

OPENING HOURS AND APPOINTMENTS

Our telephone is staffed from 8.30am to 5.30pm weekdays (excepting public holidays), and from 9.00am to 12.00pm on Saturdays. Doctors consult from 9.00am to 5.00pm weekdays. Two doctors are available Saturday mornings from 10.00am to 12.00 noon for urgent problems. Urgent appointments can be made by telephoning on the day. Routine appointments are not made for Saturdays to enable urgent problems to take precedence.

Although the practice maintains appointment schedules for each doctor, emergency problems will receive priority. Emergencies likely to interfere with the doctor running behind time include obstetrics, emergency anaesthetics, a patient presenting with chest pain, or severe bleeding. Of course, there are also the times when for various reasons; we do not have enough staff to cope with the workload and we have a policy of treating any patient with a medical emergency first.

When making an appointment, please let us know if the problem is urgent, or if you have a sick child. If you are distressed, vomiting or just not feeling like you can cope with sitting in the waiting room, please let the receptionist know so we can arrange for you to have some privacy.

We now offer Online Appointments to our existing patients for standard appointments** Ensure your Medicare card number is up-to-date and date of birth is correct, then go to www.araratmedicalcentre.com.au and follow the link for Online Appointments.

Partners
DR DEREK POPE MBBS, FRACGP, DRANZCOG, FACRRM
DR MICHAEL CONNELLAN MBBS, FRACGP, DRANZCOG, FACRRM
DR ERIC VAN OPSTAL MBBS, FRACGP, DGM, DRANZCOG, FACRRM
DR PIETER PRETORIUS MB.Ch.B, MMED (Fam Med), FRACGP
DR CHEE SHENG WONG MB BS, FRACGP, DRANZCOG
Assistants
DR MARK DEARY MB.Ch.B, FRACGP
DR NOVREEN RASOOL MBBS
DR EDGARDO LOU MBBS
DR PRASAD FONSEKA MBBS
DR MEGAN HELPER MBBS, DRANZCOG
DR CLAIRE ARUNDELL MBBS
DR BENJAMIN GANESAN MBBS

Visiting Specialists
Dr. Lydia Johns-Putra - Urologist
Dr. Tom Fisher - General Surgeon
Dr. Ruth Bollard - General Surgeon
Dr. Kon Shimokawa - General Surgeon
Dr. Michael Condous - Vascular Surgeon
Dr. David Deutscher - General Surgeon
Dr. Christopher Hengel - Cardiologist
Dr. Niall McConchie - ENT
Dr. Thea Bloom - Paediatrician

Nursing Team
Vicki, RN - Nurse Unit Manager
Jenni, RN - CDM Nurse
Teresa, RN
Janine, RN
Joanne, RN
Blaire, RN
Nicole, RN

Administration Team
Garry - Practice Manager
Chris - Finance Officer

Reception Team
Denise - Reception Supervisor
Melissa - Accounts Officer
Vicki
Tanya
Jessica
Amanda
Rosie
Kim
Kelly
Rachel
Amy

55 High Street, Ararat, Victoria 3377
Telephone (03) 5352 2311
Fax (03) 5352 3254
Hours: Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 5.30pm
Email: admin@araratmedicalcentre.com.au
Web: www.araratmedicalcentre.com.au

LONGER CONSULTATIONS

Appointments are usually spaced 10-15 minutes apart to allow adequate time for the visit. Please advise reception staff when booking your appointment if you want a longer consultation to enable adequate time to be provided. Please advise staff if attending for a pre-employment or insurance medical.

AFTER HOURS / EMERGENCY

The general practitioners maintain an after hours roster for urgent problems. This covers after hours and all public holidays.

Telephone the Ararat Medical Centre on 5352 2311 and follow the instructions.

It is important to phone first as many problems can be assisted by advice and do not need to be seen immediately. The Ararat Medical Centre participates in the after hours triage service provided by the Grampians Medicare Local. Each night from 6pm to 8am, our telephone is diverted to this service. All calls are initially handled by a specially trained triage clinician. If you have difficulty in getting through on the after-hours service or, in an emergency, call the After Hours GP Helpline on 1800 022 222.

Patients with serious problems e.g. a broken limb or chest pain (of any cause) should go directly to the hospital or call an ambulance (000).

Patients needing attention after 5:30pm weekdays or 12 noon Saturdays are usually seen in the East Grampians Health Service (Ararat & District Hospital) Urgent Care Centre.

On Saturday mornings the Medical Centre will operate a clinic from the East Grampians Health Service (Ararat & District Hospital) Urgent Care Centre with two doctors available for urgent appointments from 10am to 12pm. During the remainder of the weekend the Duty Doctor will attend the hospital for semi-urgent problems on Saturday at 4.30pm and Sunday at 10.00am and 4.30 pm.

(These times also relate to public holidays.).

PLEASE NOTE: A private fee is payable for all services provided after hours. These are not normally discounted, however, during the clinic hours above, the fee is considerably less than for an individual call out for the doctor.

Medicare does not pay an after hours loading for the majority of after hours services provided by the medical staff.

Please refer to our fee schedule for the out of pocket costs.



REFERRALS TO SPECIALISTS AND PAYMENT OF THEIR FEES

To claim a rebate through Medicare for your specialist visit, you require a referral from your GP. The reception staff may book your appointment with the specialist you have been referred to. You need to be aware of the billing practices of individual specialists and the gap fees you may incur, these vary. The practice has details available; please ensure you are given this information as most specialists expect payment on the day of service. If you have any questions regarding your specialist appointment or their fees, please speak with the receptionist.

RECALLS AND REMINDERS

This practice maintains a "Recall and Reminder" system to provide preventative care for its patients. The reminder system includes checks to help in the prevention or early detection of certain conditions such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and immunization follow-up. All Pap smears are sent to Victorian Cytology Service and are automatically included in the Victorian Cervical Cytology Register. This service provides automatic reminders plus recalls for abnormal results. If you do not wish to be included in the Registry, please advise your doctor so the appropriate paperwork can be included with your pap smear. To ensure reminders are received, please advise the Registry of any change of name and/or address.

Forms are available at the Ararat Medical Centre.

TEST RESULTS AND PHONE CALLS



Doctors will not take phone calls during consultations. We try to avoid interruptions when the doctor is seeing other patients. Please make an appointment regarding follow-up and test results which will avoid the need for you to phone in. The nursing staff are available to provide medical advice in person or over the phone for emergency care.

HOME VISITS

Home visits are available when it is not possible to come to the clinic, or hospital, by car or taxi. Please give some indication of the problem so that the doctor can bring appropriate treatment equipment. Regular visits are made to local nursing homes and aged care hostels. The sort of problems that need a home visit are those that might physically prevent the patient getting out of bed e.g. balance disturbance or infectious disease (e.g. chicken pox), or where other factors apply, such as having several sick children. In general it is more difficult for the doctor to assess your problem at home, particularly if further tests are needed.

REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

Patients should discuss repeat prescriptions with their own doctor.

Patients on regular medication have chronic health problems and need to see the doctor every 3 or 4 months. In most cases it is possible to prescribe sufficient quantities of medicines to last until the next review. If you feel that your problem is very simple or just requires 'a script' the receptionist will book you in for a brief appointment. Patients are welcome to phone for a replacement script if the original is lost or misplaced. A non-rebateable fee may be charged for a prescription if the patient was not seen by the doctor.

COMPLAINTS OR SUGGESTIONS

We can only address complaints or suggestions if we know about them. Difficulties can occur due to communication problems or misunderstandings. Your doctor will appreciate the opportunity to discuss any problem. However, if you have a suggestion that you think will be of benefit, we have a suggestion box situated in the front waiting room. We would be most pleased to receive your feedback. If after talking your issues through, you wish to take the matter further we can provide information sheets about the Health Service Commissioner (03 8601 5200).

MEDICAL EDUCATION

Doctors in this clinic regularly attend conferences and updates in areas of benefit to their patients. We regularly teach medical students from Deakin, Monash and Melbourne University. Experience in the rural practice teaches students much about medicine and also the country way of life. You will be advised when students are working with us – you are welcome to say no if you wish to see your doctor alone – just tell the staff at the front desk.



CDM NURSE - GP MANAGEMENT PLANS

A GP Management plan involves you, your GP and a Practice Nurse who, with your consent and assistance, will carry out a detailed assessment and then form a written Management Plan. This defines your special needs and the health care you require to meet those needs. Your input will be sought to tailor the Plan so that you can work with it practically. Anyone who has a long term medical condition that will last longer than 6 months e.g. arthritis, asthma, diabetes, cancer, heart disease etc. is eligible for this service. About one hour is spent with the Nurse preparing a Plan with you to include all your medical, physical, lifestyle, social and psychological needs. If you would benefit from the involvement of Allied Health providers, usually at minimal or no cost to you, (e.g. Diabetic Educator, Dietician, Asthma educator, Podiatrist, Physiotherapist) for services, education and advice, a Team Care Arrangement will be made; (a document that lists your needs, the Doctors recommendations and the contact numbers of providers to be involved in your care). You will then see your GP for about 15 minutes to discuss the Plan. For further information, or to book an appointment please phone the medical centre on 5352 2311.



45 YEAR HEALTH CHECK

45

The 45 year old health check is part of the Australian Better Health Initiative, announced by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2006. The ABHI aims to enhance the capacity of the health system to promote good health and reduce the burden of chronic disease. This is a time of life when individuals may begin to feel the impact of ageing and notice signs of the onset of chronic disease. A health check at this stage of life can assist patients to make the necessary lifestyle changes to prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease. The aim of this health check is to assist with the prevention of chronic disease and to enable early intervention strategies to be put in place where appropriate. The health check is available to people between 45 and 49 years of age (inclusive) who are at risk of developing a chronic disease. 45 year old health checks are offered as a combined consultation with nurses and your Doctor. Please allow up to one hour to complete your assessment. For further information, or to book an appointment please phone the medical centre on 5352 2311.

PAP SMEARS



A Pap Smear test can show early signs of the development of pre-cancer in the neck of the womb (the cervix). Women should have a Pap test every two years until you turn 70. (unless your doctor has told you a different interval). Women requiring pap tests are now able to choose to visit either their doctor or our nurse pap test provider. Our nurses have completed training at Melbourne University credentialing as a Nurse Pap Test Provider.

Services offered include Pap Testing, cervical cancer vaccination and other health information.

For appointments or enquiries please call 5352 2311.

OMAS SERVICE

The **Occupational Medical Assessment Service** is provided to employers who require a pre-employment or regular health assessment of their current or future staff. Patients are booked in with the OMAS Nurse before seeing the Doctor. Options for this service include measurement of respiratory function; audiometry; 12 lead electrocardiography; chest x-ray; pathology tests and drug screen testing. (onsite or lab analysis).

For current fees or appointments or enquiries please contact our Reception staff on 5352 2311.



INTERPRETER AND HEARING IMPAIRED SERVICES



There are some circumstances in which a patient may not want to use a family member or friend as an interpretive/communication link. We acknowledge this right and have access to an 'Interpretive Service' provided by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. This NABS provides interpreters to Deaf and hard of hearing people who use sign language and would like an interpreter for private medical appointments. If you feel these services would benefit you, please feel free to speak to one of our receptionists prior to your appointment.



FREE SMS APPOINTMENT REMINDER SERVICE

We know that it is sometimes hard to remember everything so we offer a free service to our patients who register their mobile phone with us. We will use your mobile number to provide you with an appointment reminder service by SMS and we may also communicate with you by SMS from time to time.

Please complete a patient registration form to register for this service. You may opt out of this service at any time by putting your request in writing including your mobile number.

UNABLE TO MAKE YOUR BOOKED APPOINTMENT?

We understand there may be circumstances that prevent you attending your booked appointment. If this is the case, please call and advise one of our receptionists prior to your appointment so we can offer an appointment to someone else. Please take the time to notify the practice if you cannot attend your appointments, otherwise a non-attendance fee of may be charged. (*non-rebateable from Medicare*)

ACCREDITATION



AGPAL accredits general practices in Australia. All practices accredited with AGPAL are assessed against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' Standards. These standards can be accessed at www.racgp.org.au and are now in their fourth edition. Accreditation provides general practitioners and their community with a mechanism for acknowledging the quality of a general practice. Accreditation is a way of assessing and recognizing the quality of a general practice against professionally developed and trialed standards. These standards are designed to ensure high quality care is provided in a safe and well organized manner.

The Ararat Medical Centre Accreditation is managed by AGPAL.

The Ararat Medical Centre meets every standard detailed in the RACGP's standards for General Practice 4th Edition.