

## **Changes to Dr Clancy's on call availability**

### **What is it like now?**

Dr Clancy is the only ENT surgeon in Warrnambool Monday to Friday. Dr Clancy does not live in Warrnambool. There's a lot of demand for ENT services. Since 2005 she has worked long hours and been on call 1:1 (24 hours a day every day including weekends), except during annual leave.

### **Why is change needed?**

Patient safety and quality of care. We now know that long work hours and overnight on call leads to lack of sleep and fatigue. Fatigue increases the risk of forgetting things or making mistakes at work, car accidents and illness. This isn't safe for patients or for surgeons.

### **When will the change happen?**

From November 1, 2017

### **What will it be like after November 1, 2017?**

To ensure patient and surgeon safety, Dr Clancy will be reducing her day time work hours to 60 hours per week and her on call to 1:4 (around 2-3 nights per week). On call nights will match days when Dr Clancy has operating sessions at South West Healthcare and St John of God Hospital.

### **What will I do if I need emergency care after 5pm and on weekends?**

Dr Clancy recommends you stay within one hour of a hospital with an emergency department for two weeks after tonsillectomy, nasal surgery or sinus surgery. If you need emergency care for bleeding, you should attend your nearest emergency department. Call an ambulance to take you there if needed.

The emergency department staff can manage most emergency problems following ENT surgery. Dr Clancy provides training and protocols (instructions) on her website that enable emergency doctors to effectively manage ENT emergencies.

Less than one in a hundred people who have tonsil or nose surgery need emergency surgery care for bleeding within 2 weeks of surgery. If you need emergency surgery care and Dr Clancy is not on call, the emergency department staff will start emergency medical treatment with intravenous fluid and medication and will then arrange treatment with the general surgeon on call or transfer to the ENT surgical team at the Geelong Hospital.

### **Does this apply to patients with private insurance too?**

Yes. Dr Clancy wants to apply the same safety standards to all patients, regardless of where they have their surgery.

### **Will patients still be safe when Dr Clancy is not on call all the time?**

Dr Clancy has collected information over 12 years about how many people need really urgent treatment after hours, in the two weeks after tonsil, nose and sinus surgery. Less than one in 500 people needed Dr Clancy's urgent care in the first 12 hours after surgery and less than one in 100 needed Dr Clancy's urgent care in the first 14 days after surgery. All other problems could have been managed by the emergency department staff. When balancing the known risks of fatigue with this information, Dr Clancy believes the safest option is to change to safe hours.

### **Do I have a choice?**

Yes. If you would prefer to have your surgery in Geelong or Ballarat, please contact your general practitioner to refer you to another ENT surgeon in Geelong or Ballarat. If you return to Warrnambool to recover after your surgery, the same emergency arrangements outlined above will apply.