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Looking after people with existing health conditions during COVID-19

The Australian Government is urging all people with chronic health conditions to not neglect their regular health care and to continue to see their general practitioner or specialist about the management of their conditions.

While COVID-19 is rightly front and centre in all our minds, it's vitally important people with existing chronic health conditions continue to consult with their doctors.

The Australian Government has expanded Medicare-subsidised telehealth services for all Australians and is providing extra incentives to general practitioners to support continued access to essential primary health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have a regular follow up appointment booked with your doctor, please contact your medical practice to see if this can be carried out using a telehealth consultation, (by telephone, or video call), or if you need to see your doctor for a face to face consultation.

If you are taking regular medication for management of a chronic condition, it is essential that you continue to take your medication. If you run out of medication, please contact your doctor or your local pharmacy to arrange a repeat prescription.

To further stop the spread of COVID-19 Australians can now have their PBS medicines delivered to their home from their community pharmacy of their choice through the Australian Government "COVID-19 Home Medicines Service". There is no additional cost to have their medicines delivered to their home.

Australians should consider getting their flu vaccine over the coming weeks to protect them against the flu. April and May is the best time to get a flu vaccine and people should contact their doctor or community pharmacy to book an appointment.

Many Australians including all Australians over 65 years of age, and children under the age of five, are eligible for a free flu vaccine through the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

If you have regular blood tests as part of the management of your chronic health condition, please continue to have your blood tests done at your local general practice or local pathology collection centre.

Whether in person, or through the expanded telehealth network, it's critical that people continue to manage their general health throughout the COVID-19 health emergency.

Your GP is there to help you follow your treatment plan and improve your health.

Chronic conditions include arthritis, asthma, back pain, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and mental health conditions. These are leading causes of illness, disability and death in Australia.

In Australia, these common chronic conditions contribute to 61 per cent of the burden of disease, 37 per cent of hospitalisations and 87 per cent of deaths.

This is the time to really look after your health and work with your GP.

A failure to keep appointments and continue treatment could also put you at greater risk of being severely affected by COVID-19 and place an unnecessary burden on a hospital system dealing with the pandemic.

It is also essential that you continue to have screening for important conditions, such as bowel cancer. We don't want people to develop cancers which could have been easily treated if picked up early.

We want you to stay well during these challenging times. Your health care needs don't take a back seat because of COVID-19.

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