



PATIENT NEWSLETTER

SEPT 2025 | EDITION FOUR

STAFF UPDATES

MEET SCOUT

OUR NEW DIGITAL RECEPTIONIST

We're excited to introduce Scout, the newest member of our team. Scout (named for their ability to help us navigate new pathways into the future) is a *Digital Receptionist* who can help with:

- booking appointments,
- organising repeat prescriptions, and
- answering general enquiries (including booking a call-back – you asked, so it's back).

We know how frustrating it can be to wait on hold, so Scout has been brought onboard to:

- **answer your calls faster**,
- **cut down the hold music** (except for those who secretly enjoy it), and
- free up our team to focus on the trickier questions.

And don't worry – if you'd rather chat to a real person, you can choose to hold for one of our human receptionists (yes, they're all staying!).

Scout officially starts later this month – another step towards making it easier, quicker, and friendlier to connect with us.

+ HOW ACC CO-PAYMENTS WORK

We often get asked: “If ACC is paying, why do I still have to pay the same co-payment?”

Here's the scoop:

- **ACC helps with accident-related injuries** – they pay part of your GP visit.
- For **non-injury care**, we get funding from **Te Whatu Ora (“Health NZ” – this is our capitation funding)** instead.
- However,... neither ACC nor Te Whatu Ora cover the whole cost. That's why there's a **co-payment** (your contribution).

The important bit:

- You're **not being charged twice**.
- We're **not being paid twice**.
- Whether it's an injury or a routine check, the fee you pay is the same – the funding just comes from different pots.

Think of it like two flat mates (ACC & Te Whatu Ora) each chipping in for the bills – between them they cover most of the cost, but there's still a little left for you.

+ NEWS IN BRIEF

1. With warmer months on the horizon now seems like a good time to let you know that we will **only be unlocking the doors for appointments from 8.30** (Monday to Friday).
2. If you need a Medical Certificate (or pretty much any Certificate – like driving, insurance, pre-employment, Mariners etc.) then this requires an appointment. Please let us know this when booking your appointment or speaking to Scout (our Digital Receptionist).
3. We're working hard to maintain all our records and right now there's extra work focusing on our enrolment paperwork. If you have turned 16 in the last few years or have a VISA that's updated/changed status recently we may need to ask you to complete some paperwork.
4. We've installed some handy signs outside Kawakawa and Mānuka to show which rooms your doctor is working from today. This is what you're looking for.





ANTIBIOTICS

WHY DIDN'T I GET ANTIBIOTICS TODAY?

We know it can feel odd when you come to see us with a cough, sore throat or earache – and go home without a prescription for antibiotics. But here's the thing: antibiotics don't work for every illness.

Most common coughs, colds, sore throats and flu-like illnesses are caused by viruses, and antibiotics only work against bacteria. Using antibiotics when they're not needed doesn't help you get better faster – and it can actually do harm by making bacteria resistant in the long run.

Instead, your doctor will look at the best treatment for you on the day. That might be rest, fluids, pain relief, or other medicines that target your symptoms. And if things change or worsen, we'll always want to see you back.

So, if you didn't get antibiotics today, it's not because we don't care – it's because we do. We want to keep you well now and protect the power of antibiotics, so they'll still work when you (or someone you love) really needs them.

ANTIBIOTIC MYTHS – BUSTED!

ANTIBIOTICS CURE COLDS AND FLU

Nope – those are caused by viruses, and antibiotics only work on bacteria.

I'LL GET BETTER FASTER IF I TAKE THEM “JUST IN CASE”

Not true – taking antibiotics when you don't need them doesn't speed recovery.

LEFTOVER ANTIBIOTICS ARE FINE TO USE LATER

Unsafe – you might not have the right type or dose for your illness, and it fuels resistance.

 **THE TRUTH:** Antibiotics are lifesaving when used properly. Keeping them for when they're truly needed helps protect us all.



+ A NOTE ABOUT OUR FEES

We acknowledge conversations about rising healthcare costs can feel tough – especially in New Zealand, where many of us still remember when visiting the doctor was thought of as “free.” The truth is, while government funding does support part of your care, it doesn't cover the full cost of providing our services.

Each year, we review our fees carefully. Like many businesses, we face rising costs – staff wages, medical supplies, technology, and keeping the doors open. To keep providing safe, quality care for our community, we do need to make small adjustments to our part charges and co-payments.

From 1 October patient co-payments will be increasing to \$67. Increases have also occurred for other items, for example nurse consultations (\$39) blood tests (\$7) and drivers medicals \$99. GP and Nurse consults for CSC cardholders are unchanged.

We don't take this lightly. Our aim is always to keep fees as affordable as possible while ensuring our team can continue delivering the care you rely on. If cost is a barrier for you or your whānau, please talk to us – there may be support options available.

Thank you for your understanding, and for trusting us with your health.

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