



ST GEORGE'S HOSPITAL

A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE



Keeping you and your family well

A focus on bowel cancer

One in three New Zealanders will have some experience of cancer in their lifetime, either personally or through a relative or friend. The disease is the country's leading cause of death as the population increases and grows older.

St George's Cancer Care Centre provides advanced treatment protocols for all types of cancer, with access to chemotherapy drugs that might not be available in the public health system plus world-class radiation technology.

One of the more common cancers treated at the centre is bowel cancer (affecting the colon or rectum), representing around 10 percent of all cases.

"New Zealand has one of the highest incidence of bowel cancer in the world," says Oncologist and Associate Professor Chris Atkinson, Clinical Director of the Cancer Care Centre. "It typically presents in people aged between 50 and 70; however it can also affect those who are much younger."

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Pictured above: Cancer Care Centre nurse Ann Shaw attends to a patient

In the Loop - Community Newsletter

June 2014

Welcome to In the Loop, St George's Community Newsletter. We are committed to keeping you informed, particularly as we move into a redevelopment phase during the next five years. If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us at community@stgeorges.org.nz or (03) 375 6000.



stgeorges.org.nz



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Some 3000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer in this country every year - that's 57 people a week. If caught early, more than 70 percent of those with the disease can be cured.

St George's Cancer Care Centre provides chemotherapy and radiation treatment to patients with bowel cancer, and puts a strong emphasis on education and screening.

"We always take a family history and tell our bowel cancer patients that their children should start screening from the age of 40," says Associate Professor Chris Atkinson. "One person's cancer journey has an impact on the rest of the family."

Signs and symptoms

Half of all New Zealanders are not aware of the symptoms of bowel cancer, which can include:

- Change in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhoea or blood in your bowel motion)
- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss and tiredness

While these symptoms are usually caused by other conditions, it is always a good idea to talk to your GP if you have any concerns.

Where we are heading

Redevelopment continues to progress

Stages 1A and 1B of St George's five-year redevelopment are now well underway.

Stage 1A comprises a four-storey atrium on the site of the old heritage building. It will be the hub of the hospital, acting as the main entrance and reception. Stage 1B involves construction of a single-storey building that will house the Cancer Care Centre's treatment bunkers.

Ground strengthening work for both stages has been completed. Basement excavation has started and construction is expected to commence in July 2014 and be completed by October 2015.

The buildings will be constructed to 180 percent of the new structural building code and feature an innovative base isolation system sourced from the United States.

"Neighbours and visitors to the hospital should not notice too much change from what has been happening onsite during the past few months," says Chief Executive Greg Brooks.

"We always endeavour to alert people prior to any major construction work taking place, and it is our aim to minimise the impact of the rebuild wherever possible." Over the past

few months St George's has held a community open day and has provided immediate neighbours with the opportunity to meet personally with Greg to discuss the rebuild.

Both buildings feature unique design and architectural elements. A living green wall is planned for the outside of the Cancer Care Centre's treatment building, as a symbolic portrayal of a living outcome for a cancer journey.

St George's has applied for and been granted resource consent for Stages 2 and 3 (Leinster Road frontage). Ground improvement work on the Stage 2 site has commenced.



Hiway GeoTechnical working on the site of Stage 1A and 1B



Artist's impression of Stage 1A – the four-storey atrium



Keeping your heart healthy

Taking a proactive approach to heart disease

Every 90 minutes a New Zealander dies from heart disease, yet many of these deaths are premature and preventable.

St George's chooses to take a proactive approach by educating its patients on the importance of making some easy lifestyle changes to minimise their risk of heart disease.

"Our approach is to construct a fence at the top of the cliff rather than provide the ambulances at the bottom," says Clive Low, cardiologist and chairman of the Heart Centre at St George's Hospital.

"After any cardiac procedure at St George's, patients are invited to attend a cardiac rehabilitation course, and their specialist will develop an individual risk reduction and surveillance plan."

While some risk factors are unavoidable, such as family history and ethnicity, there are a lot of things you can control. This includes:

- Giving up smoking
- Controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Managing your diabetes
- Changing your diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce stress
- Exercise

If you think you are at risk, or if you just want peace of mind, ask your doctor for a heart check. This simple assessment could save your life, and put you on the right road towards a healthy heart.

Pictured above: Clive Low operating in the Cath Lab

Did you know?

Zebrafish have all the same genes that cause cancer and developmental

disorders in humans? This tiny tropical freshwater fish is an important animal model for scientists studying human disease.



A second chance

Christchurch woman Dianne Parsons found out just three days before her 60th birthday that she had angina and an 80 percent blockage of her left coronary artery.

A week later she underwent an angiogram and angioplasty procedure at St George's, and was given a second chance.

Dianne had been experiencing symptoms of breathlessness for nearly two years before being diagnosed, but didn't think anything of it.

"I thought it couldn't possibly be heart disease at 60, and put it to the back of my mind. I eventually went to my GP and was sent for an exercise test. What I thought was going to be a 15 minute treadmill walk was stopped after four minutes with a positive reading for angina. It was a huge shock for me."

Dianne encourages people to talk to their GP if they are having any worrying symptoms, which can include tightness, squeezing, pressure or ache in the chest, breathlessness, and pain between the shoulder blades.

"Please don't dismiss any niggles or concerns. We all live such busy and stressful lives, that it is not until we sit down with a cuppa or take time to smell the roses that you realise things may not be as normal as first thought."



Dianne Parsons and cardiologist Clive Low at St George's Hospital



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Starting the journey at St George's

Canterbury women choose St George's Maternity Centre

More than 50 babies have been born at St George's Hospital since birthing recommenced in February this year.

The 2011 earthquake resulted in demolition of the hospital's iconic heritage building which housed the maternity unit, and services were restricted to postnatal care.

Charge Midwife Anna van Uden says women and their families are enjoying the warm, home-like environment that St George's Maternity is renowned for.

"A team of experienced midwives work at St George's to provide safe, modern care

for women who are planning a normal birth. It is an ideal environment for those looking for a more natural, family-centred experience, including first time mothers," says Anna.

"Birthing at St George's also means there is no need to transfer to another facility for the postnatal period."

Maternity care at St George's is provided free of charge. Anna encourages prospective mothers and their families to tour the facilities prior to birthing.

Please phone +64 3 375 6020 or visit www.stgeorges.org.nz for more information.



Bernadette Longson with her son Matteo at the free breastfeeding drop-in clinic held regularly at St George's

A special little arrival



One of the first babies born in the newly-refurbished maternity ward was Jack Wall on 11 February – arriving on his Dad's 50th birthday.

Jack was the third baby to be born in the new facility. His mum Claire Marquet says she chose St George's because she wanted to have a natural birth.

"I had my second daughter Holly at St George's in 2005 and I was thrilled to hear that the new facility was opening the week before Jack's due date. The care and

compassion I received with my daughter was amazing, and remains just as high nearly nine years on.

"Women birthing at St George's or transferring for postnatal care can expect to be treated with dignity, privacy and respect for their individual beliefs and ideas on parenting. The staff are very friendly and knowledgeable, and nothing was too much trouble," says Claire.

Pictured left: One-day-old Jack Wall at St George's Maternity Centre



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