

## The Elms Medical Practice Summer Newsletter

### Summer at last!

One does feel sometimes like questioning our seasons, the sun has seemed very shy at making a solid appearance this year, but at last summer has arrived! The Olympics and the Queens Diamond Jubilee seems a distant memory but there have still been moments to smile about such as the Queen making sporting history winning the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot and Andy Murray winning the Wimbledon Mens Singles. It's marvellous to once again bask in that 'feelgood' factor of last years British sporting prowess! Remember the secret weapon of good health is a positive attitude and a smile. Apparently laughing has been scientifically proven to keep you healthier!

So let's hope the sun stays out to make us smile. But a caution note from the nurses however, remember to wear sun screen!

### New to our website

We now have the facility on our website to securely:

- Cancel appointments
- Register on line
- Change contact and address details
- Fill in the pre new patient check form
- Order repeat prescriptions

This year we will also be introducing the facility to book appointments on line.

Hopefully this will relieve some of the volume of phone traffic which I know can be very frustrating when trying to get through.

## Free NHS Health Check for the 40 - 74 year age group

You may have had an invite or may in the future receive an invite if you are in this age bracket. This is a five year project as the majority of our patients are in this age bracket and will take time to effectively complete. It is important to stress that the NHS Health Check is only available to patients who don't have existing treated health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke etc as this group of patients will already be having regular monitoring.

The focus is identifying the risk of cardiovascular disease such as a stroke and heart attacks. So far, since starting in April last year, we have completed over a thousand health check assessments. Thankfully in the majority of cases we have been able to confirm that all is well and I'm sure providing a certain amount of reassurance. The reason why we do these is either to reassure, start preventative lifestyle changes or identify health issues and take action.

## Travel Essentials

- ✚ Prescription medicines - make sure you order your repeat prescriptions in plenty of time so you don't run out. As a just in case take all your medication including the dispensing label and packaging if possible.
- ✚ Insect repellent / mosquito spray / Sting lotion
- ✚ Sun protection - SPF cream and a sun hat
- ✚ Rehydration salts and diarrhoea relief medication
- ✚ Antihistamine tablets (for allergic reactions)
- ✚ Antiseptic wipes, cream, plasters
- ✚ Painkillers

## Smoking Cessation Report

I'm delighted to report that through the ongoing efforts of The Elms clinicians and staff we have achieved our allocated smoking cessation targets for 2012/2013. We were set a target by the NHS Herts Valleys CCG of getting 62 smokers to quit smoking. We achieved 65 and with the combined efforts of our local pharmacists and the late night smoking cessation clinics here at The Elms our final total was 80. We are thrilled with the results and will continue with our efforts.

## National Diary Dates

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July is 'Samaritans Awareness' Day.

Between the 20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> July you may well see Samaritan fundraisers in your nearest town trying to raise awareness of their 24/7 service. [www.samaritans.org/](http://www.samaritans.org/)

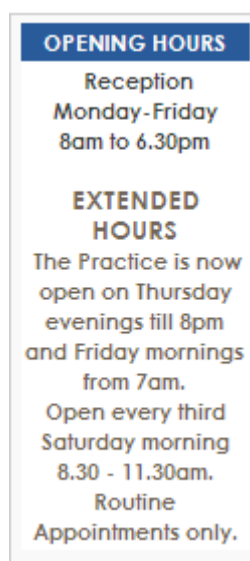
Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July is 'World Hepatitis' Day - the 6<sup>th</sup> in fact. This focuses on the real-life impact of viral hepatitis. It is often ignored around the world and this day will bring focus and recognition to this disease.

1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> August is 'World Breast Feeding' week. This will raise awareness to the importance of peer support, local support contacts and encourage breastfeeding.  
[www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org/](http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org/)

19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> August 'Learning Disability' week. National campaigning and awareness raising, run by Mencap. They will be continuing to work hard bringing people together and developing strong family networks in our local community. [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

## Extended Hours

Despite our various publicity, including our practice brochure, the waiting room plasma screen and our website, I was disheartened to hear that many of our patients were unaware that we offered appointments outside our normal core opening hours.



These extended hours appointments are particularly useful for patients that work full time and we encourage those patients to utilise these times.

## Sunburn

Its holiday time and the present weather is just as hot here as abroad. For some reason we all remember to take suntan lotion when abroad but often feel it isn't as necessary in good old 'Blighty'. All clinicians here at the Elms advise strongly that sunscreen should always be applied when outside on a hot sunny day. Sunscreen reflects the harmful suns ultraviolet radiation (UV) and aids in the prevention of developing skin cancer. Diligent use of sunscreen can also slow the development of premature aging. Approximately 15-30 minutes before exposure, it is advised to uniformly apply sunscreen with a UV filter of 15 or higher. It is important to reapply regularly particularly after swimming.

The best way to prevent sun damage is to stay out of strong, direct sunlight. Clothing and ordinary window glass, filter out most of the damaging rays, although light thin fabrics offer very little protection. Did you know that UV rays can penetrate 25cm of clear water.

Short-term overexposure can cause sunburn and in intense heat can result in heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Severe burns can even cause the body to go into shock. Exposure to the sun can also affect the eyes, causing irritation of the outer membrane and damage to the eye.

### Treatment

Sunburn should be treated in the same way as any skin surface burn. Cold tap water compresses and soaks can be used to soothe raw, hot areas. Calamine lotion or non perfumed sunburn cream can be applied to also soothe the burnt skin. Painkillers may also relieve the tenderness. Further exposure to the sun should be avoided until the sunburn has healed. Taking a hot bath is not advised as can do more damage to the burned areas. If the sunburn is severe a doctor may prescribe corticosteroid cream medication to relieve the symptoms.

Remember skin damage cannot be reversed - <http://www.skincancerprevention.org/node/282>

But if we all keep that high factor sunscreen on at all times, wear a hat and sunglasses we can really enjoy this glorious British sunshine.

### And finally.....[Editor news!](#)

I will be taking my own above advice about the sun as I will be on annual leave from next week as I will be getting married on the 20<sup>th</sup> July!

Thank you all for your continued support. I wish you good health.