

## The Elms Medical Practice Spring Newsletter

### GPs Areas of Clinical Interest

We thought it would be useful to remind everyone of the GP's areas of Clinical Interest. Sometimes a GP might suggest seeing one of their colleagues who has special expertise in a particular field.

Dr Dylan Phillips has a special interest in Urology, ENT, Drug misuse and undertakes minor surgery.

Dr Jackie Impey has a special interest in ENT and Dermatology and undertakes minor surgery. She is also trained to fit contraceptive coils.

Dr Cathy Argyle has a special interest in Women's Health and trained to fit contraceptive coils. She also has a special interest in Learning Disabilities and Safeguarding Adults and Children.

Dr David Hemsli has a special interest in Diabetes and ENT

Dr Julian Smith has a special interest in ENT, Urology and undertakes minor surgery.

Dr Bethan Rees has a special interest in Gynaecology and is trained to fit coils and implants.

Dr Charlotte Allam has a special interest in Diabetes

Dr Rebecca May has a special interest in Gynaecology, Gastro and General Medicine

### DNA Rates

Our latest DNA (Did Not Attend) rates continue to be a cause for concern.

For example, in March 2013 alone, 171 people did not attend for their clinical appointments. This sadly is part of the reason why there can be a wait for a GP appointment. We are asking all patients to ring or use the cancellation facilities on our website if their appointment is no longer needed so that it can be offered to other patients. We would however like to thank the 4,067 patients that did attend their appointments in March. We will be making it easier to make and cancel appointments on line this summer so watch this space!

### Ways to access help form our Healthcare Professionals

We are a very busy practice but always try to ensure all our patients have appropriate access to a Healthcare Professional when they need to. Many patients believe they always need a doctor's appointment but this is not always the case.

Our nursing team are able to provide help and advice on a wide range of ailments including wound care, immunisations, family planning, asthma care, smoking cessation, screening programmes, travel health, diet, well person checks and minor illness. This team consists of 4 practice nurses, a health care assistant and a physician assistant.

In addition, the local pharmacies can offer advice and support on many health related issues.

## Travel Clinics

We are heading for summer (with fingers crossed that is!) and the nurses become very busy seeing patients for travel advice and immunisations. Please ensure if you need a travel appointment you book well in advance of your holiday (at least 6 weeks). If you do require any vaccinations, please note that some vaccinations and the anti-malarials cannot be issued on an NHS prescription and there will be a private charge. The surgery will request payment by cheque or cash at the first travel appointment.

## Ready for European Travel?

### The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

This has replaced the old E111. It is valid in all European Economic Area Countries (EEA), including Switzerland. Your EHIC lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers you for treatment of pre-existing medical conditions and for routine maternity care, as long as you're not going abroad to give birth.

**The EHIC is entirely free of charge. However, some unofficial websites may charge you if you apply through them.**

Apply or renew at: <https://www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/startApplication.do>

Or **0845 606 2030**

You can renew when there are less than 6 months left to run on your card.

Don't go without it!

## **Medical Advice**

### **How to Manage..... An insect sting or bite**

#### **What is the treatment for an insect sting?**

If stung by a bee and the stinger is still in place - scrape it out.

- Scrape out a bee sting left in the skin as quickly as possible. Use the edge of a knife, the edge of a credit card, a finger nail or anything similar.
- The quicker you remove the sting the better, so use anything suitable to scrape out the sting quickly.
- Do not try to grab the sting to pluck it out as this may squeeze more venom into the skin. Scraping it out is better.

Note: wasps or hornets do not leave a stinger in the skin when they sting.

#### **If any symptoms of a generalised reaction develop then:**

- Call an ambulance immediately.
- If you have been issued with an adrenaline pen, use it as directed straight away.
- You may be given oxygen and injections of adrenaline, steroids and antihistamines in hospital to counter the allergic reaction.
- Some people require a fluid 'drip' and other intensive resuscitation.

#### **If there is a localised allergic reaction (swelling around the site of the sting) then:**

- Take an antihistamine tablet as soon as possible. You can buy these at a pharmacy.
- Use a cold compress to ease pain and to help reduce the swelling e.g. cold flannel or ice pack.
- Painkillers such as Paracetamol can help to ease the pain.
- Continue with antihistamines until the swelling eases. This may take a few days.
- If the swelling is severe make an appointment with our Physician Assistant or Practice Nurse. You may be prescribed a short course of steroid tablets to counter the inflammation.

#### **If there is no allergic reaction (most cases) then:**

- A cold compress will ease any pain and help to minimise any swelling.
- A painkiller such as Paracetamol may help if you have any pain.
- If it is itchy, you may not need any treatment as itching soon fades. However, sometimes an itch persists for hours or days. No treatment will take the itch away fully, but the following may help:
  - Crotonon ointment (which you can buy at a pharmacy) is soothing when rubbed onto itchy skin.
  - A steroid cream may be useful. For example, hydrocortisone which you can buy at a pharmacy.
  - Antihistamine tablets may be useful if you have lots of bites. In particular, a sedative antihistamine at night may help if the itch is interfering with sleep. A pharmacist can advise on which types of antihistamine are sedative and can help with sleep.

### **Some points about allergies to insect stings:**

- In the UK most allergic reactions are caused by wasp stings.
- You do not get an allergic reaction after a first sting by a particular type of insect. You need one or more stings to 'sensitise' your immune system.
- Sometimes it takes many stings to sensitise you. This is why some bee-keepers who have had many previous stings suddenly develop an allergic reaction to a bee sting.
- Bee and wasp venoms are different. People who are sensitised and allergic to wasp venom are rarely allergic to bee venom.
- About 1 in 5 people who have had a previous generalised reaction to a sting have no such reaction or only a milder reaction to a further sting. Therefore, if you have a generalised reaction to a sting, it does not necessarily mean it will happen again if you are stung again.
- However, the course can be variable. A series of stings may result in a generalised allergic reaction, no reaction and then another generalised reaction.

### **Preventing insect bites and stings**

Bites and stings most common occur when outside particularly in the countryside. Ways to avoid bites and stings include:

- Wearing long-sleeved clothing and long trousers in places where insects are common.
- Avoid brightly coloured clothes, cosmetics, perfumes or hair sprays, which attract insects.
- Rub an insect repellent on to exposed areas of skin.
- Be alert when you cook or eat outdoors as food attracts insects, especially wasps.
- Some people wear a complete head covering with plastic viewer when out where midges are common, For example when camping next to lakes and rivers. Many camping shops sell them.
- There is no evidence that eating garlic, vitamin B1 or other foods will repel insects.

Over the last few years we have been actively asking for mobile numbers from our registered patients. For many this can be the best way to get in touch with patients during the day. We now have collected 6,425 mobile phone numbers which is great news but we still have quite a few to go. Please ring the surgery if you wish to have your mobile phone number on your records.

This new service has been introduced to make it easier to access local Health care services. It is available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Calls are free from land lines and mobile phones.

#### **When to use it**

Use this number if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life threatening situation.

#### **Call 111 if:**

You need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

- You think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service.
- You don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call.
- You need health information or reassurance about what to do next.

For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way.

#### **For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999**

#### **How does it work?**

The NHS 111 service is staffed by a team of fully trained advisers, supported by experienced nurses. They will ask you questions to assess your symptoms, then give you the healthcare advice you need or direct you straightaway to the local service that can help you best. That could be **A&E**, an **out-of-hours doctor**, a **walk-in centre** or **urgent care centre**, a **community nurse**, an **emergency dentist** or a **late-opening chemist**. Where possible, the NHS 111 team will book you an appointment or transfer you directly to the people you need to speak to. If you need an ambulance, one will be sent just as quickly as if you had dialed 999. **If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.**

#### **Typetalk or text-phone**

If you have difficulties communicating or hearing, you can use the NHS 111 service through a text-phone by calling 18001 111. Calls are connected to the Text Direct system and the text-phone will display messages to tell you what is happening. A Typetalk Relay Assistant will automatically join the call. They will talk back what you've typed to the NHS 111 adviser and, in return, type back the adviser's conversation, so you can read it on your text-phone's display or computer.

As always we welcome your feedback and thank you for your continued support.