

# THE ARLINGTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER



December 2014



## Christmas Opening Hours

Wednesday 24th December - Closed from 2.00pm\*

Thursday 25th December - Closed

Friday 26th December - Closed

Thursday 1st January - Closed

\*For urgent advice or treatment between 2.00pm-6.00pm on Christmas Eve, please call 01323 727531.

We will be open at our usual times on all other weekdays over the Christmas period.

To contact the Out of Hours GP Service, for urgent problems that will not wait until we are next open, please call NHS 111 by dialling 111 on your telephone keypad.

We take this opportunity to wish all of our patients a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Do you qualify for a flu vaccination?

If you fall into one of the following 'At Risk' groups but haven't had your flu vaccination yet, please book an appointment. Those defined as 'at risk are'...

**Anyone aged 65+ (defined as those born on or before 31.3.1950)**

And **patients aged over 6 months with the following conditions:**

- \* Chronic Respiratory Disease (asthma requiring repeated use of inhaled steroids) or COPD
- \* Chronic Heart Disease
- \* Chronic Kidney Disease
- \* Chronic Liver Disease
- \* Chronic Neurological Disease (including Stroke/TIA)
- \* Diabetes
- \* Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen (this includes sickle cell disease and coeliac syndrome)
- \* Immunosuppression (due to disease or treatment)
- \* Pregnant women
- \* People in long-stay residential or nursing homes
- \* Carers.

Please remember to inform us of any change of address or telephone number. You can do this either online via our website at [www.arlingtonroadsurgery.co.uk](http://www.arlingtonroadsurgery.co.uk) or by filling in a form at the Surgery.

## 'Love In A Box'

Once again we will be supporting the Mustard Seed Charity by collecting for their appeal. Please pick up a leaflet from Reception. The closing date that all boxes need to be in by is Friday 12th December.

The leaflet explains how to make up your box and gives examples of suitable items to fill the box with. Please note that the charity cannot accept clothing apart from hats, gloves and scarves and please do not send any war related toys. We hope you will support us in this worthwhile cause.



## Do you qualify for a flu vaccination?

If you fall into one of the following 'At Risk' groups but haven't had your flu vaccination yet, please book an appointment. Those defined as 'at risk are'...

**Anyone aged 65+ (defined as those born on or before 31.3.1950)**

And **patients aged over 6 months with the following conditions:**

- \* Chronic Respiratory Disease (asthma requiring repeated use of inhaled steroids) or COPD
- \* Chronic Heart Disease
- \* Chronic Kidney Disease
- \* Chronic Liver Disease
- \* Chronic Neurological Disease (including Stroke/TIA)
- \* Diabetes
- \* Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen (this includes sickle cell disease and coeliac syndrome)
- \* Immunosuppression (due to disease or treatment)
- \* Pregnant women
- \* People in long-stay residential or nursing homes
- \* Carers.

Please remember to inform us of any change of address or telephone number. You can do this either online via our website at [www.arlingtonroadsurgery.co.uk](http://www.arlingtonroadsurgery.co.uk) or by filling in a form at the Surgery.



Friday 12th December is Christmas Jumper Day.

Surgery and Pharmacy staff will be participating in Christmas Jumper Day to raise money for Save the Children.

There will be a collecting tin at the Surgery and you can also donate by texting TEAMARLING (£amount) to 70050. UK Government will match donations pound for pound.

Support for this worthwhile cause will be greatly appreciated.



## Are you a Carer? What Is a Carer?

A carer is someone, regardless of age, who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems.

### Our commitment to carers at Arlington Road Medical Practice

Arlington Road Medical Practice is committed to identifying and supporting patients who have a caring role, thus reducing the health inequalities that carers often face and ensuring that carers receive the information, advice and support that they need at each stage of their caring journey.

If you care for someone and have not already informed us, please ask at Reception for a Carer's form to complete so that we can help support you with your caring role. We offer annual flu vaccinations and annual health checks to all Carer's registered at our practice and we can be more flexible regarding appointment times for yourself or the person that you care for if this would help you. It is for these reasons, amongst many others, that we like to identify all of our Carer's so that we can help in whichever way we can. We can also signpost you to our local Care for The Carer's Team based in Eastbourne if you are new to the area or for any Carer's who have not heard of this service before if this is something you feel would benefit you.



Mandy Brown

Care For The Carer's Lead at Arlington Road Medical Practice

## *Prescriptions*

**P**lease give us plenty of time when ordering your prescription before going on holiday. Please mark your request accordingly so that we understand why your request is early. We also need to know your date of departure, whether your holiday is in the UK or abroad and how long you will be away for.

**G**iving this information at the time of request will save our prescription team a lot of time and will mean that your prescription is prepared in the most appropriate way for your holiday.

## *Happy Retirement Linda*

**M**any of you will know Linda, one of our receptionists, who has been here for nineteen and a half years. She is due to retire at the end of January and we will miss her immensely, as I am sure many of you will.

**W**e would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank her for all of her hard work over the years and we are sure you will join us in wishing her a very happy retirement.

## *Patient Participation Group (PPG)*

**T**he PPG is a group of patients and practice staff who jointly make a positive contribution to the services offered at the surgery. We are affiliated to the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP) and are governed by the rules of that registered charity.

**T**he PPG meets every month and, every other month; we are joined at these meetings by members of the medical staff. In this way we can act as a communication bridge between patients and the practice. One of our key roles is to represent the patients of the Practice at regular meetings with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to help direct the health provision agenda for the local area.

**H**owever, as we are such a large practice, we feel it is important to get a greater level of participation from patients. One way of doing this would be online via email and we would welcome an entire cross section of patients who are registered with the Arlington Road Practice. We know how difficult it is for people who have jobs and families to find time to come to meetings, but we are anxious to hear your views.

**S**o, if you would be interested in becoming a "virtual" member of the PPG, or if you would like any more information about the group, please contact the practice with your details, and we will take it from there.

## *Availability of Doctors* "What? He's on holiday again?" or "he's never available when I want to see him" or "My doctor is Dr X but she's never there"

These are some of the responses we hear from patients when they are phoning to book an appointment with their GP and we are unable to offer an on-the-day appointment with their own GP, and we do understand your frustration.

Sadly, gone are the days when, unless a GP really was on holiday, he or she was always doing a surgery and available to see their registered patients - we are sure there are many GP's who would like to go back to that time! The ever changing face of General Practice is such that in addition to seeing patients in routine appointments, GP's have many other services, tasks, challenges and commitments they are expected to fulfil.

More and more services are being passed to primary care (general practice) that were previously provided by secondary care (hospitals). Whilst it's excellent to have the expertise of the GP's that specialise in these clinics in the Practice and it can be very convenient for patients to attend their GP surgery rather than travel to a hospital, unfortunately when the specialist GP is running his or her clinic they are then not available to see the patients who are registered with them for routine appointments.

In addition to specific clinics (eg. Diabetes, Dermatology, Minor Surgery, Coil Fittings, Ear Microsuction), there are many contractual obligations enforced by NHS England, which require the GP's to take time out from doing routine surgeries to ensure we are providing the care and treatment we should to various different patient groups. So whilst in the background the GP's are working hard to ensure the best possible care for their patients, they are not always being seen on the frontline.

We are also a training Practice, meaning two of our GP's are qualified to train new GP's. This is a great asset to the Surgery in terms of keeping us up to date, but also in terms of the extra appointments the registrars (trainee doctors) give. However, the trainees have weekly tutorials with their trainer, so again that takes a routine surgery away from both trainers each week.

There are also the surgery rotas to cover, such as emergency doctor, visiting doctor etc. so again your doctor may not be available to see you when it's their turn to cover one of these rotas. However, they are *more* available to our most sick, vulnerable and high risk patients.

We are very fortunate at Arlington Road, being a training Practice, that we have the registrars on a daily basis to make up the appointments lost when the Partners are covering these other commitments. We do understand that there are times when you would prefer to see your own GP but we felt an insight into some of the tasks that the GP's have to cover would be helpful, as we do understand that at times it may sound like your GP is always on leave.

## *The Friends and Family Test*

From December 2014, it is a contractual requirement that all GP Practices undertake the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT).

### **What is the Friends and Family Test (FFT)?**

The FFT is a feedback tool that supports the fundamental principle that people who use NHS services should have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience that can be used to improve services. It is not a traditional survey, but a continuous feedback loop between patients and the practice.

### **The Primary FFT question simply asks patients...**

"We would like you to think about your recent experiences of our service... How likely are you to recommend our GP Surgery to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment? \*Extremely likely \*Likely \*Neither likely nor unlikely \*Unlikely \*Extremely unlikely \*Don't know"

*Continued overleaf*

This is followed up by a practice chosen question which includes a 'free-text' opportunity. At no point will you be asked to give your personal details, all feedback for the FFT is completely anonymous.

### **H**ow and when will the results of the Survey will be published?

From December 2014 the Practice is obliged to submit the answer to the primary FFT question only on a monthly basis to NHS England. NHS England will also publish the results on the NHS Choices website.

The Practice will also publish the answers to the primary FFT question and our follow up question including the free text comments, providing the patient has not opted out of their free text comment being published, also on a monthly basis. We will be publishing these results on the Practice Website.

### **W**hen can patients complete the Survey?

All patients will have the opportunity to provide feedback as often as they wish. As a patient you do not have to give us feedback after every contact with the Surgery but are more than welcome to do so if you would like to.

Giving us feedback is not just limited to the occasions when you have seen a GP at the Surgery. You are welcome to give us feedback on a range of different contacts including...

- \* Home visits
- \* Telephone appointments
- \* Nurse appointments
- \* Your experience with reception, including getting an appointment, ordering/collecting your repeat prescription, calling for information etc.

### **H**ow can patients complete the Survey?

You can complete the survey in two ways...

1. Online on our website at [www.arlingtonroadsurgery@nhs.uk](mailto:www.arlingtonroadsurgery@nhs.uk). Please follow the link on our home page.
2. If you prefer pen and paper then surveys are available from our main, ground floor waiting area, along with a locked box where you can post your completed survey.

We would appreciate it if as many patients as possible complete the survey online as result collation is easier and quicker this way, although we do understand this is not possible for everyone.

### **T**he Survey is only short so how can this give a good over-all view of how the Practice is performing?

The FFT has a very specific aim, which is to gather useful feedback from people who use services that can be fed directly to the staff that provide their care, in a simple format, in near real time. Other longer annual surveys tend to give an overall opinion of the practice over a period of time, whereas this survey looks at individual, current experiences.

The practice continues to receive feedback from a much more in-depth survey which is sent biannually by NHS England to a large group of randomly selected patients. Please do complete the survey if you receive one directly from NHS England.

### **R**eceiving Good and Bad feedback

We like to hear both. It's important that we know when we are not doing well as this prompts us to look at where we are going wrong and what we can do to improve our services to patients.

However, we know, from what patients often tell us in passing, that most of the time we are getting it right. We would like to hear this feedback on the FFT as well. Primarily because positive feedback is just as important to NHS England as negative feedback but also because it's morale boosting at the end of a busy day to hear about how well we have done! Please do take the time to tell us, by completing the survey, when you are happy with your care as sadly it is in our nature to only take the time to give feedback when we're disappointed!

