

THE ARLINGTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER



October—November 2015

Flu Vaccinations Are you eligible for a Flu Vaccination but not yet booked an appointment?

Those eligible for a Flu Vaccination are...

Anyone aged over 65

Patients aged over 6 months with the any of 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

If you fall into one of the above categories and have not yet booked your vaccination, please contact the Surgery as soon as possible.

Arlington Road Pharmacy and many local pharmacies are offering private vaccinations, so if you are not eligible for a free NHS vaccination, you can choose to go privately. The cost will vary from pharmacy to pharmacy.



Thought for the day **A** large water main has burst leaving the residents of a town completely without fresh water. Supplies of bottled water are limited and one resident is lucky enough to receive the last bottle from the latest delivery, nobody is able to tell at this stage when the next supply will be delivered. Elderly residents and parents with babies and young children were waiting in the queue are being turned away disappointed.

On return home the lucky resident receives a call from a friend in the next town, who is unaffected by the burst water main, the kind friend offers them to come and stay until the water supply is restored. The lucky resident readily accepts their friend's kind invitation, packs a small suitcase and prepares to leave for home. They are about to leave when they see the bottled water standing on their kitchen worktop. No longer having any need for it and feeling it rather cluttered up the kitchen, instead of returning the unopened bottle to the nominated water collection point for somebody else in need to benefit from, they tip it down the sink. Would you do that?

In our August Newsletter we mentioned the number of unattended appointments we had in July – 83 GP appointments and 101 Nurses appointments.

We were a little encouraged in August that the number of unattended GP appointments went down quite substantially to 33 but the nurses were still high at 95.

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Very disappointingly the figures were bad again for September. 83 GP appointments and 103 Nurse appointments.

A total of **199 GP appointments in 3 months equates to over 33 hours worth of wasted GP appointments.** A total of **299 Nurse appointments in 3 months equates to over 50 hours of wasted Nurse appointments.**

Don't be like the resident who selfishly poured away what others were desperately in need of and please think to **cancel your appointment if you no longer need it.** Every day we speak to patients who would prefer to see their own doctor earlier than we are able to offer them and yet others, who have been able to get an appointment, are just wasting them.

We do not currently have an appointment reminder service at the Surgery, unless you are registered for Online Services. **If you are registered for Online Services you will receive an automatically generated email reminding you of your appointment. If you are a regular email user, we would encourage you to register for online services, even if this is all you would use it for.** The other advantage would be that you would be able to cancel your appointment even when our telephone lines are too busy for you to easily get through or when we are closed.

If you fail to attend an appointment you will receive a letter from the Practice. After your 2nd non-attendance we will impose a 'no pre-booking ban'. This will mean you will always have to phone on the day of an appointment rather than being able to plan your appointments at a time to suit you. This will in turn mean that you are very unlikely to be able to see your registered GP as these appointments are made available for pre-booking, leaving you have to accept whoever is available on that day.

Nurses Appointments

With Nurse Chris Domoney retiring and Nurse Sue reducing her hours, we are experiencing a shortage of nurse appointments, you may find that non-urgent appointments are booked further ahead than you might expect but we obviously have to prioritise appointments according to their urgency. We anticipate this being a short term problem as we are in the process of recruiting new nurses.

Requesting Prescriptions via Patient Online Services

Prescription requests made via Patient Online Services using www.myvisiononline.co.uk should only be for items that your doctor has authorised to be issued on a monthly repeat basis. Please see the text below taken from the front page of the Repeat Prescription Order-

ing Service..."You will only be able to use this service if you have medications that your doctor has authorised to be issued on a repeat basis, as your list of medications is taken directly from your patient record.

If you wish to request an item that you have been prescribed before, but your doctor has not added to your repeat re-order form, this can be added in the free-text box that appears after clicking on 'request selection'."

Whilst this allows you to request items that are not on your repeat re-order form **in addition** to your repeat, you should not be selecting items that you do not want from your repeat list, in order to activate the free text box, and then tell us in that box that you don't want the repeat item you have requested but request other items that aren't available on your repeat list. Doing this leaves us with a request that we are unable to process on the system.

If you need to request non repeat items on their own, please either do this in writing or use the Surgery website prescription ordering service. Also, please only use the comment box for information regarding your prescription and not for other requests such as asking the doctor to telephone you or asking us to make an appointment for you. Thank you.

Dr Ben McFadden

We are delighted that Dr Ben McFadden, one of our current trainee doctors, will be joining us as a Salaried GP from 1st November. We are certain Dr McFadden will be an asset to the Practice Team.

Happy Retirement

At the end of September Pam, one of our long standing receptionists, retired. Also, Nurse Chris Domoney, who did regular locum work for us. We thank them both for their hard work and wish them a long and happy retirement.

Trainer's Corner

It has been a very busy time hosting 4 trainees for various reasons. They have been a delight to train and I thank you for your input.

As you are probably well aware we have been able to take on Dr Ben McFadden as a Salaried GP from November. This directly highlights the need to support training in the area so that we can recruit high quality doctors who we feel will fit into the practice team well.

There is an increasing climate across the country of difficulty in the recruitment of GP's and this has now started to be felt in the South East as well. A big focus has been on trying to identify factors to retain GP trainees in the area and encourage them to stay permanently, we can no longer be complacent in Eastbourne/East Sussex. We can play a part in encouraging doctors to work in General Practice and to retain them in the area by providing a positive learning environment to promote excellence. This is a partnership of the practice staff and patients and many of you are used to and embrace seeing our registers and I thank you for input and any feedback you may offer.

An important tool in our work is the occasional videoing of consultations. This is done under strict protocol and consent and you will always be made aware of this prior to the consultation. We will ask for your written consent before the consultation and again afterwards, so if you have not felt comfortable during the consultation, you can change your mind and the video will not be used. Videos where full consent has been given are then reviewed in tutorial with the registrar's trainer. This gives an opportunity to both look at good aspects of consulting skills and also highlight areas that we can work on to further develop and improve the consulting experience. The videos are then deleted. I hope understanding what we are trying to achieve is helpful in encouraging participation, if requested. However, we fully appreciate the delicacies and issues around why consent may not be given. Therefore I would also like to stress that we totally respect any wish to decline consent and not participate, this does not in anyway affect your care and is absolutely your right. At no point should you feel pressurised to participate. Anyone wishing to understand more of this process, please feel free to ask.

Dr Mark Jones

The Surgery Car Park

Please note that the Surgery Car Park is for Staff Only. We don't actually have enough spaces for our Staff and access is required at all times. Please do not park in the car park even if you think you are only 'popping in' to the Surgery or the Pharmacy. We do acknowledge that parking is difficult in the area, and wish we could improve this in some way but unfortunately this is out of our control.

Pharmacy Expansion

The growing success of the Pharmacy has meant they had already run out of room! At the end of September building work was undertaken to knock through into one of our downstairs rooms. We apologise to any patients who were at the Surgery at the time for the noise but are we sure the extra space will be extremely beneficial to the Pharmacy.

Our Appointments System

We have been running our new appointments system for 6 months now and find on the whole that it is going well. Patients like to be able to pre-book and plan their appointments and we are better able to manage the daily demand. We are finding that a number of patients are not yet aware of the new system and are under the impression that you still need to phone at 8.30am to book an appointment and think that we are unable to book ahead. We are therefore including an excerpt taken from the article about our new appointments system in our April/May Newsletter...

From 11th May we will start trialling a new appointments system which will enable patients to pre-book GP appointments. Whilst our book-on-the day appointments system, with limited pre-booking, has worked well for many years, the changing landscape of General Practice in recent months/years has meant that this system has outgrown itself. With a greater focus on preventative medicine and the need for patients to pre-book health reviews of varying sorts with their GP, we have found that our old book-on-the-day system does not really cater for this, leading to frustration for patients, doctors and receptionists alike.

In a bid to improve the experience for our patients and better manage our GP's workload we are freeing up more appointments for pre-booking, enabling you to plan when you come to see the GP and hopefully making it easier for us to get the right balance between the number of appointments needed for the review of long-term conditions and non-urgent problems against the number of appointments needed for urgent problems that have arisen on the day.

As the majority of our appointments will be pre-bookable we need to ensure we have provision each day for patients who feel they need to be seen urgently. To help us manage this category we are introducing a 'Triage Doctor' system, whereby when all our routine appointments are booked for the day, requests for urgent appointments will be passed to the Triage Dr who will telephone you back. The triage doctor will then be able to decide how best to deal with your problem. That may be by giving telephone advice or by booking you an appointment with either your GP or him or herself if that is deemed appropriate.

We understand and regret that our current system has become a gamble for patients, sometimes calling back day after day trying to get an appointment with their own GP, when perhaps somebody who has phoned for the first time has got in ahead of them and been able to book an appointment. We hope that our new system will both cut down on the number of phone calls we deal with each day, given that we hope to be able to book an appointment for most patients the first time they call, and provide a fairer, first-come first-served service to patients who wish to pre-book with their own GP.

Some days your GP may be acting as a 'reserve doctor' this will mean that whilst we cannot pre-book you an appointment for that day, you may be advised that it will be worth calling on the day to be able to see him/her. The reserve doctor is part of our management plan to deal with one of the pitfalls of majority pre-booking such as doctor sickness absence.

'L♥ve In A B♥x'

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 1st 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 will be delighted if you feel you can support us in this worthwhile cause.



Forthcoming Surgery Closure

The Surgery will be closed on...

Tuesday 3rd November
from 1.45—5.00pm
for Staff Training