

February 23 update from the Surgery

We have survived the most depressing time of the year. Traditionally December is the month for giving and celebrating so January is the time to pay for it all. We have continued the celebrations into January by welcoming Karen Card to the team. She has been helping out occasionally for the last 6 years but now is officially a regular part of our nursing team and brings a wealth of experience as a Health Care Assistant.

Lots of people have also done a "dry January" avoiding alcohol for a month. "Research" has shown that reducing alcohol intake can reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, improve quality of sleep, skin quality and improve mental health. Long-term excess will result in damage to your liver and pancreas and can be quite toxic to your heart. Alcohol can chemically contribute to enlargement of your heart (hypertrophic cardiomegaly) and can cause electrical conduction changes leading an increased risk of irregular beats such as "ectopics" and "atrial fibrillation". There are lots of empty calories too so weight gain is common only to be balanced by a lighter wallet.

Government health advice is that 14 units a week remains a safe limit to avoid health risks for both men and women. The calculation is to multiply the Alcohol By Volume % by the amount of liquid in litres - so 1L of 4% beer is 4 units for example. A rule of thumb is that a bottle of wine is 9 units and a pint of normal 4% beer is a little over 2 units, a 330ml bottle of beer generally around 1.3 units.

If you have any concerns about safe limits or potential damage already done then please come and talk to us. If necessary, we can do blood tests and scans to look into any organ damage and look at ways to help reduce consumption.

February highlights heart health which I am a fan of, having had a heart attack in 2018. There are now injectable therapies for high cholesterol and alternatives to statins to help reduce cholesterol. A lot of high cholesterols are familial so if you have never had your cholesterol checked it is worth doing once, especially if you have a family history of heart disease or strokes. Following a good diet and exercising regularly is helpful too. I try and follow the 80:20 concept that you should be good at least 80% of the time!

At the risk of being repetitive we have flu jabs left for anyone over 50 or with a health condition. Please contact us. We are also shouting out to any women between 25 and 65 who haven't had a smear in the last 3 years to contact us to book in. If you're not sure please just ask.

Many thanks for all your support and best wishes for February.
Jack Hickey on behalf of the Surgery.