



New Road Surgery

Patient Participation Group

Newsletter (NRSPPG)

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

Practice News

Doctor Changes

There are some imminent changes to our doctor team.

Sadly, both Dr Hollier and Dr Tibbetts are stepping down as partners at the surgery from 30th April 2022. Dr Hollier will continue to work at the surgery as a salaried doctor, and Dr Tibbetts will be taking on a new role at St John's Surgery. The whole team thanks them for all their work as partners over many years and would like to wish them both well in their new roles.

They will be replaced by two new partners. Dr Rosie Laugharne whom will be starting on 1st May 2022, and Dr Libby Millar in early August 2022. Dr Millar, who has been working for the surgery as a salaried doctor for the last few years is currently on maternity leave. We look forward to welcoming them to the team and we are very confident that they will shine in their new roles.

In addition, in September 2022, we will be joined by Dr Fenella Johnston who will be working as a salaried doctor. We are still in the process of recruiting a further one or two doctors to bolster our numbers.

Nursing Changes

Chris Worth has now been in place for four months as our new Nursing Team manager.

He has successfully helped in a transitional period that has seen Sister Isabel Hyde reduce her hours and responsibilities, Sister Sarah Follis retire after almost 20 years at NRS and has helped recruit Nurse Carrie-Anne Banner.

COVID Status

As you will know from the news COVID levels still remain high in the UK and while the government has removed remaining domestic restrictions in England, the practice still has to try and mitigate risk for vulnerable patients and staff. To this end the practice staff continue to wear masks and we request patients attending that are able to do so, to also wear masks for the time being.

There are still steps you can take to reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated
- Let fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meet outside
- Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces

Process Changes

Appointment booking queues at the start of the day, has become increasingly frustrating for patients recently. The practice are putting in place a plan to try and resolve this by having non reception staff also taking calls between 8.30 and 9 am. Hopefully this will reduce the problem some patients have been experiencing.

The practice have informed us they have updated their text messaging service to incorporate the ability to collect patient information. It works by sending a link to a pre-made questionnaire. The patient can then fill it out on their phone (or any device with internet access) and the response comes back to the practice. Examples given were for example the ability to fill in blood pressure recordings, rather than fill in a paper form and bring it to the practice. This will save time for both patients and the practice.

PPG Response to Practice Changes

As your patient Participation Group we would like to thank the practice for notifying us of the changes. We would also like to thank Dr Hollier and Dr Tibbetts for their service as Partners in the Practice and wish them well in their new roles. We would also like to welcome the new GP's taking up new roles in the practice, we are sure they will contribute to the medical care we get as patients.

In terms of the nursing changes we hope Sarah Follis enjoys her retirement, we are sure she deserves to and we look forward to the services to be provided by new comers Chris Worth and Carrie-Anne Banner.

We would also like to give our special thanks to Sister Isabel Hyde, who has been our main practice representative at PPG Committee meetings for many years. Isabel put herself

out on many occasions to represent the practice, attending meetings in the evening after busy days seeing patients and following up on actions as they arose. We wish her well as she steps back from the hustle and bustle of a busy practice like New Road Surgery.

We welcome the changes to the appointment system process at the start of the day, when calls to the practice are high, and hope to see a difference over the coming weeks.

We also welcome anything that makes it easier to engage with the practice, to feedback health information, a saved visit to the practice is of benefit too both of us. Obviously we want to ensure that this does not discriminate against people who are not technical, and we have been advised that this will not be the case and existing processes are in place to support those that prefer not to use this service. Although non of the committee have yet tried the new service we are interested to see how we get on.

Your Practice Needs You!

Patient Engagement

The practice continually seek feedback on the services they provide to patients, and the Patient Participation Group (PPG) is one of the key ways in which they do this.

The PPG consists of volunteers who are patients at the practice, who contribute on average an hour or 2 per month to attend a monthly committee meeting which Practice representatives attend.

There is a standing agenda where PPG activities are discussed, along with suggestions to the practice for improvement, and feedback from the practice on any issues being addressed or changes being made.

In August the PPG holds its annual general meeting, where existing officers either stand for election again or step down. This year there will be a number of vacancies on the committee that need to be filled and we are asking for volunteers

from the patient community to put themselves forward.

If you can spare an hour a month and want to help support and represent patients at the practice please email newrdppg@gmail.com to receive an application form and details of the AGM, which you will be invited to attend.

Free Health Walks Bromsgrove

The Oakalls & Harwood Park Health Walk in Finstall is the latest addition to the range of free, volunteer-led, group health walks in the district and it started on Wednesday March 30th. It's the first of three new sessions coming this spring to complement existing ones in Lickey End, Bromsgrove, and now Finstall. The walk will set off from the play area on Green Park Road, at 2pm every Wednesday.

PPG Organised Patient Education Events

Healthy Feasting Talk (02/12/2021)

Our guest speaker in December Laurence Truman laid bare the facts about feasting (with particular reference to the upcoming Christmas celebrations). The good news is that Britain, among other western nations, has a long history of feasting, and is today still ranked among the top 5 nations having the highest life expectancy. The bad news is that at Christmas time there is an increased incidence of heart attacks helped by over-indulgent celebrating. Statistics show that risk of a heart attack increases fourfold within 2 hours of eating a heavy meal. It is therefore paramount that we take seriously aspects of how we eat and drink as well as what we eat and drink.

Historically, as winter approached and animal feed began to run low, animals were slaughtered and used for human consumption. So feasting has been associated with large amounts of meat, particularly red

meat, accompanied by vegetables such as roots and brassicas. Today, turkey and chicken is more popular – and healthier – but sweets and snacks are much more sugary than formerly and this is unhealthy. Traditionally, drinks have been of the alcoholic variety – this hasn't changed. Laurence demonstrated on-screen how an alcoholic drink (gin and tonic) causes a volume of water – representing a body's blood pool – to become acid.

The human body is like a waterproof bag. The average liquid content of the blood in the body (blood cells absent) is 2.4 litres (7-8 cans of Coke). This is both pH (acid/alkali) balanced and needs to be of a healthy viscosity; it must have a pH between 7.35 and 7.45 (7 is neutral) in order for us to stay alive – a very narrow range. Foods are often acidic (e.g. meat, seafoods, grains, nuts, egg yolks and Aspirin). Drinks too tend to be acidic (e.g. vinegar, fruit juices, wine, carbonated drinks, tea, coffee, milk) and gastric fluid is acidic. Thus, there is a tendency to overburden the body with acidic foods and drinks. The pH of the food and drink we consume is adjusted during digestion so that blood pH does not vary overmuch – this requires time and huge amounts of energy.

Laurence outlined the remedies under several headings:

Remember your Fruit and Veg.

This is very important. Apart from the fibre and antioxidants needed for proper digestion, they dilute the acidity of the foods we ingest. Also, the trace elements help to maintain correct blood pH. Potassium (in leaves and fruit, especially bananas) reverses the effects of salt and sugar in the diet allowing the blood to stay fluid. Red-coloured fruit and veg. is especially beneficial for this. (In answer to a question asking: "What could be added to a traditional Christmas dinner to make it healthier?" Laurence suggested a bowl of mixed salad leaves which might include a few items of chopped fruit and veg (eg. tomato, spring onion, cucumber, pepper, grapes) maybe with an oil and vinegar dressing.

Fatigue of Overeating.

Overburdening the digestive system with protein and carbohydrates will overwork the body's ability to cope. Slow down the rate of food intake; make the meal last longer and rest between courses. Eat protein before carbs. Mediterranean people, known to have a low incidence of heart attacks, start eating about 10am and eat continuously through the day in smaller amounts.

Keep Up a Steady Intake of Water.

The body needs water to dilute the acidity in our food and drink. Moreover, salt and sugar in the diet draw water out of body cells, so liquid in our blood has to re-supply this water loss. This causes the blood to thicken, which (negatively) increases blood pressure. Maintaining a steady intake of water before and after eating helps to keep our blood fluid during digestion.

Stress and Exercise.

Avoid situations which might cause your stress level to rise – the difficult relation, the disruptive child/children, etc. Try to keep an even temper while celebrating. Exercise should be performed before eating a meal rather than afterwards, because the body requires large amounts of energy to digest the meal and doesn't welcome another call on its resources.

Socialising.

The biopsychosocial model for a healthy life indicates that a sense of community (i.e. social interaction) combines with our biology and psychology to help us counter sickness and disease. This is especially true during eating and might help to prevent us eating too much too fast.

Sweet Foods and Snacks.

Avoid snacking on sweet things, especially chocolates, and especially if you're elderly (over 55). Protein feeds the immune system but a high blood sugar disrupts the immune system. Unsalted crisps, nuts and seeds are good, as are protein-based snacks. Snickers bars and dark chocolate are better than other chocolates. Laurence suggested a scotch egg is a good snack.

Final Tips.

1. Limit how much you eat the day before. Give your body time to have a clear-out beforehand (this is a general rule for staying healthy – intermittent fasting).
2. Eat protein before carbs. Protein stays in the stomach longer than other nutrients, making you feel full quicker and slowing down the entry of other components into the blood.
3. Take your time – be Mediterranean in your approach.

Dementia Support (24/02/2022)

This was a continuation of the talk on dementia and Alzheimer's disease given by Zoe Mucklow of Home Instead in April 2021. Its purpose was to give some tips to those living with or caring for a dementia sufferer to help ease the journey both for the carer and for the sufferer.

To recap, dementia is a progressive deterioration of the brain's capacity to function properly. This might affect problem-solving ability, remembering things (people, places, words), processing information, depth of vision, moods, and behaviour. The sufferer's reality is often distorted so that their reasoning becomes detached and different. Sometimes, making sense of what they are saying may be difficult. The main danger is that their needs are not met – how do we assess the needs of someone who has difficulty communicating? Often their behaviour is the clue (eye contact, facial expression, body language for example). Zoe gave ten tips for carers:

1. **Make them the centre of your world.** Take things slowly and deliberately. When you communicate, face them, make eye contact and speak clearly. Give simple instructions and allow time for them to process the information you provide and in answering your questions.
2. **Give simple and straightforward choices.** A choice of one thing or another can sometimes be useful. Remember, "No" is easier for some people to say than "Yes".
3. **Redirecting conversations.** Don't get into an argument but "play along" and divert attention away from something that may cause a difficult situation.
4. **"Pampering"** (playing to personal "likes" or preferences in activities). This can be playing a game which you know to be a favourite of the sufferer.
5. **Sequencing** to make tasks simpler, like laying out clothes in order of them needing to be put on (in case they are put on in the wrong order) and choosing clothing appropriate for the season and weather.

6. **Tolerating** tasks wrongly or poorly done (e.g. washing up). Don't criticise or complain. Arguing can destroy the relationship you are trying to build.
7. **Have a sense of humour.** There is a joy in making someone laugh, and humour can relieve anxiety and release from awkward situations.
8. **Involve in simple activities** which encourage social interaction, like doing a jigsaw puzzle, playing a card game or sock-snap. Outdoor activities can also help with providing opportunities for exercise, like throwing a ball, batting a shuttlecock or softball over a net, etc.
9. **Trips to favourite haunts**, like the local park, country walks, countryside and seaside outings. Make sure you plan ahead for things like location of toilets, prices of tickets, noise levels, etc.
10. **Capturing their life's journey** (or "Magic Moments"), where you can trace the person's history through life from their earliest years with photographs and other memorabilia. Reminiscing is always reassuring for people in distress and helps them orientate themselves and come to terms with their present situation.

Among the questions after the talk were the following:

How do I encourage my mother to go to bed at night? (have a routine, relaxing music, reading).

How can I encourage development of dementia-friendly pathways, for example handling money, with banks, shopping at superstores and other stressful activities? (make people in society aware of the existence of customers with dementia).

What support is there for carers? (Carers Careline charity in Redditch).

Local events:

Dementia Connect Groups and Dementia Cafes:

- Redditch:
 - Ecumenical Centre, B97 4EX;

- Bromsgrove:
 - Methodist Church Centre, B60 1AS;
- Droitwich:
 - Rugby Football Club, Hanbury Road, WR9 7DU
- Kidderminster:
 - Trinity Methodist Church, DY10 2JL

Future Health Education Events

Looking After Your Kidneys.
Online event 31st May 2022,
starting at 7.00 p.m.

When your kidneys fail, harmful wastes build up in your body, your blood pressure may rise, and your body may retain excess fluid, leading to ankle swelling and shortness of breath (water in the lungs). Taking care of your kidneys is therefore something we should all be considering.

“Pat Simoyi, a nurse specialising in kidney care, will present a **free online (ZOOM) seminar** on Tuesday 31st May 2022, starting at 7.00 p.m. , entitled “Looking After Your Kidneys.”

Pat’s experience in kidney care spans from 1987 and includes Dialysis and Transplantation. Most recently, she has been involved in early identification and early management of kidney disease in order to prevent modifiable conditions from causing irreversible damage to the kidneys. This involves working closely with General Practitioners on how to monitor kidney health in the practice and timely referral to secondary care.”

If you would like to join us, please email newrdppg@gmail.com for the Zoom call invitation link.”

Thinking Ahead

Summer Is Coming

Most of us welcome hot weather, but when it's too hot for too long, there are health risks. In England, there are on average 2000 heat related deaths every year. If hot weather hits this summer, make sure it does not harm you or anyone you know.

The main risks posed by a heatwave are:

- Not drinking enough water (dehydration)
- overheating, which can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing
- Heat exhaustion and heatstroke

Look out for those who may struggle to keep themselves cool and hydrated – older people, those with underlying health conditions and those who live alone are particularly at risk.

Children are often the other casualties of the sun, as they are typically more keen to get outside and play than they are to think about sun protection. Parents, Grandparents and carers please think for your children, about the clothing they are wearing (Sun Caps) the need to apply sun cream, and when to be out in the sun. Sun damage done now can affect them later in life.