

## TICKS already!

At the time of writing we are having an unseasonably warm end to February and we are already having patients coming in with ticks after walking up Tain Hill. Please ensure you check yourself, children and pets carefully after walks and remove ticks. Check again the next day.

Dr Jim Douglas a GP from Fort William has made an excellent video giving advice if you have a look on YouTube:

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=oCuWVqWdWUE>

There is also an excellent leaflet on the Health Protection Website at this address:

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resourcedocument.aspx?id=6667>

On a regular basis patients will come to the doctor for treatment using a **steroid injection**. This can sometimes give great relief from a frozen shoulder, a bursitis near the hip or other conditions. Before the injection, the patient will be asked to sign a consent form so they understand what is happening. The doctor will make the injection into the joint, making sure everything is clean to prevent introducing infection.

**Medical students** are a regular feature of practice life and we are grateful to patients for your patience and understanding in giving up some of your time to allow students to have an appointment with you before the practice clinical team (either a GP or an Advanced Nurse Practitioner) finalises your diagnosis and treatment.

**Cancelling appointments** – all practices have issues with patients not attending for appointments and we would be grateful if you could ensure you tell us that you’re not coming – even if it is short notice the doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional can do other pieces of work including checking test results, signing prescriptions. If there’s enough time we can offer the appointment to another patient.

## BOWEL SCREENING (FROM NHS INFORM)

Bowel screening is offered to men and women aged 50 to 74 across Scotland to help find bowel cancer early when it can often be cured. You’re 14 times more likely to survive bowel cancer if it’s found early. Half a million people in Scotland do their bowel screening test each year.

### WHO’S AT RISK?

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Scotland. Around 4,000 people in Scotland get bowel cancer every year. It’s more common in people over 50 years of age, especially men.

### RISK FACTORS

Some risk factors are unavoidable, such as age, sex or family history. However, as well as doing your bowel screening test you can reduce your risk of developing bowel cancer by:

- > eating a healthy diet containing wholegrains like wholegrain bread and cereals, beans, pulses and plenty of fruit and vegetables
- > limiting foods high in sugar or fat, and avoiding sugary drinks
- > avoiding processed meat like bacon and sausages, and limiting red meat
- > getting to and keeping to a healthy weight – avoid gaining weight and try losing weight if overweight
- > being more active in everyday life, this includes walking more and sitting less
- > drinking less alcohol - not drinking alcohol is better for cancer prevention
- > stopping smoking
- > telling your GP if you’ve any worries about your bowel habits

More about the causes and risk factors of bowel cancer:

### WHO’LL BE SCREENED?

In Scotland, only people aged 50 to 74 will be invited for bowel screening every

2 years.

If you’re 75 or over, you can still take a bowel screening test every 2 years. However, you’ll need to request a new test kit each time as the Scottish Bowel Screening Centre won’t send you one.

### WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

Bowel screening involves taking a simple test at home every 2 years. The test looks for hidden blood in your poo, as this could mean a higher chance of bowel cancer.

The aim of the test is to find:

- > bowel cancer at an early stage in people with no symptoms
- > other changes in the bowel, such as pre-cancerous growths called ‘polyps’

Most bowel polyps can be removed easily, which can prevent cancer from developing.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/screening/bowel/bowel-screening>

**Your Local Pharmacy** - every year, millions of us visit our GP with minor health problems that our local pharmacist is well placed to help you with. It is estimated annually 50 million visits to the GP are made with minor ailments such as coughs and colds, mild eczema, hay fever etc. to name but a few. All Pharmacists are able to assist patients with many common health conditions and offer a wealth of advice where necessary. On many occasions can be a quicker and more convenient alternative to a GP appointment. A range of common illnesses can be treated with over the counter medicines and plenty of rest.

Suggestions for our column next time in Tain & District Picture Post?

Please let us know via the practice website:

[http://www.taindoctors.co.uk/contact\\_dlg1.aspx?p=S55427](http://www.taindoctors.co.uk/contact_dlg1.aspx?p=S55427)