



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Autumn 2014



Welcome to the autumn newsletter from Swallowfield Medical Practice.
This newsletter is produced jointly by the Practice and the Patient Participation Group.
Our aim is to improve communication and keep you informed.

Flu Clinics Autumn 2014



As advised in the Summer edition our flu clinics are being held on:

**Saturday 27th September and Saturday 11th October 2014
8.30am until 12 noon.**

A vaccine is available every year to protect those people who are at most risk of complications or who aren't able to fight off flu as easily as others.

If you are in one of the following at-risk groups then you really should have your immunisation: Heart disease; Stroke; TIA; MS; Asthma; COPD; Diabetes; Kidney disease; Liver disease; Immunosuppressed; aged 65 years or over; a Carer or are Pregnant.

Please come along to one of the Flu Clinics to get your free vaccination.

Shinfield Voluntary Car Service may be able to help if you have transport difficulties getting to our Flu Clinics or any other medical appointments.
For Enquiries and Bookings please telephone: 0118 9883400



Flu Vaccinations for Children aged 2, 3 or 4 years

Again, as advised in our summer edition, last year the government introduced a programme to vaccinate children against influenza. This campaign is being rolled out to a wider age group during autumn/winter 2014/15.

Will your child be aged 2, 3 or 4 years on 1st September 2014? (ie: date of birth on or after 2 September 2009 and on or before 1 September 2012). If so they are eligible for a flu vaccination - this will be in the form of a nasal spray and not a jab. More information will be available shortly so please look out for adverts in the surgery or on our website for details of clinics.

Medical Appointments - Ten Top Tips

- ✓ Before you make an appointment to see your GP don't forget your local Pharmacists. They are highly trained people offering a wider range of health services than you think and may be able to help you
- ✓ Familiarise yourself thoroughly with the bookings systems at the Practice
- ✓ Try to plan in advance if you can and give as much notice as possible when requesting appointments
- ✓ Be polite to Receptionists who have a demanding job and often have to deal with distressed patients
- ✓ Remember that Receptionists are very experienced in helping with enquiries and will also be able to advise you about the availability of appointments
- ✓ Tell the Receptionist if you feel you need to be seen today. If you can explain in general terms the nature of your problem it will be easier to assist you. The Receptionist can arrange for a Doctor to telephone you if necessary
- ✓ Write down a list of your most important symptoms including when they started and what makes them worse or better. You'll find this helpful and time-saving when speaking with the Doctor, either by phone or in person
- ✓ Bring a friend or relative to the surgery with you if you're worried or think you may have difficulty in remembering what the Doctor tells you
- ✓ Be honest about what you think may be causing the problem and don't be embarrassed - your Doctor will have seen and heard it all before
- ✓ GP Services are available 24hours a day. If you need a GP outside normal Practice hours then contact the 'NHS111' service by telephoning 111

Read what a PPG Member has to say about 'GP Appointments Pressure' on the next page

You ask ... What is a normal body temperature?

A normal temperature is around 37 degrees, (although it may vary slightly depending on the individual person, their age, the time of day and what they've been doing.) A fever is a temperature of 38° or over in adults and more than 37.5° in children under 5 years of age. (Check by using a digital thermometer which you can buy cheaply from any Pharmacy).

Keep a person with a fever cool and give plenty of cool water to drink.

Seek urgent medical advice if:

- Your child is under 3 months old & has a temperature of 38° or above
- Your child is between 3 & 6 months old and has a temperature of 39° or above



If it isn't possible to contact the Practice then ring the 'NHS111' service by dialling 111

Medical Dictionary: Triage

Triage is a medical process where patients are sorted according to their need for care and treatment.



Staff Update

- **Farewell to:** Dr Brigitte Smith who left in August to take a post closer to her home. We wish her well in her new appointment.
- **We look forward to welcoming** Dr Lucy Dugmore who will be joining us at the end of September. Dr Dugmore will be working all day on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and mornings on a Friday. Her main areas of interest are care of the elderly and palliative care
- **Welcome also to:** Karen Brocket who joins us as a Dispenser and a Phlebotomist
- **Dr Niall Riddell:** We're extremely fortunate in having Dr Niall Riddell acting as our Locum doctor over the past couple over months. He has enjoyed seeing many of his old patients again.

GP Appointments

Mike Hillier of the PPG reports on the growth in demand for appointments

I am sure most you are aware that recently it has become less easy to make an appointment with your doctor at the time, date and location you need, especially when you contact the surgery at short notice.

I am writing as a member of the SMP Patients Participation Group (PPG) to give you all an update on this important issue.

The PPG wants you all to know that this is an issue which has already been the subject of lengthy discussions during our own PPG meetings and at meetings with the GPs. The Doctors are well aware of this issue and the need to resolve it in the best possible way.

What you may not know is that during the first quarter of this year GP capacity was reduced at short notice due to unforeseen circumstances. More recently Dr Smith left in August and will be replaced by Dr Lucy Dugmore at the end of September.

At SMP we are focused on finding out where the cause of the appointment problem lies. The available statistics for the surgery show a steady increase in the requests for doctor appointments year on year and quarter by quarter. So now we (PPG) and the doctors must delve deeper into the reasons for this increase which does not appear to be caused merely by a matching steady but smaller increase in patient numbers in the surgery area over recent years.

Furthermore, we see from the numbers over the past couple of years, that the 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) numbers expressed as a percentage of the total appointments has increased. This is not helping all of us patients to get the appointment at the time, place and date that we want and also means there are now gaps in the doctors' appointment diary that could have been refilled with a new appointment request. We can all help by ensuring that, if we make a doctor appointment, we keep that appointment, or we let the receptionists know beforehand that we cannot make it.

Please also be aware that the Practice doctors and nurses are all working flat out to meet every request for an appointment from any of us but please also be a patient patient while we tackle this problem. As mentioned in Medical Appointments - Ten Top Tips we can all help to make things smoother by planning our doctor or nurse appointment in good time. This can, in turn, help to accommodate the last minute or emergency requests for immediate appointments that are needed.

Finally, we PPG members (we are all 'active' patients) want you all to know that the local benchmarks show clearly that SMP is one of the most respected and efficient surgeries in the region. I am sure for all of us, this will not come as a surprise.

Mike Hillier

Citizens Advice Bureau

From next month Bob will be taking over the CAB outreach service at the Practice. The next session will be on Thursday 25 September from 1.30pm when he will be available to see up to four people by prior appointment. Please book in advance at Reception. The CAB service offers free, independent, confidential and impartial information and advice on a range of subjects from consumer and employment issues, to money, legal, family and housing matters. If you'd like to learn more about the local CAB service, do look at the website: www.wokingham-cab.org.uk . If your issue is more urgent and you'd prefer to talk to CAB on the phone, you can call the office in Wokingham , Mondays -Thursday from 9.00am to 3.00pm and Fridays 9.00am to 1.00pm. Just call 0844 499 4126.

Stop Smoking Clinic

Want to quit smoking? Need more encouragement? Come along to our Stop Smoking Clinic. For more details call Reception on 0118 9883134.

Useful numbers and contact details:

Main line:	0118 9883134
24 hr Automated system:	0118 9769606
Fax:	0118 9885759
Appointments:	0118 9883473
Dispensary:	0118 9883459
Website:	www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk