



# Swallowfield Medical Practice



## Newsletter Autumn 2015

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 2015

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September and Saturday 10th October**  
**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

**Children's Flu** - We will be holding separate flu clinics for children who are aged 2,3 and 4 years as at 31 August 2015. More information will be available shortly so please look out for adverts in the surgery or on our website for details of clinics

If you have difficulty getting out & about and need assistance with transport to one of the Flu Clinics or other appointments then contact Shinfield Voluntary Car Service who may be able to help. Enquiries/Bookings Office: 0118 9883400 Mon /Wed/Fri mornings.

*Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer driver for the Car Service can find out more from Eddie Brown or Sandy Smith via the Office. Applicants need to be able to offer around 4 hours a week. Expenses are paid.*

### Online Repeat Prescriptions - a new, improved system starts October

Repeat prescriptions can now be ordered online via the same 'portal' as is used for online appointment booking - Vision Online Services (VOS) (soon to be called Patient Services). If you are already registered as a VOS user for online appointment booking, this function is available to you now.

*Do you need to register as a VOS/Patient Services user?*

**From the beginning of November this will be the only way to order repeats online, so if you haven't already registered, you need to do so now...!** We are implementing this change in order to improve order processing in the Dispensary, hopefully speeding up turnaround for you. Registration forms are being sent out with all repeats issued in the next few weeks - the form can also be accessed from our website ([www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk)). Please sign and return it to the Practice bringing with you photo ID and proof of residence. (utility bill/bank

statement). Once registered you will automatically be migrated to any enhanced versions of this site.

If you don't use a computer to order repeat prescriptions, then you won't be affected by this change at all, so don't worry. You'll still be able to go on ordering repeats in your usual way. Please remember to allow at least three full working days' notice.

## NHS - "The Perfect Storm"

### Important ways for us all to play our part in reducing strain on the NHS system

We've all have heard about, read articles about, seen programmes about the ongoing issues with the NHS which is currently facing a desperate fight for survival as we know it. The reasons behind this are many but the problem is exacerbated by the acute shortage of trained doctors and nurses combined with an ageing population many of whom have multiple and complex diseases. This applies to general practice as well as hospitals. With a potential funding gap of some £30 billion, the outlook for the NHS is bleak without a radical overhaul of the system. Demand for GP appointments has reached unprecedented levels and whilst at Swallowfield Medical Practice we have tried to meet patient demand and expectations as best we can, there will inevitably be and have been times when we fail.

### What can you do to help?

#### *Lifestyle*

Everyone can play their part in helping to keep the system from buckling under the pressure. Having a healthy lifestyle will have a positive effect on your health and an individual's immune systems will often be able to fight off simple infections e.g. sore throats, coughs, colds without the need for a trip to the GP for antibiotics - your local pharmacist will be able to advise on simple remedies. Overuse of antibiotics is a major cause for concern so anything we can do to reduce our dependence on this family of drugs will be of benefit to everyone.



Key lifestyle choices are: taking enough exercise, healthy eating, quitting smoking and sensible use of alcohol. Find information and support on the NHS Choices website.

#### *Appointments*

If you do have an appointment and decide that you no longer need/want it, please let us know so that we can make that slot available for someone else. For example, during one week in July 36 patients did not attend their appointments. This equated to 8 hours of clinician time that was wasted - a whole day of appointments which were not available for others to book. Unfortunately this is not unusual. So please be considerate and cancel your appointments rather than not bothering to turn up.

Thank you.

**What is Blood Pressure?** When your heart beats, it pumps blood round your body to give it the energy and oxygen it needs. As the blood moves, it pushes against the sides of the blood vessels. The strength of this pushing is your blood pressure. With our waiting room BP machine you can check your own blood pressure - no appointment needed. Just call in and speak to a receptionist.

## Carers & Dementia

Dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing and being forgetful doesn't necessarily mean someone has dementia. Dementia-like symptoms can be caused by depression, stress, vitamin deficiencies, thyroid problems or urinary tract infections.



If memory problems are beginning to have an impact on day-to-day life, visit the GP together and explain your concerns. The thought that someone you care about might have dementia can be scary but facing your fears is usually better than trying to ignore the problem.

### Getting Support

If the person you care for is diagnosed with dementia, you don't have to manage on your own. You may need to be persistent, but make sure you ask for all the support you're entitled to. The Carers Trust or Age UK will be able to help you with information about all aspects of caring. For more information visit their websites [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org) or [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### Health checks for carers

It is vitally important that as a carer you look after yourself too. We are offering all carers a health check where we will assess your physical wellbeing; check your blood glucose and cholesterol levels as well offering lifestyle advice. These checks will be carried out by one of our Healthcare Assistants.

If you'd like a Carer's Health Check then please telephone reception on 0118 9883134 to book your assessment. Also, make sure that your GP knows that you are a carer.

### Staff update

In August Dr Julia Lyons started her maternity leave and we all wish her good luck with her forthcoming arrival! We are fortunate to have a maternity locum, Dr Nick Smith, joining us from September. We extend a warm welcome to him. He'll be working 6 sessions a week and will be with us for the next 12 months.

**GP recruitment** is still an issue and despite persistent advertising and the use of recruitment professionals we have still been unable to recruit a doctor to replace the vacancy created some 9 months ago. As we move into the winter season this will inevitably have an impact on GP appointments.

To help address this, we have increased the number of Minor Illness Clinics which are run by Sister Julia Bourne and where possible we would ask patients with conditions such as tonsillitis, earache, coughs, sore throats, etc to book in with her.

We also have a new **trainee dispenser**, Lisa Mace, joining us in September and hope she will enjoy her new career with us. Thanks to our assistant, Jess Leafe who has been able to help with the more administrative tasks in dispensary over the summer break. This has taken some of the strain off our qualified dispensers enabling them to dispense your medications on time.

## You tell us...



"Having recently attended the Minor Illness Clinic I'd like to pass on my appreciation for what I think is a great new patient service.

I started by explaining my symptoms to the very kind and helpful receptionist, who knew exactly what type of appointment I needed. It was great a relief that she was able to arrange for me to come along promptly that day. I saw Sister Julia Bourne, whom I found to be excellent - very thorough and professional.

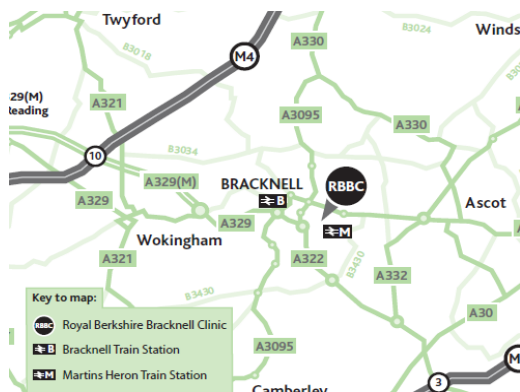
During the consultation, Sister Bourne suggested that I have an ECG, just to confirm that all was well. She explained the results clearly and carefully, taking time to give me lots of reassurance & useful information. If necessary, she'd have organised a prescription for me as her Clinic runs alongside the Duty Doctor's surgery, which is useful to know. I felt confident about the care I'd received so came away feeling relieved & grateful." *(Letters to the Editor are welcome to [ppg.smp@nhs.net](mailto:ppg.smp@nhs.net) or c/o The Practice Reception)*

## Bracknell Urgent Care Centre & Newbury Minor Injuries Unit

**For anyone requiring immediate treatment that is not life threatening**

NHS Facilities with 'Walk in' Services available to provide treatment for most injuries which aren't life threatening -

eg: sprains, broken bones, scalds and minor burns, minor head injuries, stings and bites.



Bracknell Urgent Care Centre  
Brants Bridge  
Bracknell RG12 9BG  
01344 662900  
Car parking available  
Open every day 8am - 8pm  
Access to diagnostic tests  
Including X-rays



Newbury Minor Injuries Unit  
West Berkshire Community Hospital  
London Road  
Benham Hill  
Thatcham  
Berks RG18 3AS  
01635273508  
Open Every Day 8am - 10pm

### Useful Numbers and Contact details

Main Line: 0118 9883134  
24hr Automated System: 0118 9769606  
Fax: 0118 9885759

Appointments: 0118 9883473  
Dispensary: 0118 9883459  
Website: [www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk)