



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Winter 2015



Welcome to the winter 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.

Surgery Christmas Opening Hours

Wednesday 16 th December	8.00am - 12 noon & 2.00pm - 6.30pm
Christmas Eve (Thursday 24 th December)	8.00am - 3.30pm
Christmas Day (Friday 25 th December)	CLOSED
Boxing Day (Saturday 26 th December)	CLOSED
Bank Holiday (Monday 28 th December)	CLOSED
Tuesday 29 th December	Open as normal
Wednesday 30 th December	Open as normal
New Year's Eve (Thursday 31st December)	8.00am - 3.30pm
New Year's Day (Friday 1 st January)	CLOSED



Cover will be provided on 16th December 12 - 2pm, 24th December 3.30 - 6.30pm and 31st December 3.30 - 6.30pm. Please phone our main number: 0118 9883134.

Except for these times the surgery will be open as normal.

GP Services - Out of Hours

If you need urgent GP Services when the Practice is closed then please phone 111 and you will be connected to the 'NHS 111' Service. 'NHS 111' is available at any time of the day or night and is free from all landlines and mobiles.

In the event of a life-threatening medical emergency dial 999 and ask for 'Ambulance'.

Don't forget there are also facilities in Bracknell and Newbury which are open 365 days a year which provide treatment for most injuries which aren't life threatening:- eg: sprains, broken bones, scalds & minor burns, minor head injuries, stings and bites.

- **Bracknell Urgent Care Centre,**
Brants Bridge, Bracknell RG12 9BG
Open every day 8am - 8pm Telephone: 01344 662900
- **Newbury Minor Injuries Unit,**
West Berkshire Community Hospital, London Road, Benham Hill, Thatcham
RG18 3AS
Open every day 8am - 10pm Telephone: 01635 273508

Prescriptions and Medicines

Do make sure that you have sufficient prescription medicines to last you through the festive period. This is a very busy time of the year so it is important that you order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time. Please help our Dispensing Team by allowing a minimum of 3 working days - but longer if possible - as this will help to avoid the seasonal rush.

Don't forget to check that your usual 'Home Remedies and Medicines' Cupboard is also stocked for the holiday period.

Local Pharmacy Services - (Duty Pharmacist/Prescription Dispensing)

Opening times for the Emergency Chemist's Duty Rota for the Christmas period can be found on the Practice door/window.



Note: the Asda Pharmacy at Lower Earley is open every day throughout the holiday period except for Christmas Day - Friday 25th December:

Telephone: 0118 9870310

Minor Illness Nurse - An important new daily clinic for patients who require medical assistance but don't necessarily need to see a Doctor

In response to increasing patient demand and the distinct lack of GPs available in the area (we have been advertising for over 1 year without success) we have introduced minor illness clinics. These are currently run by Sister Julia Bourne who is our senior Practice Nurse and has completed a degree level module in minor illness. Minor illness clinics are held in the mornings and some afternoons - and our aim is to increase this to every morning and afternoon (we are actively seeking additional minor illness nurses).

Sister Bourne sees a variety of conditions during her clinics including rashes, muscle pains, respiratory problems, tummy aches, infections and temperatures. If you feel you need to seek medical advice for your illness you will be offered an appointment with the Minor Illness Nurse if appropriate. She works alongside the Duty Doctor so that additional advice can be sought if necessary and prescriptions issued for patients. As a minor illness nurse, Julia is not able to treat babies under 1 year or patients with mental health issues.

Many illnesses seen are actually viral in nature which means that antibiotics will not treat the problem. In such cases, one of the main roles of the Minor illness Nurse is to encourage self-management and how to use over the counter medication safely.



Medical Dictionary:

Phlebotomist: A specialised clinical support assistant skilled in drawing blood samples from patients for testing purposes to aid diagnosis

Missed your autumn flu jab?

It's still not too late to have a free flu vaccination if you're in an at-risk group. Simply ask our Receptionists to arrange an appointment with a Health Care Assistant – the sooner the better. Telephone: 0118 9883473. 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

Coping with colds and flu – here's how to look after yourself

"Try to rest, eat well, avoid stress, and keep hydrated" advises Dr Beacham. "If your temperature is slightly up you may need extra fluids. Taking paracetamol can help with fever or pain and inhaling steam with a decongestant can help to clear a blocked nose. Antibiotics **cannot** help colds and flu so you don't need to see a GP, but local pharmacists are there to help with symptom advice and non-prescription medicines"



When to see a doctor

Whilst most cold & flu bugs will run their course without doing any real harm Dr Beacham says that you should seek medical help if you have a very high temperature and feel ill, for example with an unusually severe headache or abdominal pain or vomiting or rash. Babies, children, older frailer people or those with a chronic condition should also get help if they're unwell.

Blood Pressure Monitor

The new 'Waiting Room' Patient Blood Pressure Monitor installed in the nurse's corridor (reported in the Summer Newsletter) is seeing good use. As we all know maintaining a healthy blood pressure is important and for patients on medication it needs to be monitored at least annually. To save patients' time and create more flexibility we would encourage patients to use the monitor.



Using the blood pressure monitor

There's no need to book an appointment – just pop into the surgery during opening hours. Speak to a receptionist on arrival and they will show you where the machine is, there are instructions on the machine but if you are unsure what to do please ask for assistance. There's no need to roll your sleeve up unless you have a thick coat/jumper on – just make sure your arm is fully inserted into the cuff with your elbow resting in the groove. It's also important to be calm when you measure it, so if you've rushed in take some time to relax so that your reading is representative. Once completed your result will be printed out, please take this to reception so it can be added to your records. If your readings are high you will be contacted and asked to have your BP rechecked by a Health Care Assistant. If it is again found to be high then a GP appointment may be appropriate.

Staff Update

Recruitment of clinical staff has been at the forefront of our plans for the past year. In October we welcomed a **new phlebotomist**, Debra Elliott, to the practice. Dr Riddell leaves us in December after stepping in as a locum for the past year - his help and expertise have been greatly appreciated by all. Unfortunately we have, as yet, been unable to secure either a salaried GP or suitable locum to replace him. As an alternative we have been advertising heavily since September for another suitably qualified minor illness nurse and are hoping to interview shortly..... In the meantime please be patient. Whilst we have and will continue to try our hardest to offer a seamless service, there will be occasions when we fail as our limited resources are stretched to their limit.

Changes to Online Repeat Prescription Ordering

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 known as Patient Services which works with smartphones and tablets too. If you are already registered as a VOS user for online appointment booking, this functionality is available to you now.

If you have received your log-in details for VOS, PLEASE USE THAT PORTAL FOR REPEAT MEDICATION REQUESTS RATHER THAN THE LINK ON THE PRESCRIPTIONS PAGE OF THE WEBSITE. We really want to de-activate the link, but have been unable to resolve issues for a few of our patients, so can't turn it off just yet! However, using VOS if you can is REALLY HELPFUL for us.

If you want to register you will need to complete the form (accessed via our website or from reception) and return it to the Reception desk, bringing two forms of identification with you - any two of the following three documents are acceptable: passport, driving license, bank statement. If you don't have a computer there's no need to worry as you can still order repeat prescriptions in your usual way.

How are we doing? - Providing your feedback

Feedback from our patients is vital; it enables us to improve our services and lets us know how well we are doing which is important for morale in these difficult times. Were you aware that one of the ways you can do this is via the NHS Choices website? To do so go to the NHS Choices "Home Page", click on "Services near you", then enter "GP" in the "Find" box and RG7 1QY (our postcode) in the "Location" box and click "Search". You will then see results for local surgeries including SMP. Click on "Rate it yourself" to provide your feedback. Please take a look and let us know what you think.



Useful Numbers and Contact details

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