



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Summer 2015



Welcome to the summer 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.

Minor Illness Clinics

In response to the demand for appointments, particularly with GPs, the practice is redesigning the way in which minor illnesses are managed. We are introducing a nurse led Minor Illness Clinic which will release GP time so they can spend extra time on more complex cases.



Sister Julia Bourne has undergone an intensive training course and has spent time with all doctors at Swallowfield putting into practice what she has learned on her training and treating patients under their guidance. From June she will be holding her own Minor Illness Clinics, initially each Monday and Friday morning, where she will treat patients with ailments such as sore throats, conjunctivitis, abdominal pain, urine infections. Once the clinic is established we envisage increasing sessions to every morning. Our receptionists will play an important role in signposting patients to the most appropriate service for their condition so please do help them if you phone for an appointment by giving them an indication of what your problem is.

We very much hope that by introducing this new initiative we will improve patient access and reduce the workload of our overworked GPs.

Medical Dictionary:



Minor Illness: Refers to common conditions requiring medical attention which are usually straightforward to diagnose and treat. ('Minor' is used as a term of medical classification and does **not** mean 'trivial')

New Blood Pressure Monitor

We all know the importance of maintaining a healthy blood pressure and for those patients on medication it is very important that this is monitored at least annually.

To save patients' time and create more flexibility we have purchased a brand new 'Waiting Room' Patient Blood Pressure Monitor. Due to the layout of our waiting room we're unfortunately unable to keep it there but we have installed it in our nurses' corridor. Some of you may have already seen and used it!

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 she will show you how to use the machine - it is important to make sure your arm is fully inserted into the cuff with your elbow resting in the groove. Your result will be printed out - take this to reception so it can be recorded into your records.

Diabetes - Sister Julia Bourne reports

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a serious chronic condition where the body doesn't produce enough insulin or is unable to use it properly. Food that we eat gets broken down into nutrients in our stomach. These nutrients are then absorbed by the body. Insulin 'unlocks' our cells enabling sugar to enter the bloodstream, giving us the energy we need to live.

A person with diabetes doesn't have the insulin necessary to convert sugar to energy. Instead the sugar remains in the bloodstream causing symptoms such as tiredness, increased thirst, needing to pass lots of urine as the body tries to get rid of this excess sugar.

What can be done?

There are different treatments available for diabetes. The most important and probably most effective is lifestyle - diet and exercise. Changing and/improving your diet will vastly improve symptoms and many people are able to control their symptoms by following these lifestyle tips alone:-

Diet: Moderation, moderation, moderation!
 Stop when you're full
 Use a smaller plate
 Fill up on vegetables and protein
 Reduce carbohydrate intake
 Reduce sugary snacks to a minimum



Exercise: - Take a 15 minute brisk walk after each meal

If lifestyle changes fail to make a difference there are various medications available varying from tablets to injections - your GP or specialist nurse will advise you on this.

Start now

Diabetes is a very serious disease and failure to manage your symptoms properly may lead to irreversible side effects in the longer term so PLEASE take note and start helping yourself now.

Donations to The Practice

We would like to say a huge thank you to the Farley Hill Charitable Trust whose kind donation has allowed us to purchase 3 nebulisers which can be loaned out to patients in need of short term treatment in their homes.

Also, enormous thanks to John York and the 'Zippers Club' who donated a generous sum which will be used to purchase additional cardiac monitoring equipment.

John is pictured with Dr Prabhakar and Dr Beacham



Staffing Update

There have been a few new faces at Swallowfield since our last newsletter.

In April we said farewell to Sister Linda Barkus after nearly 15 years at the practice. We send every good wish for her well-deserved retirement and thank her for her invaluable contribution. In her place we welcome Yvonne Newman, who brings with her a wealth of practice nurse experience.

In May Nicola Swift left us to pursue a career in the teaching profession. Goodbye, good luck and good wishes to Nicola. We have since recruited additional members and are pleased to welcome Sidonie Underdown and Juliet Devon to the reception team and Karissa Dainton & Stephanie Prosser to the administrative team.

In June Jackie Cooper retired from the dispensary team, and is much appreciated for her contribution to practice. We hope she too enjoys her retirement. We're making every effort to recruit a suitably qualified replacement as soon as possible, but ask all patients to continue being patient whilst we re-advertise. Many thanks go to others in the Dispensary team for increasing their hours to help cover the shortfall.

GP recruitment is also ongoing but in the meantime we are indebted to Dr Niall Riddell for his continued and unerring support.

You ask us...

Q. What sun protection factor should I use?



A. Use a sun screen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. The higher the SPF, the better and go for 'broad spectrum' sunscreens which protect against harmful UVA & UVB rays. **Don't** spend any longer in the sun than you would **without** sunscreen. Sunscreen is not an excuse to stay out in the sun! Make sure you spend time in the shade between 11am & 3pm when the sun is at its strongest.

Children and babies are at more risk of sunburn as their skin is delicate and very easily damaged. Again use sunscreens of at least factor 15, with a 4 or 5 stars rating, that are specially formulated for them. Always remember to apply to areas not protected by clothing such as face, ears, feet and backs of hands.

New Look Website

We have just invested in a brand new website with improved features and functionality - we hope all our patients will approve of the new look!

For those patients who order their prescriptions via the website there is a new form to complete when ordering medication - please note that there is a drop down box for you to specify where your prescription is to be sent.

Within the next 2 -3 months patients will be able to register for a new online repeat ordering service which links directly into our clinical system. This will ultimately replace the existing (new!) website ordering form. If you have already registered to use our online appointment booking system, your log-in details will also enable you to access the repeat ordering service. Our aim is to improve efficiency within the dispensary and streamline the service which we currently offer. More information on how to register for this service will be available on our website shortly.

Dates for your Diary - Flu Clinics Autumn 2015

Saturday 26th September and Saturday 10th October 2015
8.30am until 12 noon - at the main Swallowfield Surgery



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. Last year's vaccination wasn't as effective as usual but this only happens approximately 1 year in 10, so please don't be put off coming this year.

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.

Patient Transport to Flu Clinics or Booked Appointments

"If you have difficulties using transport to get to the Surgery, then Shinfield Voluntary Car Service may be able to help" suggests Dr Beacham. "We maintain very strong links with the Car Service, which assists our patients. During the past year over 500 people were brought to their booked appointments at our Main or Branch Surgeries and 220 trips made to Royal Berkshire Hospital Out Patient Departments"

(To find out more, ring the Shinfield Car Service Office on 0118 9883400 - Mon/Wed/Fri mornings)

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