



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Summer 2016

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.

Be Sun Smart

Being protected from the harmful effects of the sun is something you need to be aware of every day throughout the summer. Sun damage doesn't just happen when you're holidaying in the sunshine, it can occur when you're not expecting it, for example when you're gardening or walking and even on a cloudy day.



Whether you're on holiday or at home you can protect yourself by following the Sun Smart Message:

- Spend time in the shade between 11.am and 3.pm
- Make sure you never burn
- Cover up with a T shirt, hat & sunglasses
- Use Factor 15+ sunscreen that blocks both UVA & UVB rays and isn't past its expiry date. Use it generously and reapply regularly
- Always take special care of children's skin. The best way is to cover them up and keep them in the shade

Finally, do report any mole changes or unusual skin growths to your G.P.

Repeat Dispensing for "Non-Dispensing Patients"

If you are on regular repeat medication, and normally take your prescription to a Pharmacy (ie are a 'non-dispensing patient'), please talk to them about the possibility of 'Repeat Dispensing' (sometimes known as 'batch dispensing'). This can reduce the frequency with which you have to order your repeat prescriptions from us.



Staff Update

In April we said a fond farewell to one of our cleaners, Phyll Read, who has been a loyal member of staff for over 26 years. Phyll is taking a well-deserved retirement and everyone at the practice wishes her well and hopes she enjoys her lazy mornings!



During January to March 2016 420 appointments were lost to non-attendees. Please do let us know if you can't attend so that we can re-allocate your appointment.

Patient Services - Online access



As mentioned in earlier editions of the newsletter, we offer online access to patients to order repeat prescriptions and book appointment with GPs. This is via the Patient Services website (previously called Vision Online). If you haven't already registered and would like to take advantage of this facility you will need to complete a registration form (which can be downloaded from our website or collected from the surgery). Once completed, you will need to bring the form into the surgery along with 2 forms of identification as stated on the form (one of which must be photo-ID). We will then process the form and email you with a letter which includes your registration details.

In order to register you will need to go through a series of steps as follows:

1. Open the attachment to the email you received from us (do also check your junk/spam inbox in case it has been directed there). This includes your registration details which you will need at step 8.
2. Click on the hyperlink '[Patient Services](#)'.
3. This will take you to a **Registration page** where it will ask you to 'Create your account'. At this stage you will be asked to create a username and password. After you have done this, scroll to the bottom of the same page where you will be asked to complete your 'Account recovery details' - which is simply filling in your personal details.
4. After ticking the 'I agree' box and pressing on 'Register' you will be directed to another page which states 'Email verification sent'. You must check your email inbox for an email from noreply@patient-services (do also check your junk/spam inbox in case it has been directed there).
5. Once you have opened the email, you will see a blue hyperlink '*Email Verification*' which you must click on. This will take you back to the Patient Services website and should inform you that your email has been successfully verified and give you a '*login*' button to click on. Please click on this, and log in using the username/password you created on the first page (step 3).
6. Once you have logged in, you will be warned that you have not yet linked to a practice account. There will be a blue hyperlink '*Link here!*' that you must click on to proceed (you must link to our practice before you can use any of the services).
7. After clicking on '*Link Here!*' you will be redirected to a **Linkage** page where you must choose from 2 options. As you are registering as a new user you must choose 'I am a new user and I have a registration letter from my practice'. The registration letter that it refers to is the letter we attached in your email at the very beginning.

8. You must press 'choose' and will be taken to another **Linkage** page where you must fill in the boxes using your letter with the registration details. After doing so, press the 'Link' button, and you will be taken to a third **Linkage** page which asks for an Activation code. This will be sent to your email by Patient Services. Once you have put this code in to the box and pressed 'confirm' you will be directed to the final page which will say you have now successfully linked to your practice account. You have now completed the registration process and will be able to use the online services.

If you have already registered with Vision Online (the original website for online access) you will need to migrate to Patient Services. Log on in the usual way and you will be guided by instructions on screen.

We are aware that a number of you have had difficulty registering online with issues regarding passwords, registration details and the migration to the new site. We are working hard with our clinical IT supplier to sort these out and would encourage you to persevere with your registration. Some common problems that have been experienced by patients seem to be:

- Activation code not received - although generally it should appear in your inbox fairly quickly, occasionally it may take a few days, also please check your junk/spam mailbox as your system may direct the email into the junk box
- Username/password problems - in this case you will need to contact Patient Services directly (contact details at the bottom of the screen). Unfortunately we are unable to sort out these issues. If the problem persists we suggest that you re-register.
- Log in details are not received - please check your junk/spam mailbox as your system may direct the email into the junk box.
- Patients are unable to order their repeat prescription - this is probably because your medication needs to be reauthorized by a GP. Please email dispensary on swallowfield.dispensary@nhs.net with your query. They will then get your medication reauthorized and inform you if any further steps need to be taken eg medication review, BP check
- Patients are unable to specify where the medication should be sent (location not in the drop down box) - in this case please write your instructions in the 'message from patient' area each time you order your prescription. We have submitted a change request and are awaiting further modifications

If you have any difficulties or forget your log in details there are Patient Services contact details at the bottom of the screen.



Medical Dictionary: 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..

Blood pressure readings have two numbers for example 130/80. The top number is your **systolic** pressure. (The highest pressure when your heart beats and pushes your blood round your body) The bottom one is your **diastolic** blood pressure. (The lowest pressure when your heart relaxes between beats).

With our waiting room BP machine you can check your own blood pressure - no appointment needed. Just call in and speak to a receptionist

GP Workload is increasing - Dr Buttar of the Local Medical Health Council for Berks, Bucks & Oxon tells us more

"Patients are seeing their GP's more frequently nowadays and the number of consultations has doubled over the past fifteen years" says Dr Buttar. "In the UK most GP's see around fifty to sixty patients per day." He goes on to explain some contributing factors:

- The UK population is aging with around 15 million of us over the age of sixty. On average, people aged over 65 have more than twice as many consultations as those under 65
- People are living longer and the NHS is a victim of its own success
- More people are living with one or more serious long-term conditions which require monitoring and treatment
- The care of many conditions has moved from hospital to General Practice, but resources for General Practice rarely follow
- People are more likely than ever before to see their GP with minor symptom, such as coughs and colds and there is a lack of self-care skills and self-management

Is this sustainable?

"GPs are leaving the profession because of the huge increase in work load" Dr Buttar tells us "Some are retiring early, others are emigrating or leaving medicine altogether. It's now very difficult to recruit new GPs so the doctors left are under even greater pressure. It needs to stop."

What can patients do?

You can help to make a difference in two major ways:-

1. If you have a cough or a cold think about whether you really need to see a Doctor; could you ask a pharmacist for advice or seek guidance from the UK patient or NHS Choices websites?
2. Contact your MP. Tell them that you value your GP and that they need to act to stop the worsening situation affecting all our GPs

Community Navigator

Community Navigation is essentially a signposting service giving people access to community and voluntary support groups locally. The navigators are trained volunteers and operate from the surgery a couple of afternoons per week. They will receive referrals from the Doctors, other healthcare professionals or even directly from patients who may require further support beyond the medical help already provided eg a patient who is recovering from a stroke may be referred to the navigator who could then put them in touch with the local branch of the Stroke Association who can provide further support for the patient and, importantly, their carer(s). This service is available for all age groups and is there for many different



needs - please speak to your GP if you feel you could benefit from this or you can self-refer by following the link http://www.involve.community/on_line_referral.php

Dates for your diary

Flu Clinics Autumn 2016

Saturday 24 September and Saturday 8 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.

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

Shinfield Voluntary Car Service Registered Charity No: 1152423

Public Annual General Meeting - 8.00pm, Thursday 16th June 2016

Shinfield Parish Hall, School Green RG2 9EH

All Welcome -Simply come along- Free parking

Light refreshments will be served after the meeting Enquiries: 0118 9883400

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