



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Winter 2014



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 17 th December	8.00am - 12 noon & 2.00pm - 6.30pm
Christmas Eve - (24 th December)	8.00am to 12.30pm & 2.00pm - 3.30pm
Christmas Day - (25 th December)	CLOSED
Boxing Day - (26 th December)	CLOSED
New Year's Eve - (31 st December)	8.00am - 3.30pm
New Year's Day - (1st January)	CLOSED



Cover will be provided on 17th December 12 - 2pm, 24th December 12.30 - 2pm, 3.30 to 6.30pm and 31st December 3.30 - 6.30pm - please phone our main number (0118 9883134)

The surgery will be open as normal (8.00am - 6.30pm) on all other days.

GP Services - Out of Hours

If you need urgent GP Services when the Practice is closed then please contact the 'NHS 111' Service for assistance by dialling 111 on your telephone. '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'.

Prescriptions and Medication

Do make sure that you will have sufficient prescription medicines to last you through Christmas and the New Year period. This is a very busy time of the year so it is important that you order your 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 avoid the seasonal rush.

Don't forget to check that your usual 'Home Remedies & 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 can be found on the Practice door/window or on the Practice website www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk

STOP SMOKING - Make 2015 the year you quit if you're a smoker

- Did you know you're 4 times more likely to quit with support from your GP or Stop Smoking Clinic.
- Give the practice a ring on 0118 9883134 to find out more or contact 'Smoke Free Advisors on 0800 6226360

It is with enormous sadness that we have to report that Dr Ansari's wife passed away at the end of November. We would like to thank our patients for their support at this difficult time.

Staff Update

- ❖ We will be saying farewell to Dr Samantha Wild who is leaving us in early February. We all join in thanking her for her hard work and wish her well for the future.
- ❖ New GP: We are currently in the process of recruiting a replacement but with the current GP shortage this may take some time. Please bear with us during this time and understand that our doctors are under extra strain coping with this additional pressure. You can help by cancelling appointments that are no longer required and using other services such as NHS 111 and your local pharmacist for advice.

The battle against colds and flu!

A cold is mild viral infection of the nose, throat sinuses and upper airways. It can cause a blocked nose followed by a runny nose, sneezing, a sore throat and a cough. It usually lasts for about a week and you can relieve the symptoms by taking over-the-counter-remedies such as paracetamol and drinking plenty of fluids.



When to see your GP

You really only need to see your GP if:

- Your symptoms persist for more than three weeks
- You have a high temperature of 39° degrees or above
- You feel chest pain
- You have breathing difficulties
- You cough up blood stained thick mucus
- You experience severe swelling of your glands in your neck and/or armpits

Flu virus symptoms make you feel so exhausted and unwell that you have to stay in bed until you feel better. Flu causes a sudden high temperature of over 38°, headache, chills, general aches & pains, tiredness, sore throat, can make you feel nauseous, have a cough or a stomach upset.

If you are otherwise fit and healthy there is usually no need to see a Doctor if you have flu like symptoms. The best remedy is to rest at home, keep warm and have plenty of water to drink to avoid dehydration. You can take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower a high temperature and relieve aches.



When to see your GP

You should contact your Doctor if you have **flu like symptoms** and:

- You're aged 65 or over
- You are pregnant
- You have a long term medical condition or a weakened immune system

Antibiotics have no effect on viruses, so there is no point in trying to get some from your Doctor to cure a cold or flu! There's also a risk that you could spread the infection to other patients or staff while visiting the Doctor's surgery.

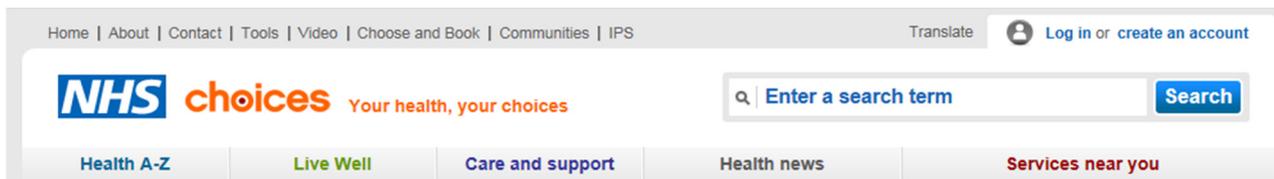
You ask us...

Q. Where's the best place to find reliable medical information on the internet?

A. Dr Helen Hegarty replies "As Doctors, we recommend using www.patient.co.uk



or www.nhs.uk



for up-to-date information and advice that you can trust. Both are helpful websites, easy to use and include a wide range of topics about conditions & treatment, and offer guidance on when to consult a Doctor as well as good advice about healthier living."

NEW YEAR - NEW YOU!

Lose weight if you need to:

- Check the 'NHS Choices' website for tips, guidance and to find your nearest Weight Loss Organisations

Get moving and increase your amount of daily activity if you can:

- It only needs 10 minutes twice a day to start making a difference. A brisk walk is simple and free! You can find out more about walking, exercising or Seated Keep Fit on the NHS Choices or Parish Websites

~ Quick Quiz ~

How many patients do you think failed to attend their GP or nurse appointments in October?

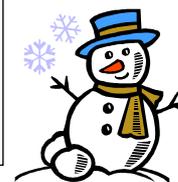
- a) 63 b) 127 c) 235 find out over the page...

Answer: 235 - which equates to **39 hours of clinician time wasted** in one month. This includes appointments booked on the same day(!) and nurse appointments, some of which are lengthy - a missed single 30 minute nurse appointment potentially means that 3 people were not able to be seen. So do please *always* let us know if you are no longer able to attend. Even very short notice cancellations can be put to good use, especially during the increased winter demand.

Appointment reminders

If we have your mobile phone number, we can send you a text on the day before your appointment reminding you of the date, time and location of your appointment. (Don't forget to let us know if you change your contact telephone numbers, home or mobile.)

During the colder months do remember to check that older relatives or neighbours are keeping safe, warm & well. If they are finding it difficult to get out and about they may appreciate help with shopping, hot meals and drinks or path clearing if there's snow and ice about.



Friends and Family Test

Did you know you can now have your say to help improve your care?

The Friends & Family Test is about giving patients the opportunity to provide quick feedback on their care and treatment experience. It's already in use in many parts of the NHS and is expanding to a lot more.

We would like your feedback on the care or treatment we give you any time you visit your GP or have contact with the practice. It doesn't take long and you don't need to give your details on your feedback form. Tell us how likely you would be to recommend us to friends or family and let us know what is working and what we can improve. You can say what you think without giving your name and we will use the information to plan improvements to our services.

We may sometimes ask you to fill in a brief questionnaire - otherwise ask at Reception for a form or fill in the questionnaire online at: www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk .

We would like to wish all of our patients a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

Useful Numbers and Contact details

Main Line:	0118 988313	Appointments:	0118 9883473
24hr Automated System:	0118 9769606	Dispensary:	0118 9883459
Fax:	0118 9885759	Website:	www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk