



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Winter 2016



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 21st December	8.00 am - 12 noon & 2.00 pm-6.30 pm
Boxing Day (Monday 26th December)	CLOSED
Bank Holiday (Tuesday 27th December)	CLOSED
Wednesday 28th December - 30th December	OPEN AS NORMAL
Bank Holiday (Monday 2nd January)	CLOSED
Tuesday 3 rd January	OPEN AS NORMAL



Cover will be provided on 21st December 12 - 2pm. Please phone our main number: 0118 9883134.

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.

You may be directed to 2 local nurse-led units (see below) which offer advice and treatment for injuries which aren't life threatening and don't need a visit to A&E. Please phone NHS 111 and they will be able to direct you to the most appropriate place.

- Bracknell Urgent Care Centre,
Brants Bridge, Bracknell RG12 9BG
Open every day 8am - 8pm Telephone: 01344 551100
- Newbury Minor Injuries Unit,
West Berkshire Community Hospital, London Road, Benham Hill,
Thatcham RG18 3AS
Open every day 8am - 10pm
Open 10am - 6pm only on Christmas Day Telephone: 01635 273508

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

During July to September 2016 435 appointments were lost to non-attenders.
This equates to **72.5 hours** of clinical time being wasted. Please do let us know if you can't attend so that we can re-allocate your appointment.

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 giving as much notice as possible in December - 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 and on the practice website.

www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk

Note: the Asda Pharmacy at Lower Earley is open every day throughout the holiday period except for Christmas Day - Sunday 25th December: Telephone: 0118 9870310

We wish all our patients a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

Receptionists and GP Appointments

There has been much in the news recently about the fact that GP receptionists quizzing patients may potentially put patients off seeing their doctor.

Our receptionists at Swallowfield Medical Practice are here to help you. They are the first point of contact for all of our 11600+ patients and need to be able to get you the most timely and effective appointment with the right clinician. This is why they may ask you some simple questions about the nature of your problem. They are not trying to diagnose your problem. They are not being nosy or obstructive but simply trying to do a very difficult job under very difficult circumstances.

We understand that symptoms may be difficult to discuss and if you do find it difficult you should always feel able to say to the receptionist that your problem is private or personal and that you only want to discuss this with a doctor.

EPS - coming soon! - for non-dispensing patients only

Do you take your prescriptions to a chemist? Then you might be interested in EPS.

EPS (Electronic Prescription Service) is a new service which allows GPs to electronically send your prescriptions directly to your chosen pharmacy. This means:

- You save time having to collect your paper prescription from us. This is really useful if you have repeat medications.
- Your medicines will be ready to collect (or delivered to you) at the usual time

Please be aware that any acute prescriptions you may be issued eg for antibiotics would also be sent to your nominated pharmacy.

What do you need to do?

Speak to your pharmacy about nominating them as the pharmacy you want to receive your electronic prescriptions (you can only choose one pharmacy). They will then do the necessary administration to enable us to send all your prescriptions directly to them.

How do I order my prescriptions?

You can order your repeat prescriptions in the normal way - online, email, fax or by telephone, or if you wish speak to your pharmacist about them ordering your repeat medications on your behalf.

If we dispense your medication directly from Swallowfield Surgery there is no need to do anything. Your service will continue as normal.

Staff Update

We welcomed back Dr Julia Lyons in November after her maternity leave. We also have welcomed 3 new staff members - Liz Byrne in Dispensary and Emma Vivian and Izabela Skonieczna into the Reception team. Please do bear with us during their training period - there is a huge amount of knowledge to assimilate.

Non NHS Work

Our GPs and administrative staff are spending an increasingly significant amount of time on administrative matters that aren't funded by the NHS - by this we mean requests from insurance companies for reports, requests for copies of medical records, completion of licence forms, private medicals, letters to schools, employers etc. This growing burden not only detracts GPs from their work as doctors but also is placing a financial strain on the practice as staff are taken away from their normal work in order to deal with these time consuming requests. For this reason we have implemented a minimum charge of £25 for any private work undertaken by the Practice. A full list of charges is available in reception or on our website.

'Open up' and help to cut down on wasted medication

Berkshire West CCGs are supporting the 'Open up' campaign, which encourages patients to discuss their prescription medicines with their healthcare professional. It could be talking about medicines that are prescribed but you don't use, or if you are unsure how to store or take your medication.

Also, we'd like patients to check their prescriptions when they collect them - many people don't realise that once medicines have left the dispensary or pharmacy they cannot be given to someone else even if the packaging is still sealed, the medication has to be destroyed. People can 'Open up' to their pharmacist, to their GP, or to hospital staff.

Diabetes Self Management - by a grateful patient

In March this year a routine blood and urine test revealed I had developed type 2 diabetes. The doctor could have prescribed medication in tablet form to bring it under control. I was very reluctant to go down the tablet route as I already take other tablets. So the doctor advised a different course of action - Adopt a different lifestyle : Change my diet to a low carbohydrate diet, cutting down on high carb things like potatoes, cakes, biscuits and, above all, remove all additional sugars from my food. Increase my vegetable intake, eat fruit and, most importantly, lose some weight. (I admit I was carrying a bit too much round my middle). And finally - make efforts to exercise, but don't overdo it.

So this is what I did. It was a bit difficult at first - you probably know the symptoms, as soon as you go on a reduced diet the thought of food makes you hungry. Walking past the cream cake counter in the supermarket can make you envious (at least it did me). For exercise I took to 'old man running' around the park, which had the added advantage of meeting very nice people walking their dogs. It all took a little determination - and the results have been brilliant. I am now free from diabetes and my cholesterol is within normal limits.

I didn't know that if you have diabetes you have to let the DVLA know and your insurance company. Failure to do so can mean you are uninsured, and it can increase your premiums.

I have since found out that type 2 diabetes is a huge drain on NHS resources as well as being very bad for your health. (I read Ella Fitzgeralds biography that type 2 diabetes contributed to the death of this great singer).

I didn't know I had this condition, although the signs were there: overweight, high blood pressure and too much sitting down. But I've proved that you can help yourself by doing just a few things.

Five New Year's Resolutions for a healthier you

1. **Move more** - getting enough activity means a stronger fitter you and is good for your mind too
2. **Eat well** - a healthy diet can help you look and feel great. Start by shelving the sugar and cutting back on fat
3. **Be smoke free** - no surprises here. Stopping is the best thing you can do. No matter how long you've smoked for, quitting helps improve your health straight away
4. **Drink less alcohol** - cutting back is good for your health. It can boost energy levels and improve the quality of your sleep
5. **Sleep better** - it's important to get a good night's sleep. It allows your mind to relax, improving your mental and emotional well-being

Promise yourself you'll put at least one of these on *your* New Year's List. Find out how to tackle it and what local support is there for you by checking out NHS Choices on-line or asking about health leaflets available from the surgery.

'Save a Life' with an app

'Save a Life' is a free app from South Central Ambulance Service that uses GPS functionality to show where your nearest defibrillator is on a map. The app is available for Android or Apple smartphones. It also features videos, resuscitation instructions and a section that will answer many of your cardiac arrest and heart attack questions. Go to www.scas.nhs.uk/savealife for more information.



Friends and Family Test

Thank you to all of you who have completed the Friends and family test questionnaire which is available in the surgery. We are pleased to say that 96% of our patients would be extremely likely or likely to recommend us to their friends and/or family which means we must be doing a reasonable job! Below are some of your comments:

'Swallowfield has always been an exceptional practice'

'all doctors are caring and helpful'

'Telephone booking is brilliant'

'Swallowfield Medical Practice is fabulous'

'The receptionists are 5*'

'I have had excellent care from the doctors and nurses'

If you would like to complete one of these forms they are available at reception and in both branch surgeries.

Thank you for your continued support.



Medical Dictionary:

Antibiotics: Are medicines used to treat or prevent some types of bacterial infection. They work by killing *bacteria* or preventing them from reproducing and spreading.

Antibiotics **aren't** effective against viral infections (caused by a *virus*) such as the common cold, flu, most coughs and sore throats.

Treating your infection

How long is it likely to last?

Middle-ear infection	4 days
Sore throat	7 days
Common cold	10 days
Sinusitis	18 days
Cough or bronchitis	21 days

What you can do to ease your symptoms:

- ✓ Have plenty of rest,
- ✓ Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty
- ✓ Ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines to help your symptoms or pain (or both)
- ✓ Use paracetamol if you or your child are uncomfortable because of a fever. (Fever is a sign that the body is fighting the infection.)

When to get help

Contact the GP Practice or NHS 111 for assessment and advice:

- If you develop a severe headache and are sick
- If your skin is very cold, or has a strange colour or you develop an unusual rash
- If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy
- If you have difficulty breathing
- If you develop chest pain
- If you have difficulty swallowing or are drooling
- If you cough up blood
- If you are feeling a lot worse

The body can usually fight the infections listed above on its own but you should seek medical help for babies, young children, the elderly or if you have another condition as well, such as diabetes or heart disease.

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