



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Summer 2017



Welcome to the Spring 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.

Staff Update

There have been a few staffing changes since our last newsletter. We are sad to say farewell to Fran Leafe who is leaving us to take up a new position in the CCG. Fran has been with us for a many years and has played an integral part in the making Swallowfield the successful practice it is today and will be missed by all of us. We would, however, like to welcome Shaun Nicholson as the new Practice Manager. Shaun has worked in general practice for many years and brings a wealth of experience in practice management with him. We also have 2 other new starters:- Joanne has joined the reception team and Julie is our newest member of the dispensary team. We still have a vacancy for a receptionist and once this is filled we should have a full complement of staff for the first time in many months.

Important Dates For Your Diary

Don't forget to put the dates of the Flu Clinics in your diary:

Saturday 23 September and 7 October – 8.30am – 12 noon.

No need to book an appointment – just turn up and get jabbed!

Treating Your Infection

Your infection	Usually lasts
• Middle Ear infection	4 days
• Sore throat	7 days
• Common Cold	10 days
• Sinusitis	18 days
• Cough or bronchitis	3 weeks

Coughs, colds, sinusitis, sore throats and other infections often get better without antibiotics as your body can usually fight these infections on its own.

How to treat yourself better for these infections now and next time:

- Have plenty of rest
- Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty
- Ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines to help your symptoms
- Fever is a sign the body is fighting the infection and usually gets better by itself in most cases

- Use tissues and wash your hands to prevent the spread of infection to family, friends and others you meet

When to get help:

Contact your GP or NHS 111 (if it's out of hours) if you have any of the following symptoms

- 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 eg breathing quickly, turning blue around the lips
- If you develop chest pain
- If you have difficulty swallowing
- If you cough up blood
- If you are feeling a lot worse
- If your symptoms last longer than advised above
- In children with ear infections – if fluid is coming out of their ears

Please be aware that if you take antibiotics when you don't need them, it allows bacteria to build up resistance. This means they're less likely to work in future when you really need them.

Never share antibiotics and always return any unused medicines to a pharmacy for safe disposal.

Missed Appointments

Between January and March this year 394 patients failed to attend their appointments. This wasted over 65 hours of clinical time. If you really do not need your appointment please, please let us know so that your appointment can be given to someone who really does need it.

Stop Smoking

There is a relationship between smoking and post-op outcomes:

Patients who continue to smoke after they've had an operation have been shown to experience more problems. The evidence is that quitting smoking before surgery may have more immediate benefits by reducing the risk of post-operative complications, shorter hospital stays and better long-term outcomes and that even brief abstinence may be beneficial to this aim. We are lucky enough to have our own in-house Stop Cessation advisor. If you would like to take advantage of this service please speak to a receptionist and they'll be able to advise you further.

Shinfield Relocation

Thank you to all of you who completed the survey regarding our proposal to move the Shinfield Branch Surgery to premises in the Shinfield Medical Centre. The results have been collated and the overwhelming majority of patients were in favour of this move – parking issues were highlighted both as a good reason for moving and as a potential problem at the new site. There will be more parking spaces available to the practice if we do move as we will be taking over rooms currently occupied by the staff of the Talking Therapies service so this hopefully will not

be too much of an issue moving forward. We have submitted our proposal to the Primary Care Commissioning Board and are waiting on the outcome of their decision. Watch this space!

MenACWY Vaccinations



Meningococcal disease can cause meningitis (inflammation of the brain) and septicaemia (blood poisoning). It is an extremely serious disease which can kill within a few hours and those who recover may be left severely disabled. There has been an increase in the number of reported cases of a highly aggressive strain of meningococcal W (Men W) national. Young people starting university are particularly at risk and with this in mind we are offering all current year 13 students the opportunity to have a vaccination against this disease. If you haven't done so already, please contact the surgery to book your appointment.

Treating Insect Bites and Stings

Most insect bites and stings are not serious and will get better within a few hours, although pain, swelling and itchiness can sometimes last a few days.



- Remove the sting if it's still in the skin
- Wash the affected area with soap and water
- Apply a cold compress such as a clean flannel or cloth cooled with water or an ice pack for at least ten minutes
- Raise the affected area if possible as this can help reduce swelling
- Avoid scratching the area to reduce the risk of infection
- Avoid traditional home remedies, such as vinegar or bicarbonate of soda, as they're unlikely to help
- Ask your pharmacist about over the counter treatments that can help, such as painkillers, creams for itching and antihistamines

When to get medical advice

Contact the Surgery or NHS 111 for advice if:

- You've been stung or bitten in your mouth, throat or near your eyes
- A large area (around 10cm or more) around the bite becomes red and swollen
- You have symptoms of a wound infection or a more widespread infection
- You are worried about a bite or sting

When to get emergency medical help

Dial 999 for an ambulance if you or someone else has the symptoms of a severe reaction, such as:

- Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- A swollen face, mouth or throat or difficulty swallowing
- Nausea or vomiting, dizziness or feeling faint
- Loss of consciousness

To help prevent insect bites and stings, remain calm and move away if you encounter wasps, hornets or bees.

Don't wave your arms about or swat them.

Be careful around flowering plants, rubbish, compost, stagnant water and areas where food is being served.

Swallowfield Extension Update



Work behind the scenes continues with the extension at the Swallowfield site. A soil survey has been carried out, planning meetings with the builders have taken place and we are hoping that the building work will actually begin in the early part of September. We will try and keep the disruption to our patients to a minimum however, there will inevitably be some issues with parking. There will be very limited access to our staff car park and we are hoping to have use of the village hall and the pub. Thank you in advance for everyone's cooperation.

Travel Vaccinations

Going away somewhere exotic this Summer? Please remember to arrange your travel vaccinations at least 6 weeks in advance.

Please call Reception on 0118 9883473 to book an appointment with a nurse to discuss your requirements.

You ask us.....

How do I get vitamin D safely from sunlight during the summer months?

Most people's bodies can make enough Vitamin D from being out in the sun daily for *short* periods of time with their forearms, hands or lower legs uncovered and without sunscreen from late March to the end of September. But you should be careful not to burn in the sun, so take care to cover up or protect your skin with sunscreen *before* your skin starts to turn red or burn.

Insomnia affects me badly in the summer. Is there anything that might help?

In the summer, the lighter mornings and rise in temperature can hamper sleep patterns. These simple tips may help:

- Keep the bedroom dark by putting a blind over the window or using an eye-mask
- Keep the room cool by opening a window or using a fan
- Reduce your intake of caffeine and alcohol, especially in the evenings, and try not to eat for at least two hours before bedtime

Be Sun Smart – enjoy the sun more safely

Sunburn can double the risk of skin cancer, so protect yourself from sunburn:

- Use at least SPF 15 sunscreen – apply it liberally and often. Ask your pharmacist for more information about sunscreen products
- Don't stay in the sun any longer than you would without sunscreen
- Re-apply sunscreen straight after you swim – water washes off sunscreen (even if it is 'water-resistant') and the cooling effect of the water can make you think you're not getting burned

- Cover up with a long-sleeved top, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses – when the sun is at its peak sunscreen is not enough
- Relax in the shade between 11.00 and 3.00 – the sun is most damaging to your skin in the middle of the day
- Protect children in the sun - young skin is delicate
- Keep babies out of the sun and always use a sunshade

People with fair skin, lots of moles or freckles or a family history of cancer need to be especially careful.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body can't lose heat fast enough. Signs of heat exhaustion include faintness, dizziness, nausea and headaches. If it's not treated quickly, it can lead to heat stroke which is a much more dangerous condition.

What to do

If someone has signs of heat exhaustion get them to rest in a cool place – ideally a room with air conditioning.

Give them plenty of water to sip. Avoid alcohol or caffeine as this can increase dehydration.

Cool their skin with cold water – either in a shower or bath or by applying wet flannels or cloths to their skin.

Loosen any unnecessary clothing and ensure the person gets plenty of ventilation.

Monitor their condition closely and seek medical advice if you are concerned - ring the Surgery on 0118 9883473 or NHS111.

Did You Know These Facts?

- An ambulance call out costs a minimum of £223
- A visit to A&E costs at least £114
- A visit to your GP costs a minimum of £36
- A call to NHS 111 costs £12
- The cost of self-care is FREE

Useful Numbers and Contact details

Main Line: 0118 9883134
 24hr Automated System: 0118 9769606
 Fax: 0118 9885759

Appointments: 0118 9883473
 Dispensary: 0118 9883459
 Website: www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk