



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Autumn 2017



Welcome to the Autumn 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.

Flu Clinics – it's that time of year again!

**Saturday 23rd September and Saturday 7th 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: Heart disease; Stroke; TIA; MS; Asthma; COPD; Diabetes; Kidney disease; Liver disease; Immunosuppressed; aged 65 years or over; a Carer or are Pregnant, then please come along to one of our Flu Clinics to get your free vaccination - no need to book

Children's Flu - We will be holding **separate** flu clinics for children in the 'at risk' groups and those who are aged 2 and 3 years on 31 August 2017. More information will be available shortly so please look out for adverts in the surgery or on our website for details

Staff Update

In August we said a sad farewell to Dr Julia Lyons and one of our practice nurses, Meryl Peckham. Dr Lyons has been with the Practice for 12 years and has seen many changes along the way, not least of which is the arrival of her 2 boys! Meryl has been here for 3 years and has been the backbone of the respiratory team. Ali Henderson also left us in July. We wish Julia, Meryl and Ali well in their new ventures. They will both be missed by all. Recruitment for a new nurse is underway and we are fortunate to be able to retain our current locum, Dr Choudry, now that Dr Dugmore has returned from her maternity leave.

Swallowfield Extension

At long last - the building work is scheduled to start on Monday 2nd October!! We envisage the work will take at least 9 months. We will try and keep disruption to a minimum but apologise in advance for any disturbance caused whilst our extension is being built. The patient car park will still be available for your use.



Missed Appointments

Between April and June this year 368 patients failed to attend their appointments. This **wasted over 61 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.

Shinfield Branch Surgery Relocation

Our proposal to relocate our Shinfield branch surgery was submitted to Berkshire West CCG in June. Negotiations are still ongoing but we are hopeful of a positive outcome. We will, of course, keep you all posted if we hear any news.

Travel Vaccinations

Please be aware that you need to book your travel vaccinations at least 6 weeks in advance of your travel date. This is to ensure that a) we have to correct vaccines in for you and b) to allow enough time for the vaccine to work prior to your departure.



There is currently a global shortage of both Hepatitis A & B vaccine. We are unable to source any for travel purposes and would advise any patients to contact the local travel clinics as they may have larger residual supplies:

Boots, Broad Street, Reading 0118 9571135;
Superdrug, Broad Street, Reading 0333 311 1007;
MASTA, Reading 0330 100 4292

Booking an appointment to see a GP at Swallowfield Medical Practice



We recently conducted a survey to discover how patients felt about our appointment system and how quickly they would like to be seen by a GP. Analysis of the results indicated that generally patients would like to be seen within 7 days and for more urgent conditions would like an appointment the same day or the following day.

At Swallowfield Medical Practice we have always offered patients the convenience of booking appointments up to four weeks ahead. Following the outcome of our survey we introduced an additional system enabling patients to book 7 days ahead. These appointments are released just shortly after midnight the week before and can be booked in the same way as our normal, routine and 'on the day' appointments. Our 'on the day' appointments are also routine 10 minutes appointments available for all patients to book.

All GP appointments can either be booked **Online** or via our automated telephone booking system **Patient Partner**. Patients need to be registered for the **Online** service. Please come in to Reception at Swallowfield to complete a registration form bringing along with two forms of identification, including a photo ID i.e. Passport or Driving Licence and also proof of your address eg utility bill or bank statement. You can book appointments via **Patient Partner** on 0118 976 9606. No registration is necessary for this service.

New routine 'on the day' appointments are released just shortly after midnight. If you are not able to use the systems at this time you can try as soon as you are able the following day. All available appointments stay on these systems until they are booked.

If you feel you need to be seen on the day for **Urgent Care** medical matters, we have an Acute Illness Team in our surgery. Please phone and speak to reception. When booking this type of appointment the receptionist will ask you're a few questions about your symptoms so that you can be directed to the most appropriate member of the Acute Illness team. You will be allocated a time to come down to the surgery to sit and wait. A clinician will see you as soon as possible.

If you are not able to use any of the above systems please call the reception team on 0118 988 3134 and they will be happy to help you with booking appointments and answering any questions or queries you may have.

Repeat Medication



We have over 5000 patients who are on regular repeat medication, 2000 of these have 4 or more repeat medications each month. This, along with our acute dispensing means that we dispense over 7000 items each month. It is especially important that you order your repeat medications in plenty of time to allow time for the processing of the request, sorting out any queries, raising of the prescription, getting a signature from the GP and dispensing the medication itself or transmitting the prescription to your nominated surgery via the EPS system. Thank you to everyone who does this in good time. However, in July alone we had 500 patients who phoned to say they had now run out of medication and needed their prescription immediately. This adds to the already considerable. Therefore we would please recommend that you order your repeat medication **at least 3 full working days prior to you running out** – ideally it would be better to give 7 days' notice. Thank you for your cooperation.

Is this you?

'Is this you?' is a series of articles focusing on the most common acute and chronic clinical conditions that affect our patients.

This is the first article, written by Dr Prabhakar, whose specialist area of interest is cardiology. Each doctor will be giving you their SMP experiences, opinion and advice, about one of these conditions within their specialist area. We are confident you will find this series of articles both informative and beneficial and a basis for discussion.

Is this You? - HEART FAILURE.

Heart failure is one of the most wide-spread medical problems encountered by most GPs - SMP is no exception to this. The NHS Choices website defines Heart Failure like this:

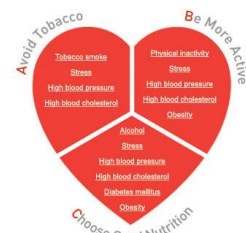
"Heart failure means that the heart is unable to pump blood around the body properly. It usually occurs because the heart has become too weak or stiff. Heart failure doesn't mean your heart has stopped working – it just needs some support to help it work better. It can occur at any age, but is most common in older people".

The main symptoms of heart failure are:

- breathlessness after activity or at rest
- feeling tired most of the time and finding exercise exhausting
- swollen ankles and legs

Some people also experience other symptoms, such as a persistent cough, a fast heart rate, and dizziness.

Symptoms can develop quickly (acute heart failure) or gradually over weeks or months (chronic heart failure).



Heart failure is a long-term condition that tends to get gradually worse over time. It can't usually be cured, but the symptoms can often be controlled for many years."

We have approximately 11,760 SMP patients of whom 77 have some kind of ongoing 'heart failure', so it is a subject that I am dealing with and discussing with my patients every day of the week.

The common drugs taken for heart failure are:

- **Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors.** A drug that widens blood vessels to lower blood pressure, improve blood flow and decrease the workload on the heart. Examples include Ramipril, Lisinopril, Perindopril
- **Angiotensin II receptor blockers.** These drugs, which include Losartan and Valsartan have many of the same benefits as ACE inhibitors. They may be an alternative for people who cannot tolerate ACE inhibitors.
- **Beta blockers.** This class of drugs not only slows your heart rate and reduces blood pressure but also limits or reverses some of the damage to your heart if you have systolic heart failure. Examples include Bisoprolol, Atenolol.
- **Diuretics.** Often called water pills, diuretics make you urinate more frequently and keep fluid from collecting in your body. Diuretics, such as furosemide, also decrease fluid in your lungs so you can breathe more easily.
- **Aldosterone antagonists.** These drugs include Spironolactone. These are potassium-sparing diuretics, which also have additional properties that may help people with severe heart failure live longer.

ACE inhibitors and diuretics are started on diagnosis. Kidney functions are monitored closely.

Here is some useful advice for patients with heart disease:

- a) Any patient with heart disease who feels short of breath or develops leg swelling should seek advice from a doctor to rule out heart failure.
- b) During summer if you feel dehydrated and you are not short of breath you could leave water tablets on and off for few days.
- c) If you feel very dizzy you should get your BP checked as all these medications drop your BP.
- d) We also have access to community heart failure nurses who are highly trained to start medications and monitor patients at home. Patients are usually referred to them if they need close monitoring.

"Treatment for heart failure usually aims to control the symptoms for as long as possible and slow down the progression of the condition." So, you must often be ready for a long haul which needs your calm commitment on a continuous basis. As patients, you can help to manage your condition by managing your medication properly; ie. taking the directed dose accurately, consistently and if necessary adjusting it yourself to optimise how your body and mind feels.

It's interesting to note that the top treatments for heart diseases usually include lifestyle

changes – including eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and stopping smoking. So there is an important long-term, self-help or DIY element for each of us to manage and stick to because experience tells me that treatment will usually be needed for life.

£136 per year – what can you buy?

11 months' pet insurance – it costs £151 to insure a rabbit for one year with Petplan



6 months' mobile phone use – 1 year on a Vodafone sim-only tariff costs £264

5 months' Sky TV family bundle – one year costs £289



Less than 3 tanks of fuel for a Vauxhall Astra

Coffee on your way to work for 3 months



Or...

...one year of funding per patient for the average general practice.

Yes. £136. Less than the cost of pet insurance, or a mobile phone, or Sky TV, or 3 tanks of fuel. And many practices get far less than this.

And what do you get for your £136?

- As many consultations with your GP or other practice staff as you need
- Prescriptions organised and signed
- Blood tests
- Other tests e.g. ECGs
- Hospital referrals
- Pre-hospital care
- Post-hospital care
- Home visits if required

GPs use this money to:

- Pay for their premises
- Pay doctors and nurses

- Pay their reception and admin staff
- Pay for electricity, gas, phone bills
- Buy/maintain surgery equipment and drugs
- Pay for CQC inspections
- Pay for accountancy, legal advice
- Pay for professional insurance

It's not much, is it?

GP funding has fallen by nearly 1/3 in the last five years.
General practice is in crisis – without better funding, we cannot continue.

What can you do to help?

- Please don't waste appointments. If you can't make your appointment, cancel in good time
- Think about if you really need an appointment – could the pharmacist help?
- Order your repeat prescriptions in good time rather than at the last minute
- Only request a home visit if you are genuinely housebound
- Contact your MP. Tell them how much you value your GP surgery

Health Prevention Programme Opportunities in the Wokingham Borough through Physical Activity

Current Initiatives in the Borough:

The Sport and Leisure team at Wokingham Borough Council offer a wide range of health prevention programmes to the residents of the Wokingham Borough to provide them with physical activity opportunities in order to help improve and prevent any further long term health conditions whilst encouraging a more active lifestyle.

For all programmes you will need a referral from your GP surgery (nurses can do this for you) or any other health professional who feels that you would benefit from a physical activity programme. We offer - GP Referral, Long Term Health Conditions gym, Cardiac Rehab Phase 4, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Falls Prevention (Steady Steps), Dementia and Children/Adults with Additional Needs.

The team also offers physical activity programmes which are not on referral and for people who don't have any health conditions, such as Shine (over 60's), Wokingham Active Adults (16+) and Walking for Health.

If you are interested or would like further information please contact Sian Attard on 01189 743728 or sian.wide@nhs.net

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