

Practice Newsletter – November 2011

Latest news from the Team

We will be saying farewell to Dr Maxine Ulahannan who leaves us in December to start her next job in A&E. She will be returning to us later on in her GP training programme. Kristyn, our lead nurse, will be returning to us in January following her maternity leave.

Flu jabs continue...



These annual combined seasonal & swine flu vaccines are available to anyone aged over 65, pregnant women, a registered carer or those in an 'at risk' group i.e. usually those with chronic medical conditions. We are able to offer appointments until early February 2012. **Please contact reception to make an appointment.** It is also important to let us know if you do NOT wish to take up the offer to have this vaccine so that we do not trouble you unnecessarily. The Department of Health are aiming for at least 75% all eligible patients to receive a vaccination, so don't delay!

Pneumococcal vaccinations

Anyone aged over 65 is also encouraged to have a once in a lifetime Pneumococcal vaccine. Please contact reception to make an appointment.



Appointment system

Subject to daily availability, we would like to remind you that we have

- 1 week book ahead appointments
- 48 hour book ahead appointments
- Same day appointments
- Internet appointments (beginning & end of day)

Over recent months, the reception team is unfortunately being subjected to an increase in verbal abuse from a small minority of our patients when they are unable to offer an appointment at a time to suit the caller i.e. around school runs or after work. We do not tolerate this unacceptable behaviour and incidences are reported to the Practice Manager and this can lead to registration with the practice being reviewed for the individual concerned. There are 3 receptionists at Fairlands and 1 at Normandy answering the incoming

lines from 8am each day. It is unfortunate if all the appointments have been booked by other patients before your call is answered, and if an alternative appointment on another day is not suitable we do offer a lunchtime surgery with '5 minute' consultation slots for patients who feel that they must be seen that day. These appointments cannot be pre-booked in advance nor can the patient determine which doctor they are seen by and should not be used by those who could be seen at another time. They are flexible surgeries which are allocated on the day to those doctors who are available and are slotted in at the end of morning surgery before home visits.

An amazing number!

Between 1st Oct -14th November 2011 (just 30 working days), a total of **186 appointments were wasted** as patients FAILED to attend the surgery. This not only wastes the time of the clinician involved but also prevents the appointment being offered to someone else leading to a delay in appointments being offered. Please let us know in advance if you cannot make your appointment.

Home Visits

When requesting a home visit, please consider that including travel time, one home visit takes the same amount of time as it would to see 4 or 5 patients in the surgery. Please make every effort to attend the surgery if you can.

A plea from the Doctors....

When attending an appointment, please can we remind you that the appointment is allocated to one person & one problem per 10 minute slot? If you require an extended appointment for multiple problems please request this at the time of booking to avoid overrunning of surgeries. During the consultation, please avoid "whilst I am here..." by asking that your children are also

checked e.g. ears, throat, chest problems. If they are unwell, please make them an appointment so that they are given the time and attention that they deserve and the extra consultation will not result in a delay for the next patient.

In case of snow.....!

Please keep an eye on our website as it will always contain the most up to date information during any snowy conditions.

Community Services – thank you

With the increasing numbers of visitors to the surgery, we would like to thank the Fairlands Community Centre for letting us use the car parking to the front and rear of their building during daytime hours. We would also like to thank the community volunteers for transporting patients to and from the surgery. Finally the local pharmacy teams who deliver medicines to home if requested.

Repeat medication – a seasonal reminder

Most repeat medications are issued for a 2 month period and any dispensed in November should be sufficient to last into the New Year. We see a surge in requests every November & December as people panic and think that they will run out of the medicines. Please note our closure dates below and make sure that your requests are in a few days before we are closed.

When starting your last pack of repeat medication, please remember to put in the next request at that point rather than waiting until you have run out altogether. The turnaround process for requests is 48 hours and we are not able to offer a drop-in service for urgent requests.

Work continues across the practices in Surrey PCT to make sure that patients are on the correct medicine for their condition. In some cases this may involve a change from one drug to another strength or brand name. Any changes are always in close consultation between the PCT pharmacist and your GP following a review of your medical notes. Where changes take place we do attach a note to the next prescription explaining the alteration in more detail but do apologise if your request overlaps with the information being sent out. If you have any queries please leave a message at reception and we will make sure that your GP is made aware of them.

Christmas & New Year closures



From 6.30pm on	Until 8am on
Fri 23 Dec	Wed 28 Dec
Fri 30 Dec	Tues 3 Jan 2012

Please see the list of alternative providers for when the times when we are closed.

Patient Involvement – we need your views...

The short questionnaire which has been developed by some of our patients is still available either on-line via the website www.fairlands.co.uk or in paper form at either reception desk. We would really welcome your views on how we perform as a Surgery and what you think of our services. If you are interested in becoming part of this wider email 'working group', or if you don't have internet access and would prefer to be notified by post, please contact Sarah Casemore, Practice Manager sarahcasemore@nhs.net

What's happened so far?

To date 145 patients have replied either on paper or on-line to the practice questionnaire. These views & feedback are shaping the way we deliver services to you in the future. But we need more ideas as this only represents 1% of our registered patient population, so please take the 2 minutes to complete the form and we look forward to hearing from you. Results so far indicate that we need to address the confidentiality aspect of discussions that are being held with the receptionist; perhaps introduce a nurse practitioner/prescriber to see patients with straightforward medical needs e.g. repeat contraception issues, earaches, urine infections; and finally ensure that the front desk at Fairlands has a member of staff present at all times. We apologise if you are being kept waiting especially if it feels like you are being ignored, this is not the case and the desk is monitored by CCTV and a receptionist goes to the front whenever she has finished dealing with the telephone enquiry. All calls are taken behind the wall to ensure that they are not overheard in reception, but we are aware that you are waiting and will deal with you as soon as we can. However we would like to improve upon

this area and hopefully you will notice the difference in the future.



When we are

- Thamesdoc take telephone calls when the surgery is closed between 6.30pm and 8am weekdays and on weekends & Bank Holidays. They have a base at RSCH but may do home visits if they feel it is required. Telephone 0300 130 1305. Please note that this is a **NEW** number.
- There is a walk-in centre at Woking Community Hospital, Heathside Road, Woking GU22 7HS telephone 01483 846209 which is open Monday to Friday 7am-7.30pm, weekends & Bank Holidays 9am-7pm
- There is **no** longer a walk-in centre at RSCH or Frimley park Hospital



Travel Vaccinations

Please remember that if you are travelling to countries this winter where you may need to be immunised before you depart, please book an appointment at least 4 weeks in advance with a nurse as we are not able to offer appointments at short notice. If you are unsure whether you will need to be vaccinated, please download a travel risk form from our website or enquire at reception. If you require a prescription for anti-malarial treatment, this is a non-NHS service and as such will incur a charge of £11.50 per person **plus** the cost of the drugs when you take it to a pharmacy. Some vaccinations will also incur a charge.

National Antibiotics Awareness day on 18 November... 'Cold? Flu? Take care not antibiotics!' is the message being publicised this year across Europe. It is important that antibiotics are only taken when absolutely necessary as determined by a doctor. The increasing use of these drugs is making bacteria more resistant and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are not taken for viral infections i.e. cough, colds and flu. There will also be a greater use of 'delayed' prescriptions where post-dated prescriptions can be issued if symptoms are expected to resolve in the meantime but is there 'just in case' they don't. There is a useful guide to coughs, colds, earaches and sore throats in children and can be found at <http://www.whenshouldiworry.com/booklet-final.pdf>

During the winter months, these consultations place an extra pressure on our services and the symptoms of coughs and colds cannot be relieved with antibiotics – just plenty of fluids and rest. Please visit your high street chemist, where the pharmacist will be able to offer advice on which over the counter medication will be best suited to your symptoms. Paracetamol is available over the counter from just 19p and preferable for the NHS budget if they can be purchased by the patient as required rather than via a prescription from the doctor.

Pill prescriptions

Please note that contraceptive pills are **not** available on a repeat prescription basis. **Before** your next pack is due, you will need to book an appointment with Debbie or Carol, the Practice Nurses or a doctor. This check will need to be repeated every 6 months before obtaining your next prescription.

Childhood vaccinations – an update

It is important to reply to the invitation to attend for childhood immunisations to ensure that your child is fully protected both as a baby and later when they start school. Without completing the full course, your child is left exposed to a range of preventable diseases. If you have any questions, please contact the practice nursing team for more information.

The latest guidance has changed for children following their first (8 week) vaccinations. A fever is *UNCOMMON* after this set of injections. If your baby presents with a temperature of over 38°C, please contact your doctor and do not give Paracetamol until this conversation has taken place.

New service at Royal Surrey County Hospital

There will shortly be a nurse employed at RSCH, whose role involves tracking down patients who have suffered fragility fractures e.g. wrist, hip and spine, to ensure that they are fully investigated for osteoporosis and commence on medication if thought to be at further risk.

Diarrhoea & vomiting general advice

Gastroenteritis is an infection of the gut. It causes diarrhoea, sometimes vomiting, tummy pain and other symptoms. In most cases the infection clears within a few days, but sometimes takes longer. The main risk is dehydration. The main treatment is to give the patient lots to drink approx 200mls after each bout of diarrhoea in addition to what you would normally drink. This may mean giving special rehydration drinks. Also, once any dehydration is treated with drinks, encourage the patient to eat as normally as possible. See a doctor if you suspect that the patient is dehydrating, or if they have any worrying symptoms such as those which are listed below.

When should I seek medical advice?

Most children and adults who have gastroenteritis have mild symptoms which will get better in a few days. The important thing is to ensure that they have plenty to drink. In many cases, you do not need to seek medical advice. However, you should seek medical advice in the following situations (or if there are any other symptoms that you are concerned about):

- If the child is under the age of six months.
- If the patient has an underlying medical condition. (For example, heart or kidney problems, diabetes, history of premature birth, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease or epilepsy.)
- If the patient has a weakened immune system because of, for example, chemotherapy treatment, long-term steroid treatment, HIV infection.
- If the patient has a fever (high temperature).
- If you suspect dehydration is developing (see earlier).
- If the patient appears drowsy or confused.
- If the patient is vomiting and unable to keep fluids down.
- If there is blood in their diarrhoea or vomit.
- If the patient has severe abdominal pain.
- Infections caught abroad.
- If the patient has severe symptoms or if you feel that their condition is getting worse.
- If the patient's symptoms are not settling. For example, vomiting for more than 1-2 days, or diarrhoea that does not start to settle after 3-4 days.

Chronic Disease Clinics

Please remember to book into the asthma, COPD and diabetes clinics for your annual review. These appointments are important to check your medication, overall health & chronic condition and offer the opportunity to discuss the latest recommendations & research for your specific disease.

Smoking cessation

If you want to give up smoking, there is a free, local group run in the daytime & evenings. It also offers telephone support and daytime one-to-one sessions. It is a 7 week course run by professionals and if you

would like to join please telephone **0845 602 3608** or visit www.surreyquit.net. For your information, the Royal Surrey County Hospital and Surrey PCT are requesting that all patients who smoke and who are being referred to them for a non-urgent operative procedure have engaged with this service and have attempted to stop smoking with the support of the advisors prior to being offered a date for their operation.

Private services at Fairlands

We continue to offer a range of independent practitioners who work alongside us at the surgery. Please book at reception.

- Deborah Rockell (chiroprapist/podiatriist)
- Alex Nash (chartered physiotherapist)
- Donna Varns (osteopath)
- David Weiss (acupuncturist)
- Imogen Woods & Lesley Hepburn (Counsellors)

Some patients request 'to whom it may concern' letters from their doctor in connection to their medical fitness e.g. for a gym/class membership, TV show application, college. Please note that this type of letter falls outside of the NHS contract and as such a charge of £20 is payable at the time of collection. This is also the case for holiday cancellation forms, fitness to travel certificates and private insurance claim forms where charges apply.

Mobile telephone numbers

There are times when we may need to contact you when you are not at home and would appreciate it if you could let us have your current mobile telephone number to make this communication more effective. Please let a member of reception know next time you are visiting the surgery or speak to us on the telephone.

And finally.....

Please don't forget to send you email address to sarahcasemore@nhs.net if you would like to receive this newsletter via email in PDF or if you would like to join our 'virtual' patient participation group.