

## Practice Newsletter – May 2009

### Prescription requests

You are now able to request repeat prescriptions in 4 ways:

- By letter (enclosing a SAE if unable to collect from nominated pharmacy or the Practice)
- By fax to 01483 598767
- By completing a request form from reception
- Via the internet if you have been issued with a password (see above)

Please note that we are unable to accept telephone requests for repeat prescriptions. Prescription requests will be available for collection 48 hours after submission from Fairlands and after 72 hours if you are eligible to collect from our dispensary at Normandy.

### Nurse-led clinics

Just a reminder that our fantastic team of Practice Nurses run a variety of clinics, some at both sites, covering:

- Blood Pressure
- Asthma & COPD
- Weight management
- Smoking cessation
- Childhood immunisations
- Diabetes
- Travel

Please book at reception if you would like to make an appointment to see a nurse.

### Holiday vaccinations

If you require holiday vaccinations, we request 4 weeks notice if possible. A risk assessment form needs to be completed prior to seeing the nurse. These are available at reception or can be downloaded from our website [www.fairlands.co.uk](http://www.fairlands.co.uk) Some vaccines will be free of charge and others will need to be paid for IN ADVANCE of the

appointment and please note that we only accept payment by cheque or cash.

### News update -- Swine Flu

At the time of going to print there are now 5 confirmed cases of Swine Flu in Surrey. If you have flu-like symptoms and have recently returned from Mexico or another affected area or been in close contact with someone who has,

- Stay at Home and contact your GP by telephone or ring NHS direct on 0845 4647
- Do NOT go into your surgery or hospital as you may spread the disease
- Remember to wash your hands with soap and water
- Clean surfaces to get rid of germs
- Use tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- Place tissues in the bin as soon as possible

### Results of the Patient Questionnaire

We recently analysed the results of a questionnaire which was handed out to our patients. We received 361 replies and we thank all those who took the time to complete the form.

- 75% of respondents rated the reception team as good or excellent
- 57% of patients rated the opening hours as good, very good or excellent
- There was excellent feedback for the Doctors in their questioning, listening, patience, care & concern, time spent & putting a patient at ease during a consultation.

Areas where we would like to improve include waiting times once you have arrived for your appointment; availability of

appointments in advance of 48 hours and satisfaction in telephoning through to the surgery. We have already spoken to the telephone system company to increase the waiting time whilst on hold and stop callers from being cut-off.

### **Appointment system pilot**

Some of you may have encountered a new system that we have started as a pilot based on successful services running at other surgeries in Guildford and Surrey. Many people become frustrated that they are not able to book appointments to see a doctor. To address this, some of our doctors have started to 'triage' all requests for a same day appointment to see whether a telephone consultation can address the problem and reduce the need to be seen in person. For example simple medical advice, medication queries, referral requests to name a few have been successfully dealt with over the telephone, thereby increasing the number of available appointments for patients who do need to be seen that day by a doctor. The feedback so far from patients who have been involved in this new call-back system has been overwhelmingly in favour of this new way of working and we will continue over the coming weeks to develop a process which satisfies patients, doctors and receptionists. If you have any thoughts or suggestions please notify the Practice Manager.

### **Appointments**

When booking an appointment for a smear test, please note that it can now be made at any time during your cycle providing that you are not menstruating.

### **A change to Childhood Immunisations**

From this month, we are starting to issue our own recall letters for immunisations instead of the ones previously sent by the Jarvis Hospital. Please check your child's 'red book' to ensure that they are up to date with all immunisations. If you have a query or would like to make an appointment, please contact the surgery and ask for Chrissie or Kristyn.

### **Data Quality Award**

We have just been awarded a national certificate for the high quality of our clinical data which is contained within your medical records.

### **Health Promotion**

Please remember to look at our new health promotion display boards at both surgeries for latest information on local and national campaigns.

### **Hayfever**

We are pleased to welcome a new private practitioner to Fairlands, Joanna Al-Zuhairi who is a homeopath. **Homeopathy** is a system of healing that works in harmony with nature: it strengthens the body's own attempts to heal itself. Each homeopathic remedy has been tested on healthy individuals (not animals). It can safely and effectively be used alongside conventional medicine.

Joanna will officially start practicing as a homeopath at the Fairlands surgery on Wednesday 1st July 2009. However because **hayfever** is affecting a lot of people at present and can be very easily and successfully treated with homeopathy, she will be available for a 30-minute consultation at a special price of **£15 (incl. remedy)**. Please book at an appointment at reception.

### **And when the sun finally does come out....**

**Sun tan** - A tan is a sign that your skin has been damaged and is trying to protect itself. UV radiation stimulates your skin to produce more pigment (colour) giving you a characteristic tan. Your tan will fade over time, but the skin damage remains.

**Sunburn** - Short-term overexposure to the sun can cause your skin to burn, usually making it red, hot and painful. Burnt skin can be soothed with calamine lotion or aftersun lotions. After a couple of days, the burnt skin may peel. Severe sunburn with blistering may need medical treatment.

**Heatstroke** - This is when the body becomes overheated from overexposure to the sun. Symptoms include vomiting, headaches and fever. If you think you may have heatstroke, get to a cool place and drink plenty of cool fluids. If your temperature measures higher than 39.5°C on a thermometer, or your skin has become damp and clammy, seek immediate medical treatment.

### **Moles**

Moles are small dark marks on the skin. The majority of moles are harmless, but a small number of them may turn into skin cancers.

### **Skin cancer**

The number of cases of skin cancer is increasing worldwide but it is thought that most could be prevented. Some people are more likely to develop skin cancer than others and should take extra care to protect their skin in the sun. These people usually have:

- a family history of skin cancer
- a lot of moles
- pale skin and/or fair or red hair and/or blue eyes
- freckles
- skin that burns easily
- skin that's been badly sunburnt before

### **Mole watch**

You should check your moles regularly so that you will notice any changes in colour, size or shape. Most changes are harmless, but you should see your GP if you notice:

- a **new** mole that looks unusual
- **growth** of an existing mole
- a mole with a **ragged/uneven** edge
- a mole of **varying shades of colour**
- a mole with an **inflamed or red edge**
- a mole that **bleeds, oozes or crusts**
- a mole that feels **painful or itches**
- one mole that is **bigger** than all your other moles

### **Preventing sun damage**

- Limit the time in the sun and avoid exposure between 11am-3pm

- Watch the UV index on the TV and radio weather forecasts
- Cover up, including a hat & sunglasses and wear high factor sunscreen which protects against UVA & UVB rays and reapply it regularly

### **Children and the sun**

Getting sunburnt as a child is known to increase the risk of developing skin cancer as an adult. Young skin is sensitive and very easily damaged by the sun's rays. Babies should be kept in complete shade. Use water-resistant sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher on all exposed areas of children's skin and apply generously every couple of hours. If you take your child swimming, re-apply the sunscreen after towel drying.

### **Private services at Fairlands**

We continue to offer a range of independent practitioners who work out of the surgery. Please ask at reception on details of how to book an appointment with them.

- Alex Nash (chartered physiotherapist)
- Donna Varns & Caroline Govett (osteopaths)
- David Weiss (acupuncturist)
- Imogen Edwards & Lesley Hepburn (Counsellors)
- Joanna Al-Zuhairi (homeopath)

### **Sexual Health & Contraceptive services**

If you require a repeat prescription for the oral contraceptive pill, please book an appointment with Kristyn (Lead Nurse) at either Fairlands or Glaziers Lane Surgery.

HPV (cervical cancer) vaccine is now available to girls born between 01/09/1990 and 31/08/1993. Letters will be sent out shortly inviting those who are eligible to make an appointment for their vaccination. By having the vaccination a girl will reduce her risk of getting cervical cancer when she is older. She will need three injections over about six months to get the best protection and it is important that she has all three doses. The vaccine is not painful to receive; she will only feel a small stinging sensation.

### **Long Acting Reversible Contraception**

We offer a comprehensive service for women who would like to discuss contraception. Please book an appointment with Kristyn to discuss your needs and the range of options available to you.

*Implanon* is a long acting reversible contraceptive in the form of a small flexible rod, which is inserted just under the skin on the inside of your upper arm. Implanon is more than 99% effective and offers women reliable and convenient contraception. You do not need to worry about forgetting to take a pill and there is no need for regular visits to the doctor or nurse for injections. An Implanon lasts for 3 years and does not interfere with your sexual relationship with fertility returning quickly once the implant is removed.

*Coils* come in two forms.

- The intrauterine system (IUS) is a small device that sits inside a womb for up to 5 years, releasing a small amount of progesterone directly into the womb. The IUS is more than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy and periods often become lighter and shorter.
- The copper coil (IUD) is also a small device that sits inside the womb but does not rely on hormones. The IUD prevents sperm from reaching the egg. If you suffer from hormonal side effects from contraception, the IUD may be an ideal option. The IUD lasts up to 10 years and is more than 99% effective.

You can use either coil whilst breastfeeding, if you have a history of smoking, DVTs, suffer with migraines or are currently overweight.

Please book an appointment with Kristyn to discuss these options in more detail.

### **Your thoughts & suggestions**

At Fairlands we are always keen to receive feedback on the services we offer and hear about any suggestions for improvements that you may have. If you have any ideas or areas of concern please get in touch with the Practice Manager.