Please feel free to take this home

The Swanage Medical Practice

Sept 2016
Issue No.7

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter! Its hard to believe that preparation for our annual Flu clinics is already underway. We have already started sending out invitation text messages & letters to those patients in 'at risk groups'. Every year we invite over 4,500 thousand people to be vaccinated, it's a large operation and we set up special Saturday clinics with GPs on hand offering the highest possible welfare & safety to our patients. This is an important initiative, that relies on patient uptake to keep the community clear of the Flu virus. Flu is an acute & highly infectious viral infection of the respiratory tract which spreads rapidly in closed communities, so please make a note of the clinic date in your diary. Whilst we would encourage patients to attend the clinic dates offered, we are able to offer alternatives appointments, please contact the surgery to book.

Who should have the flu jab? The flu vaccine is available on the NHS for adults and children who are considered at risk. This includes anyone aged 65 & over, mums-to-be at any stage of pregnancy, people who are very overweight & people with a long-term health condition. The nasal spray flu vaccine is recommended for all 2, 3 and 4 year olds & children in school years one & two, and children aged from 2-18 with a long term health condition.

Don't want the Jab? If you don't want to have the jab, please advise us by kindly responding to the letter we send you. If we don't hear from you, national guidelines dictate that we MUST get in touch with you to ascertain your response; this can be time-consuming and a burden on our stretched resources. *Thank you, we are grateful for your co-operation.*

A key reminder from the GPs

Face to face appointment slots are 10 mins long, by the time the patient is called & has come into the consultation room, that time has gone down to approx. 7 mins. So please be prepared, come to the point quickly & don't bring a list of items to discuss. *Thank you.*

GP Hours Changing

Due to increasing pressure of work and "not getting any younger" (his words, not ours!), Dr Jason Clark, has decided to reduce his number of sessions from 7 to 6 per week. In the near future he will be dropping his Wednesday afternoons. Similarly Dr Linda Watson is dropping to 8 sessions a week and will no longer be working on Mondays.

With this in mind Dr Ciara Murphy is taking the opportunity to increase her sessions from 5 to 6. To ensure list sizes remain balanced we will transfer patients from Dr Clark & Dr Watson to Dr Murphy. Patients will be written to shortly.

The Purbeck Pledge 2016 - Get up & get active in Purbeck
Purbeck is taking the pledge again!

Led by Purbeck Locality, Purbeck District Council and Dorset Community Action, the Purbeck Pledge is a health campaign that we are supporting again this year.

Last year you were asked to abstain from alcohol for the month of October, for 2016 the challenge is to 'take the pledge' to get up and get active in Purbeck.

Being active is all about having fun, with friends & family and is a great way to meet new people. There's a range of activities including Dinghy Sailing, Nordic Walking & Stone Carving.

The Pledge was launched on Saturday 3 September at Durlston Country Park from 10am until 4pm. For more information please visit: https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/Purbeck-Pledge

Watch this space …..We will soon be able to launch a new text cancellation service. In our quest to help YOU reduce missed appointments this will be another tool in your armoury to manage your health responsibly and help keep us informed.

Prescriptions Update - We're a little frustrated!

With all the improvements in prescribing that we have initiated over the last 18 months, the GPs are astonished that patients still come to reception demanding, sometimes rudely, a repeat prescription to be issued NOW! because they, the patient, have forgotten to re-order it on time.

For those of you that continue to do this, its about time you take responsibility and do the following:

1. **Sign up to a pharmacy** so your prescriptions are issued directly to them. The **Electronic prescribing Service (EPS)** makes the most efficient use of a GPs time & these prescriptions are therefore prioritised. There is no scheduled time allocated for signing paper scripts; they are a burden on the GP's time, particularly when there is a more efficient electronic option.
2. Sign up to your chosen **pharmacy's repeat prescription service.** The pharmacy will then routinely get your medication ready for you when its needed - you need do nothing else apart from collect your medication when you are close to running out. Some of the pharmacies will even send you a text to say its ready.
2. **Sign up to online services** and order your prescriptions any time of day or night.

Simples! Not rocket science, just three easy steps to make self management of your health easy & take the pressure off our staff & the GPs.

We always endeavour to ensure prescriptions are issued as quickly as possible, ie within 48 hrs, but cannot guarantee, even for urgent repeat prescriptions, to issue them sooner. Undertaking the advice above will make all our lives easier.

Thank you.

Hospital Prescriptions

If you have been issued with a prescription at a hospital consultation and advised to get the medication from the hospital pharmacy, please do so, even if the process is time consuming. There are some medications that GPs are not permitted to issue in the community. *Thank you.*

Please feel free to take this home

With a growing elderly population we are always on the lookout for local schemes that offer support……

Swanage Link Visiting Scheme

Swanage Link Visiting Scheme aims to befriend and support anyone who is isolated or lonely & who would benefit from receiving a regular visitor. The majority of those visited are older people, but there are no age restrictions applied. We visit those who are mobile and those who are housebound. If you are interested in learning more please contact us (details below).

They are part of a national network of befriending schemes which have been set up using a community franchising approach. Our approach is based on a successful model of operation which began in 1998 in the Wokingham Borough area of Berkshire (See www.linkvisiting.org for further details)

How to make a referral - If you are a friend, neighbour or a member of an organisation and would like to refer someone onto the scheme, you should in the first instance discuss it with them. If they are in agreement please ask for their referral form and return it to them. They will then make contact with you to discuss it further.

Volunteering - They rely on volunteers in order to improve and enhance the lives of older people. They ask you to give one or two hours per week or per fortnight to visit an older person (Link Friend) and offer friendship and support. If you'd like to do more, that would be great but regular visits are our minimum requirement. Please see the short video about volunteering from their main scheme in Wokingham Borough.

They provide training before you start visiting and on-going training if you need it. They have a support structure in place so you can always call on someone if you have any questions or concerns.

If you are interested in volunteering with them, they will send you a Volunteer Pack in the post. This contains a simple application form which asks for two references. Next you'll meet their Coordinator and complete a DBS form (criminal record check). Finally they'll ask you to come along to an evening where they can provide some training, and will then support you as they introduce you to your Link Friend. To make a referral or to inquire about volunteering or any other aspect of their work, please contact their local coordinator: Alan Dominy, Email: swanage@linkvisiting.org, Telephone: 07495 534171

A HUGE thank you to the Patient Participation Group (Friends of the Practice) for their fundraising this summer. A series of tombola & bric-a-brac stalls on Swanage seafront have raised funds for Paediatric Oxymeters. These are used to get an accurate & reliable measure of oxygen saturation & heart rate in young children.

As ever, we are very thankful for their support.

Important Reminder for our Diabetic Patients - When booking your annual diabetic blood test and follow up appointment with the specialist nurse, please remember that the blood test must be done within 7-10 days of the follow-up appointment. *Thank you.*

Are you a carer and do you need support?

As a carer it can be hard to know where to look for help and caring for a loved one or friend can feel very daunting and isolating. However, there is help out there that you may be entitled to. In Swanage there are local support groups with members that have loads of experience and knowledge about the unique problems that carers cope with.

Carers lead at the Practice, Barbara Cousins, has put together a pack full of useful information and contacts that could prove invaluable to you. This includes patient consent forms that enable you to discuss the medical treatment of the person you are caring for with their GP. *Please don't continue to struggle alone and pick up a pack from reception today.*

Q. Why didn't the GP give me antibiotics?

A. Antibiotics are 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, such as the common cold, flu, most coughs and sore throats. Many mild bacterial infections can also be cleared by your immune system without using antibiotics, so they aren't routinely prescribed.

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 the future, when you really might need them. It's important that antibiotics are prescribed and taken correctly to help prevent the progression of antibiotic resistance. This is when a strain of bacteria no longer responds to treatment with one or more types of antibiotics. Just to be clear, it is the bacteria that becomes resistant, not you. People have a tendency to think that antibiotic resistance won't affect them because they "haven't had that many" not realising that it is the bacteria that is resistant, not the person. If bacteria become resistant to our antibiotics many routine treatments will become increasingly dangerous. Setting broken bones, basic operations, even chemotherapy all rely on access to antibiotics that work.

Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats facing us today, but we can fight back. Don't expect or ask for antibiotics, treat your cold, flu, cough and throat symptoms with pharmacist advice and over the counter medicines. A common cold can last 2 weeks, coughs can last 3 weeks or more, just because your condition lasts a long time doesn't mean that you need antibiotics. Time, patience and self-care are key in the treatment of common ailments, not antibiotics.

Q. Why isn't my young child prioritised on the S&W Surgery?

A. Children up to the age of 5 are highlighted so that the GPs can view their problem and assess whether they need to be seen sooner or not. If the duty GP decides your child is not a priority they will be seen in the order that they arrived, unless the GP considers that a patient further down the list should be seen sooner. We recognise that it can be difficult waiting with small children but that isn't a reason to see them earlier than other patients. Come prepared; try bringing favourite toys or books so you can keep them entertained.

Have your say: If you have any comments or feedback about our services, please use the '*Friends & Family Test*' touch screen and we can respond to the queries raised via this newsletter. Your opinions are of great value to us & can sometimes lead to change within our practice. For major concerns & queries please contact Natasha Ritchie, Practice Manager or speak to your GP.

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