



The Swanage Medical Practice

Newsletter

March 2015
Issue No.1

Welcome to our Newsletter, the first of a quarterly issue, which we hope will keep you updated with our latest news & useful information. In an era of unprecedented demand on all NHS services we hope that being open about what & how we do things will reassure you how hard we are working on your behalf. Since last summer, partly due to the national shortage of GPs, we have been coping without a full complement of Doctors, so we are extremely grateful for the patience & consideration so many of you have shown us during this challenging time & are now very pleased to introduce you to our new GPs.

Update on The Sit & Wait Surgery

The Practice has hit the ground running following the New Year, since the 1st January 12,924 appointments were completed across the surgery, 4,022 of them on the S&W surgery. With demand on the Practice higher than ever the S&W surgery has proved a great success giving patients on the day access to a GP for urgent health issues & falling well within the desired 48hrs to see a GP quoted by MPs!

We recognise that sometimes the wait can seem long when patient demand is high but the GPs endeavour to see the patients in order of need as quickly as patient safety will allow. Monday & Friday are particularly busy days to avoid if you can.

Alternatives to The Sit & Wait Surgery

It is worth remembering that most minor ailments can be dealt with by a Pharmacist who is able to offer advice & over the counter remedies.

The Minor Injuries unit at Swanage Hospital is open daily between 8am-8pm to deal with lacerations, sprains/soft tissue injuries, simple fractures, wounds, foreign bodies in skin (eg splinters) foreign bodies in eyes, head injuries, animal/insect bites, urinary tract infection, eye infections & skin/wound infections.

For general advice & reassurance phone NHS Direct on 111.

!*Our New GPs*! We are delighted to welcome Dr Andrew Dennison who has joined us as a salaried GP. Dr Dennison is an experienced doctor who graduated from Edinburgh in 2004. He lives locally with his young family & will be working 4 sessions a week on Tuesday & Thursday. He worked here as a locum sometime ago so some of you might recognise him.

Dr Peter Blick is now a permanent member of the team. He will be working every Tuesday and is available to all patients.

Also joining us is Dr Ciara Murphy who will look after Dr Sandeep Gwinnet's patients until her return from maternity leave on 20th July working Tues, Wed & Thurs.

Many of you will already have met Dr Katie Evans, who joined us before Christmas.

We would like to thank you for your understanding during this period of change.

Prescriptions Update

Success! A huge thank you to the 67% of patients who have signed up for electronic prescribing making us joint first with another surgery in our area for this achievement. This is an important initiative to improve efficiency for you, us & the pharmacists. If you've not yet nominated a Chemist please do so soon by speaking to a Receptionist or your favoured chemist & don't forget you can also order your prescriptions online.

New Initiative: The Practice is looking for patients who want to sign up for 6 months of prescriptions at a time to save you, the chemist & the doctors from having to do a prescription each month. Please ask your chemist about "electronic repeat batch prescribing" if interested .

Foreign Travel

With immediate effect there is a change to how we deal with foreign travel vaccination requests. Any patient attending the surgery & is travelling in less than 6 weeks but more than 2 weeks will be asked to complete a travel form, it will be marked as urgent & forwarded to the nurses. You will be advised that there may not be enough time to complete the recommended course of travel vaccinations.

It should be noted that the ideal scenario is that you advise us of your travel plans at least 6 weeks or more before your departure date.

For patients travelling within two weeks, we are still unable to provide travel advice/vaccinations.

A Day in the Life of: The Medical Secretary/Coding Team

We are a busy team of 6 ladies that you may never have seen as we 'live' below stairs at the practice & are usually on the end of the phone. Our role is to deal with referrals, hospital letters, GP correspondence & the coding of patient's records. You'll find us a friendly approachable bunch & we're on hand to help you with queries regarding your referrals.

In our down time we like to get involved in local & national charities & are always willing to wear a silly nose or get wet for charity!

Answers to Frequently asked questions

Q: Why don't we provide sample pots?

A: *As reflected in the media money is tight across the NHS, and this affects us too. Unfortunately due to funding cuts the lab no longer send us sample pots for patients to take to hospital appointments or to bring into the surgery. Unless a clinician specifically asks you to collect a Monovette or stool pot, just use a clean lidded container such as an old jam jar.*

Q: Why do the receptionists ask what the problem is when we ask for an appointment?

A: *The GPs request this information. From the moment you contact the surgery a triage process is taking place. The receptionists are trained to carefully judge the most appropriate action for your enquiry. For the S&W surgery in particular it is essential as the GP's will see the patients most in need first. To reassure you the receptionists are bound by very strict confidentiality regulations. If you wish to speak privately you can ask to be taken to a 'quiet place'. However, with this knowledge in mind, it is still your prerogative to decline this request.*

Spring is on its way!

A good time to start thinking about getting active & taking advantage of the great outdoors. With this in mind we have included information below about joining the Swanage Walking Group. Walking is a wonderful way to keep fit, use up calories & be sociable.

Whilst we're on this theme Dr Jason Clark recently came 4th in The Portland Marathon, completing the run in 4hrs 1 min!

Congratulations Dr Clark!

Missed Appointments

With patients struggling to get timely appointments it is disappointing that since the New Year 566 appointments with clinicians have been missed by patients.

We understand that 'life happens' and it is not always possible to attend booked appointments, but we would be **very grateful** if you could let us know when you aren't able to come. Cancelled slots are easily filled, even on the day.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Staff Fundraising Antics

Never wanting to miss out on an opportunity to have some fun together for a good cause, in October 2014 Practice staff, GPs & their families took part in the Lions Annual Charity Swim to help local charities. We have taken part in this event for the last 21 years & raised in excess of £150 each year. For the past 2 years our mixed age team has won the cup, for the most lengths swum, which is on display in reception.

Last Christmas many staff decided not to send Christmas cards to each other but instead made a donation to charity. We are happy to announce that we raised £58, which was given to Cancare.

We have many 'non-uniform' days for charity events too, including Red Nose Day, Children In Need & Breast Cancer so if you ever see us dressed casually, this may explain why!



SWANAGE WALKING FOR HEALTH

Swanage Walking for Health organise regular (weekly) walks guided by trained walk leaders on walking routes that are classed as easy. The walks are in beautiful and interesting locations and as well as exercise, offer good company. **It is fun, free, local and sociable.** The group has about 40 regular walkers and usually has 15-25 walkers attending each main walk dependent on weather. Visitors are welcome.

Walks

Starter walks (15–30 mins) every Tuesday at 10.30 am along Swanage sea front starting from the Mowlem shelter. These walks are aimed at people with impaired walking ability, suitable for those recovering after a fall, fractures, strokes etc. or maybe just lacking in confidence or ability to walk further. Each participant is individually supported or encouraged by walk leaders to walk a distance of their choosing often followed with light refreshment.

Main walks of 60–90 minutes duration, at various locations, every Tuesday at 2.00 pm. These walks often split into two groups to reflect the range of abilities of the participants. The walks are very social and are planned on a seasonal calendar taking place from different locations.

How it started

The Swanage Walking for Health group was started in 2002 as the result of a British Heart Foundation initiative and two local nurses Christine Kemp and Karen Knapp who organised the certified training of the first local volunteer walk leaders mostly drawn from the PPG (Patient Participation Group) members.

The training covered how to plan and manage walks for people of all ages and physical capability, and also included a working knowledge of first aid.

With the support of the SMP (Swanage Medical Practice) who have printed the walk calendars until 2015, the group quickly grew to some 25 to 30 regular walkers. John and Anne Warren developed and led most of the walks until 2009 when Catrina Humpherson took over the role of co-ordinator. In 2010 the leadership passed to David Sharpe. Additional walk leaders have been recruited and recognised quality assurance standards put in place for an application to be made for formal accreditation within the National Walking for Health Scheme (currently run by Macmillan and The Ramblers). In 2015 leadership of the walking group has been taken over by John Kirwin.

Any persons interested in joining the walks please contact the Co-ordinator John Kirwin, tel. 01929 481000, e-mail swanage.wfh@gmail.com or you are welcome to just turn up at the walks. Walk programmes with details of locations are available at Swanage Health Centre or at - www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/swanage

Have your say:

If you have any comments or feedback about our services that you would like to pass on to us, please feel free to use the 'Friends & Family Test' touch screen in the waiting room & 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 you can contact Natasha Ritchie, Practice Manager or speak to your GP.

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