



The Swanage Medical Practice

Newsletter

June 2015
Issue No.2

Welcome to our Summer newsletter, hopefully the sun will be with us more permanently soon! The practice is as busy as ever and we now take on responsibility for supporting the medical needs of visitors to Swanage. Waiting times for Doctors apts. are now a national talking point & cause for concern, not least amongst our GPs & the team. With practices coming under a lot of criticism & rocketing demand we want to use this issue to help you & our visitors make the best use of the GP appointments. We also think that highlighting the number of appointments that are 'missed' (below) without cancellation might encourage patients to cancel their appointments, allowing another person to take their place.

GP Appointment Guide

Routine Telephone Appointments - are 5 mins long & are booked in advance. You must be available for the call & supply us with one telephone number only.

Routine Appointments - are 10 mins long & are bookable in advance for routine health concerns and management of chronic conditions.

Sit & Wait Surgery - telcons or apts. for immediate medical problems ONLY. Listed 1 min apart for quick consultations so not suitable for long lists of problems.

These apts. are not appropriate for requesting results, sick notes, repeat prescriptions or general enquiries about chronic conditions.

Please also avoid using this as an opportunity to see your own GP if there's a long wait for a routine apt. with them, UNLESS a receptionist or GP has invited you. We are not able to guarantee that you will see your own GP.

Temporary Residents Surgery - held daily during the school holidays from 1.45-2.00pm. This surgery is for visitors who are staying in the Swanage area only. Appointments are listed in 1 min slots & are for quick consultations.

Important points to remember before booking:

- * Don't book a follow up telcon or routine apt. for results unless a GP or receptionist asks you to. (see Q & A section on the reverse)
- * Telcon apts. should not to be used if you have a condition that obviously needs to be seen.
- * Telcon apts. shouldn't be used to discuss more than one issue.

Thank you! For all the positive feedback you've given us about our new GPs. They have settled in nicely & are very grateful for your support 😊

Help us, help you get the best from your GP appointment by participating in your own care with these top tips:

If you have a minor self-limiting illness: before booking consider self management with advice from a pharmacist & over the counter treatments.

Ask yourself: do I really need to be seen quickly, or would I be better waiting & booking a routine apt. with my own GP? If you have a long term condition you'll probably benefit from a GP who knows you.

Before you see the GP: work out in your mind what you're worried about & highlight any particular concerns. Consider preparing short notes, including how you would describe your symptoms.

It's tempting to bring a list of problems: but consider what's achievable in the time. 4 problems in 10 minutes? That's 150 seconds each. It is often better to return again & spend more time on a single issue.

Get to the point: don't beat about the bush & don't keep important issues until the end.

Understand what happens next: if you aren't sure ask to discuss the plan again & make notes.

Quarterly Appointment Statistics

Since March, across the practice we have undertaken a total of 12,911 appointments, 3,978 on the S & W surgery. **Unfortunately we have experienced a high level of DNA's (Did Not Attend) without cancellation, 655 in all. Based on practice working hours & an average 10 min appointment that is 12 days worth of apts!** This is very disappointing. As you will be aware the practice is overwhelmed with demand; to miss an appointment without cancelling & giving another patient the chance of taking your place is not very thoughtful. Please cancel appointments that you can't attend, your support in this is vital.

Prescription Update

We've already given you **electronic prescribing** and the ability to request your **prescriptions online**; now we can improve the efficiency of our prescription service even more by offering you the ultimate convenience of **Batch Prescribing!**

Batch Prescribing....

Patients who receive repeat prescriptions, & are stable on those medications, may be able to benefit from this new scheme, working in conjunction with your pharmacist. On this scheme 6 months worth of prescriptions are issued & saved at the chemist for monthly collection (you will not be given 6 months worth of medication in one go!). This saves you having to order your medications on a monthly basis.

Either ask your pharmacist or a receptionist here at the health centre for an Electronic Batch Prescribing Request Form (EBPR). Initially you fill in the form & return it to the surgery with a repeat prescription request (this request will be issued in the normal way). The GP will then confirm whether you are eligible or not & may indicate on the form that some tests are undertaken before the request goes ahead; if this is the case book the appropriate appointments. Once the tests have been completed you return the same EBPR form, with a further prescription request, which is then issued as a 'batch' & all you need to remember is to go & pick up a months worth every 4-8 weeks from the pharmacist, with no requests from you or the chemist to the surgery needed.

Once set up, we cannot stress enough the convenience & efficiency of this scheme. We hope very much that many of you will consider signing up. Please speak to a receptionist or pharmacist about this exciting new service.

A Day in the Life of: The Reception Team

We are a team of 16 cheerful ladies whose job is varied & interesting. We work in shifts & our responsibilities cover a wide range of duties from manning the front counter & phones, booking appts, taking messages for GPs, nurses & district nurses, issuing routine prescriptions & dealing with prescription queries, chaperoning patients during consultations, holiday & travel insurance paperwork, & many other queries that we do our best to deal with. We also scan all paperwork that comes into the practice including hospital letters, letters from patients etc., into individual patients records.

Our job is diverse & never dull. It can be challenging at times but it is very rewarding and we do meet some lovely people.

Staff Antics! Summer is here & we are making the most of it by being active! Dr Jason Clark has recently completed a 100 mile run and is in training for the Paris-Brest-Paris 1200km cycle ride, to qualify for entry undertaking 2, 600km cycle rides in the UK.

Members of the Reception & Medical Secretary teams are excitedly gearing up for the Bournemouth *Race for Life* this month in-aid of Cancer Research UK.

Medical Secretary Louise Holloway & daughter Kate have raised £80 taking part in The Rainbow Run in aid of Children's Hospice South West.

In May During Dementia Awareness week & in aid of the launch of the Swanage Area Dementia Community, staff raised money by selling cupcakes & forget-me-not badges.

Staff Training: All clinical staff at the practice undertake regular mandatory training to retain their professional status & update skills. We are also committed to staff development across the surgery. Recently the Reception & Medical Secretary teams have undertaken courses on Equality, Safeguarding (of children & vulnerable adults), completed a hands on course in CPR, are trained as Chaperones (to accompany patients, should they request support during intimate examinations) and have become Dementia Friends.

Dementia Friends is an Alzheimer's Society initiative to change peoples perceptions of dementia. It aims to transform the way the nation thinks, talks & acts about the condition. Their aim is to sign up one million 'friends' creating dementia friendly communities. If interested in this initiative go to www.dementiafriends.org.uk. Should you be concerned about dementia there is a national helpline offering support, 0300 222 1122, and if you are affected by dementia you can join the Talking Point discussion forums at forum.alzheimers.org.uk/forum.php

Are you aware that there is a local Cancer Support Group?

Cancare was formed 26 years ago in a bid to offer help to local patients & their families during periods of illness & treatment. In the early months of its creation members became aware of the many & varied needs of patients, & so the small Committee embarked on fundraising events. It is only with the support & generosity of local people that they are able to offer practical & financial assistance to so many individuals.

They are happy to visit patients, their families or carers, for a chat, or to offer moral support at any time. They are also able to offer some financial support to Cancer patients to assist with extra costs which may be incurred during periods of treatment. Please do not hesitate to contact them in complete confidence if they can help. Their leaflets giving details of contact numbers can be found in all the Purbeck Health Centres & at Swanage, Wareham & Poole Hospitals.

Two of the reception team here are members of the *Cancare* committee, Sara Ward & Emma Anderson, & are also on hand to speak to you should you wish, just ask at reception.

Answers to Frequently asked questions

Q: Why is it so difficult to get an appointment with my own GP?

A: *As reported by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) the UK has a severe shortage of GPs, a lack of investment in general practice & rapidly growing demand. The RCGP confirm that the rise in the number of patients who are finding it difficult to make a GP appointment is being brought about by an ageing population & more patients being treated for long-term & complex conditions.*

Doctors choose to become GPs because continuity of care is a key component of the role. The GPs & the team here find the current situation as frustrating as you do. General Practice is dealing with 90% of all contacts in the NHS but receives only 8.39% of the budget. Until more resources are made available we at Swanage aim to do the very best we can by at least offering daily availability to see a GP on the Sit & Wait surgery for urgent conditions.

In response, nationally, the RCGP has launched the Put Patients First: Back General Practice campaign, in partnership with the National Association of Patient Participation, calling for the share of the NHS budget for general practice to be increased to 11% by 2017 & an additional 8,000 GPs in England by 2020.

In the meantime, please be assured that patient access is a core issue at this practice that is regularly monitored & reviewed.

Q: Why don't I automatically hear from my GP regarding test results?

A: *As you might imagine, you aren't the only person we have referred to have a blood test/scan/ x-ray etc. Everyday there are scores of referrals made for further investigations and between 180-200 blood tests sent for analysis per week. We quite simply do not have the resources to contact every single patient with results. Therefore our priority is to inform patients whose results have come back with abnormalities. For this reason, & with GP appts. at a premium, we also advise not automatically booking an apt. with your GP to get the results, as the GP will contact you if there is an issue. However, if you haven't heard from your GP and your symptoms persist, please don't hesitate to contact us and make another appointment to see or speak to your GP.*

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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View our website for more information about our services: www.swanagemedical.org.uk

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