



# The Swanage Medical Practice



Winter 2019/20  
Issue No.16

**Welcome to our Winter Newsletter!** The turkey or nutloaf has been ordered, the presents wrapped and the cards are in the post, phew! It's a busy time of year and our health issues can go on the back burner as we try to get everything ready for the Christmas season. It's no coincidence that this time of year is when busy people succumb to seasonal nasties. Help yourself by keeping up your exercise regimes, eating plenty of fruit & veg, & don't completely fall off the wagon! Most importantly... its still not too late to get your flu jab & help keep our community safe.



## Merry Christmas & Happy New year!

**GP News.....** We are sadly saying goodbye to Dr Claire Lehman who is hanging up her stethoscope to take up a new position as Consultant in Public Health at West Sussex County Council. Loved by her patients & colleagues alike, we'll miss her sunny disposition and the tantalising aroma of her daily toast! A warm farewell has also been offered to our longstanding locum Dr Jonathan Easterbrook who is retiring. Popular with patients, his support, friendship and regular egg deliveries will be greatly missed.



### GP Online Services

As technology advances a rising number of NHS services will be provided online. General Practice is no exception. For any of our patients who have internet access, via a computer or smart phone, it really is a no brainer. You can:

- \* order repeat prescriptions
- \* book GP appointments
- \* look at your medical records
- \* view & print blood? test results



To sign up come in with ID & a receptionist will provide you with a unique password.

### E-Consult



Furthermore you can now **CONSULT ONLINE** with our new service **E-Consult** & get a response from a Swanage GP within 48hrs! Find the link on the home page of our website. Quick, easy & effective! Just think you hardly ever need come to the practice if you use these services.

**Go on, you know it makes sense!**

### Our Test Results protocol - Please don't automatically book a follow up appointment.



A GP will ask reception to contact you if a follow-up is needed. You won't be contacted if your test result is negative/clear. If you need a paper copy of your results for any reason, please sign up to our **Online Services** so you can view them online & print off yourself. **This protocol will improve efficiency of care to our patients, so doctors can spend more time directly with them. Previously 75% of what we printed out was not collected & is therefore a complete waste of our time & resources!**

**Sick Note Reminder....**Patients must 'self-certificate' for the first 7 days of illness. A GP can then issue one as long as you've been seen at the practice for the illness.

### Maternity referrals have changed...

Our pregnant ladies must now self-refer via an online only system. At 6-8 weeks pregnant please go to: **maternitymattersdorset.nhs.uk** and fill in the online form. This covers both Poole & Dorchester Hospitals.



In other **Staff News** we are delighted to announce that Lucy Evans has joined us as a practice nurse and comes to us with a wealth of experience. Receptionists Zoe Wilson & Anna Prewer are sharing the role of Doctor's Secretary. We are fortunate to welcome new health coach Karen Fuller who takes over from Laura Lohk.

Please feel free to take this home

**The medically urgent S&W Surgery** It is impossible for the Reception team to advise how long you will have to wait. The on-call GPs see patients as quickly as **patient safety allows**. One of the duty team may need to do an urgent visit, prolonging your wait further. Please bear with us. There are other options to save you waiting .....

**Alternatives to the S&W** It is now possible to consult with us online via our new **E-Consult** service (see overleaf), or the reception team can book you an appointment at either Swanage or Poole Hospital (very convenient if you work in Poole) with a prescribing nurse and in the case of Poole, a GP.

We are fortunate that there are several local sources of health support. If you have a minor self-limiting viral illness (a condition that will go away by itself with patience & time), unless you have an underlying chronic condition that makes you more vulnerable, we really don't want to see you at the surgery. You can see a pharmacist who can give you medical advice and suggest over the counter medications (they are trained to do this) and you can view our website for health advice.

**Coming to the S&W should be your very last resort.** As we strive to give the very ill the best possible care, we greatly appreciate you taking advantage of these other fantastic services. The reception team will advise you of the alternatives each time you contact us.



**GP Recruitment....** Continues apace but we've found that conventional recruitment avenues (we advertise permanently) are no longer enough to attract sufficient applications to replace our pending GP retirees. Word of mouth is the best advertising for our practice and the GPs kindly ask that if you know a Doctor who might be interested, or have friends of friends who might know someone, please pass on our contact details. **Thanks**



**Letters from patients requesting GP appointments...** We're getting an increasing number of these. Sadly the GPs do not have a magic wand when it comes to access. If you have a medical problem either take the next available appt. offered to you, with your or any GP, regardless of the wait, or use our new **e-consult** service (see overleaf for details). You can also use your **online access** to book with your own GP.

**No unnecessary paperwork please.**

**Staff antics.....** To help those in need our kind Medical Secretaries have set up an in-house food bank collection box so that all staff at the practice can donate essential food items, personal hygiene necessities & seasonal goodies to our local centre. Colleague & organiser of the Purbeck Rally (PR) Donna Ashcroft, has on behalf of PR kindly donated £1,500 to Forest Holme and £306 to Dementia Friendly Purbeck. Dr Jason Clark will soon be flexing his muscles on the *Dorset Ultra Marathon*, a race designed for 'tough runners'; we wish him well!!



**The Text Cancellation Service** has helped reduce the number of missed appointments but patients are still not following the very simple instructions. If cancelling your appointment by text, in response to a reminder, please just use the word **CANCEL** & nothing else.



**Batch Prescribing** is suitable for certain patients on particular repeat medications. It means that via your Pharmacy we can prescribe you 6 months worth of post-dated scripts that the Pharmacy 'release' to you at the appropriate time without the delay of getting a further signature from your GP. **Genius!**

**Please speak to your Pharmacist without delay, to see if you are eligible.**

### Answers to frequently asked questions

**Q: I find it really upsetting when I can't speak to or see my own GP. Why is it so difficult?**

**A:** *We are short of Doctors despite continuous advertising. This does not mean however that you are not getting the best possible care at this practice. Many practices don't even have patients registered with specific GPs. Patients just see whoever is available. Fortunately we haven't reached that stage yet.*

*Any GP, including our Locums, can take care of you. Particularly useful is our computer system where at a touch of a button and an experienced glance, any Doctor can see what your current medical 'situation' is and act accordingly. We know that everyone feels their problems are unique and only their Doctor can help, but in reality that is simply not the case. We have a highly skilled & experienced GP team and there isn't anything that they haven't seen or dealt with before. General Practice is changing, you are also likely to see a prescribing nurse, community pharmacist or paramedic here in the near future.*

**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.

**Next Issue:** Spring 2020