



# The Swanage Medical Practice

Spring 2019  
Issue No.15

**Welcome to our Spring Newsletter!** Spring hasn't quite sprung yet, we've had a few false starts, but hopefully it won't be long before we can shed our winter garb. Many of you will have your mind on potential overseas trips for the year ahead. Don't forget to contact us well in advance (at least 6 weeks before travel) if you think you'll need any vaccinations, and do remember to take the appropriate level of sun protection.

**GP News...** We'd like to extend a warm welcome to Dr Sarah Basham who has recently joined us taking over the care of Dr Gwinnett's patients. Our continued grateful thanks to Dr Jonathan Easterbrook, Dr Nayan Solanki, Dr Kiran Qureshi, & Dr Sue Warren the wonderful Locum GPs who continue to support us! From April 1st Dr Claire Lehman is changing her status with us, becoming a salaried GP & reducing her hours to 1 day per week; she will no longer have a list of her own patients. We will be contacting all of Dr Lehman's patients advising them of who their new GP is in due course. In the meantime they can make appointments with any of the locum GPs & with Dr Lehman if she has availability. GP recruitment continues to be a challenge and we are *eternally grateful for your continued patience & understanding!*



### Swanage Hospital X-Ray Dept. Temporary Closure

We have been informed that the unit will be closed for approximately 3 months for refurbishment. During this time all X-ray's will be performed at either Poole General or Victoria Hospital, Wimborne. All ultrasounds however, will continue to be done at Swanage.

### Zero tolerance

NHS staff dedicate their lives to protecting & caring for us in our times of greatest need so for any one of them to be subject to verbal aggression or violence is completely unacceptable. Our Staff always strive to give the best care/advice possible in a hugely pressurised environment. Please consider your behaviour very carefully before engaging with any staff & clinicians at the Practice. Should we need to 'off list' you the alternative choice for such patients is a surgery in Boscombe!

### Patient Recall requests

Part of our remit is to co-ordinate ongoing monitoring of patients with chronic conditions or who take particular medications. This may require us to send you letters or to contact you by text inviting you to submit blood pressure readings, attend for a blood test or review appt. with a specialist Nurse or your GP. These are 'safety net' requests to ensure a patient is responding well to medications & self maintenance of long term (chronic) health conditions. This monitoring is very important but we're finding that we're having to spend increasing amounts of time chasing patients who don't respond. This is such a shame as this monitoring is part of our 'care package' to you.

Please **help us, help you** manage your health by responding to our requests.



### Bowel Screening

If you are aged between 60 and 74, you will be invited to take part in bowel cancer screening every two years. If you are aged 75 or over, you can ask for a screening test by calling the free bowel cancer screening helpline on 0800 707 60 60 or visit NHS Choices for more information about bowel screening in England.

**Bowel Scope screening** is another part of the national bowel cancer screening programme. The test is gradually being introduced and will eventually invite all men and women in England aged 55 to take part. The NHS Choices website has more information on bowel scope screening. **As a practice we strongly advise that you take part in these screening programmes when invited to do so.**

### New Service at SCH Minor Injuries Unit & PGH

We are now able to book appointments with an advanced prescribing nurse at Swanage MIU for patients who aren't able to attend the surgery but do need help with minor self-limiting conditions. For patients who work in Poole we can book appointments with Doctors at Poole General. Next time you contact us regarding your health you may be offered one of these options by the reception team if appropriate.



### A plea to all from our clinicians.....

Please, when coming for an appointment, take off your outerwear before being called in to your consultation. This includes jumpers & cardigans if you are attending for a blood test or BP appt. This saves precious time when your appointment is only 5 or 10 minutes long.

**Follow up GP Appointments.....** When a GP asks you to book a follow-up appointment with them in a few weeks time, you need to book this immediately after the initial consultation. Our appointments are at a premium so if you don't book straight away there will be no appointment for you. Our poor reception team can't magic up appointments where there are none. So please book at the time of your GP ask-



**Availability or lack of appointments....** A perennial problem for GP practices & one that is difficult to resolve without help from you. We are currently operating with 6 sessions unfilled by a GP despite an active recruitment drive. Some of our GPs are booking routine appointments for 3 weeks ahead. Of course, for urgent health issues the Urgent S&W is available to use, so there is always access to a GP for serious problems & there is often availability sooner with one of our regular Locum GPs. **We recognise & are aware of your frustration**, but please be minded that we are working at full capacity, so getting angry with our staff is pointless. Instead we need your patience, support & flexibility. Be open about who you see, you don't have to see your own GP for instance - something several patients insist on, which of course is their right, but it may mean a self-inflicted longer wait. Any of our GPs including the Locums can see your medical record & have an understanding of your health 'situation'. Don't come to the surgery for minor self-limiting illnesses. Your first port of call should be a pharmacist who can offer advice & suggest over the counter remedies, and for injuries go up to the MIU at the hospital. If your health issue is routine then waiting a few weeks isn't medically a problem. So before launching into an aggressive diatribe about how awful our service is, think carefully about what you need, how urgent the problem actually is, and take the *care navigation path* that the receptionist has been trained to offer you.

**Your support & considerate attitude is much appreciated.**



**Patient Participation** We are keen to encourage more patient participation in the machinations of the practice. However it is realised that busy lives & time limitations mean that it's not easy for people to come to the regular meetings of our *Patient Participation Group*. With this in mind we have created a '**Virtual Patient Group**'. By signing up to the '**Virtual Participation Group**' you will receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter and be kept informed with regular updates about new initiatives at the Practice. We might also ask you for your opinion on the services we provide. If this is of interest to you, please speak to a receptionist who can give you a form to sign up.

**Staff antics.....** We are simply bursting with pride for our friend & colleague Donna Ashcroft who has been honoured with the prestigious **Best Event In Purbeck Award** for the 2018 *Purbeck Rally* - an annual steam enthusiasts event that she organises. **Well done Donna!**



**Ear Syringing.....try it at home**

There is always high demand for these appointments but do you know that you can syringe your ears in the comfort of your own home? Buy a kit from your pharmacy and give it a go!



**Cancare Cancer Support Group for the Isle of Purbeck** *Cancare* is a local charity set up in 1989 to assist cancer patients, their families and friends. They are able to offer holistic & financial help throughout periods of treatment and visits to hospital. Whatever your need, they may be able to help. Three members of the charity's committee work at the surgery; Sara Ward, Jane Haysom & Emma Woolston. If you need any support or advice please do pop into the surgery & one of these lovely ladies would be delighted to help.

**Answers to frequently asked questions**

**Q: I felt really awkward talking about my/my parent's end of life care plan, why did my GP ask me about it?**

**A:** *The entire relationship between GP and patient is based on good communication. GPs have a unique role in the NHS of caring for patients from when they are born to the end of their lives. Making sure patients and their families feel supported at the end of life is an essential part of what we do, and in many ways, one of the most privileged aspects of our role. We understand that people might not always feel comfortable talking about end of life care for themselves or relatives, but patients should feel reassured that GPs are highly-trained to have sensitive conversations with them and their families in order to ensure that their plans and wishes are met. Society places huge importance on talking about birth – and rightly so – but this should also extend to talking about death & making sure our patients are given the right support & guidance when they are at their most vulnerable.*

**Q: What is a DNAR form and Advance Decision?** **A:** *It can be overwhelming to be asked to make healthcare decisions for someone who is dying & is no longer able to make his or her own decisions. It is even more difficult if you do not have written or verbal guidance. A Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) form is a document issued & signed by a doctor with a patient's consent, which tells your medical team not to attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The form only covers CPR, so if you have a DNAR form you'll still be given all other types of treatment for your condition as well as treatment to ensure you're comfortable and pain-free. The form is easily recognised & verifiable, allowing healthcare professionals to make decisions quickly about how to treat you. It is not legally binding however so you may also wish to have an Advance Decision (Living Will) which is legally binding. This allows you to write down any treatments that you don't want to have in the future, in case you later become unable to make or communicate decisions for yourself. At your request, your GP is more than happy to discuss either of these options with you or for more information you can visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment>*

**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.