



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Winter 2018



Welcome to the winter newsletter from Swallowfield Medical Practice.
This newsletter is produced jointly by the Practice and the Patient Participation Group.
Our shared aim is to improve communication and keep you informed.

Surgery Christmas Opening Times

The normal opening hours for the surgery are 8am – 6.30pm Monday-Friday. These times will apply over the Christmas period EXCEPT as noted below:



Wednesday 12th December	8am - Noon & 2pm – 6.30pm <i>Cover will be provided Noon – 2pm. Please phone our main number: 0118 9883134 if urgent and follow the instructions</i>
Christmas Day (Tuesday 25 th December)	CLOSED
Boxing Day (Wednesday 26 th December)	CLOSED
New Year's Day (Tuesday 1 st January)	CLOSED

The Dispensary will close at 4pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

GP Services – Out of Hours

If you need urgent GP Services when the Practice is closed, then please phone 111 and you will be connected to the 'NHS 111' Service which is available at any time of the day or night and is free from all landlines and mobiles.

The 'NHS 111' Service may direct you to two local nurse-led units, either at Bracknell or Thatcham, which offer advice and treatment for injuries which aren't life threatening and don't need a visit to A&E.

In the event of a life-threatening medical emergency you should as always dial 999 and ask for 'Ambulance'.

Prescriptions and Medicines

Do make sure that you have sufficient prescription medicines to last you through the festive period. This is a very busy time of the year so it is important that you order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time. Please help our Dispensing Team by giving as much notice as possible in December – this will help to avoid the seasonal rush.



Don't forget to check that your usual 'Home Remedies and Medicines' Cupboard is also well stocked for the holiday period.

Local Pharmacy Services – (Duty Pharmacist/Prescription Dispensing)



Opening times for the Emergency Chemist Duty Rota for the Christmas period can be found on the Practice door/window and on the practice website:

www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk

Note: the Asda Pharmacy at Lower Earley is open every day throughout the holiday period except for Christmas Day: Telephone: 0118 9870310

Five New Year's Resolutions for a healthier you

1. **Move more** – getting enough activity means a stronger fitter you and is also good for your mind
2. **Eat well** – a healthy diet can help you look and feel great. Start by shelving the sugar and cutting back on fat
3. **Be smoke free** – no surprises here. No matter how long you've smoked for, quitting helps improve your health straight away. You can ask our receptionists, in strictest confidence, about referral to the practice's 'No Smoking Adviser'.
4. **Drink less alcohol** – cutting back is good for your health. It can boost energy levels and improve the quality of your sleep
5. **Sleep better** – it's important to get a good night's sleep. It allows your mind to relax, improving your mental and emotional well-being

Promise yourself you'll put at least one of these on your New Year's List. Find out how to tackle it and what local support is there for you by checking out NHS Choices on-line or asking about health leaflets available from the surgery.

Coping with colds and flu - here's how to look after yourself

"Try to rest, eat well, avoid stress, and keep hydrated" advises Dr Beacham. "If your temperature is slightly up you may need extra fluids. Taking paracetamol can help with fever or pain and inhaling steam with a decongestant can help to clear a blocked nose. Antibiotics **cannot** help colds and flu so you don't need to see a GP, but local pharmacists are there to help with symptom advice and non-prescription medicines"



When to see a doctor

Whilst most cold & flu bugs will run their course without doing any real harm Dr Beacham says that you should seek medical help if you have a very high temperature and feel ill in other ways, for example with an unusually severe headache, abdominal pain, vomiting or a rash. Babies, children, older frailer people or those with a chronic condition should also get help if they're unwell.

Medical dictionary

Antibiotics....are medicines 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 (caused by a virus) such as the common cold, most coughs and sore throats



Could you help to take our patients to and from our surgeries or local hospitals?

If you have your own car and one morning a week to share then do please contact Stevie Horton of the Shinfield Voluntary Car Service on 0118 9883400 or her mobile 0791 767 2222 to find out more with no obligation.



You need to live somewhere within our medical practice catchment area. You choose when and where you drive and the Car Service will give you training and pay your expenses.

So if your New Year's resolution it to do some worthwhile voluntary work this year then why not consider giving Stevie a call?

During July to September this year 330 appointments were lost to people who failed to turn up. This equates to about 55 hours of clinical time being wasted. Please do let us know if you can't attend so that we can re-allocate your appointment to somebody that needs it.

Practice Staffing Update

Farewell to Amanda one of our newer receptionists who has decided to move on. Also to Julie Lyons, one of our HCAs who re-joined us in 2017 having had a career break; Julie is stopping work to look after her family. Both leave us in November/December as well as Liz Smart who leaves the admin team in January having worked with us for nearly 12 years. We wish them all well in their future endeavours.

We welcome Claire Hunter who joined us on 7 November as a receptionist. Claire has previously worked within primary care in a similar role.

Karissa Rossiter will be leaving us to start her maternity leave shortly. We wish her well and look forward to meeting her bundle of joy in the new year.

Simple steps to help keep warm and well this winter

1. Look after yourself and keep a check on older neighbours or relatives
2. Layer your clothing and wear well-gripping shoes if you need to go outside
3. Try to make sure you have regular hot meals and drinks



Tell the PPG what you think

The Patient Participation Group exists to make sure that the views and concerns of patients are listened to and taken into account in the way that the Practice operates.

If you attended the first flu clinic at the end of September you will have seen two members of the PPG in the waiting room talking to patients about their experience of the practice. We collected lots of useful input which we will be discussing at our next meeting with Dr Beacham and the team. The main concern raised was about the difficulty of obtaining appointments which is a concern to everybody as new houses get built and the number of patients continues to grow.

The PPG has its own email address – ppg.smp@nhs.net – so please use this to contact us if you have specific concerns or there is something you would like to discuss.

Useful Numbers and Contact details

Main Line	0118 988 3134
Appointments:	0118 988 3473
24hr Automated System:	0118 976 9606
Dispensary:	0118 988 3459
Fax:	0118 988 5759

Website: www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk

Patient Participation Group: ppg.smp@nhs.net

We wish all our patients a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year