



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Autumn 2016



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

Flu Clinics Autumn 2016

Saturday 24th September & Saturday 8th October

8.30am - 12 noon



A vaccine is available every year to protect those people who are at most risk of complications or who aren't able to fight off flu as easily as others.

If you are in one of the following at-risk groups then you really should have your immunisation:

Heart disease; Stroke; TIA; MS; Asthma; COPD; Diabetes; Kidney disease; Liver disease; Immunosuppressed; aged 65 years or over; a Carer or are Pregnant.

Please come along to one of the Flu Clinics to get your free vaccination - no need to book.

Children's Flu

Protecting children can stop flu spreading to others in the community, especially babies and grandparents who may be at higher risk from flu. Most children receive a nasal flu spray which is painless and easy to have.

We will be holding separate flu clinics in the autumn for children in the at-risk groups and those who are aged 2, 3 and 4 years as at 31 August 2016. More information will be available shortly so please look out for adverts in the surgery or on our website for details of clinics

If you have difficulty getting out & about and need assistance with transport to one of the Flu Clinics or any other appointments then contact Shinfield Voluntary Car Service who may be able to help.

Enquiries/Bookings Office: 0118 9883400 Mon /Wed/Fri mornings.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer driver for the Car Service can find out more from Sandy Smith via the Office. Applicants need to own a car & be able to offer around 4 hours a week. Expenses paid.

CQC - A Good Practice!

It's official! - Swallowfield Medical Practice has been classified a 'Good' Practice by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). All GP practices in England are being inspected by the CQC and on 8th June this year 5 inspectors descended on the practice for the day. They undertook in-depth inspections into the quality of care provided and management of the Practice under the following headings:

Are services safe? Are the services effective? Are the services caring? Are the services responsive to people's needs? Are the services well led?

After a presentation to the inspection team members of staff working on the day were interviewed, processes, policies and procedures examined and evidence gathered. Patients were also interviewed as were representatives from the PPG. It was a gruelling and stressful day for everyone in the practice but our hard work and commitment has paid off with a 'Good' result. A summary of their findings can be seen in the matrix below.

| | Safe | Effective | Caring | Responsive | Well-led | Overall population group |
|---|------|-----------|--------|------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Older people | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| People with long term conditions | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Families, children and young people | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Working age people and the recently retired | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| People in vulnerable circumstances | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| People experiencing poor mental health | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Overall Key Question | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | |
| Overall location | Good | | | | | |

Our thanks to everyone involved and to those patients who completed CQC comment cards - all of which were favourable!

A full report is available on our surgery website or you can go to:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/1-199752536>

During April to June 2016 421 appointments were lost to non-attenders. This equates to 70 hours of clinical time being wasted. Please do let us know if you can't attend so that we can re-allocate your appointment.

Antibiotics - A Growing National Concern

Antibiotics are medicines used to treat both humans and animals. Before antibiotics were introduced people often died from infections such as pneumonia or meningitis. Simple medical procedures were risky because of the chance of infection. That changed with the introduction of antibiotics in the 1940s. Since then, these medicines have enabled us to fight infections and save millions of lives.

BUT antibiotics are becoming ineffective against many infections because as a nation we aren't using them properly:



- We take medicines that we don't need. Antibiotics don't help viral infections including most coughs and colds.
- If antibiotics are prescribed we often don't take them exactly as prescribed eg missing doses, not taking the whole course, saving some for the future or giving them to someone else.

This is leading to Antibiotic Resistance and is one of the biggest threats facing us today.

What can you do to help?

Don't ask for antibiotics - treat your cold and flu symptoms with pharmacist advice and over the counter medicines

Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed, never save them for later, never share them with others

Spread the word - tell your family and friends about antibiotic resistance

Staff Update

Farewell

We have seen several changes to our reception and admin team over the past three months. We've said farewell and many thanks to receptionists Mandy Smith, Juliet Devon and also to Sid Underdown and Steph Prosser who've both left us to begin their

maternity leave. We wish them well with their forthcoming arrivals and hope to see them both and their new babies soon.

Welcome

We've recently appointed 2 new receptionists and have pleasure in welcoming - Claire Dean and Robin Slone.

As you may realise, Medical Receptionists require a tremendous amount of knowledge to be able to perform their role efficiently, so please bear with us during the training period for our new staff. They aren't able to work as quickly as the experienced receptionists and will need to constantly check with other team members to ensure they are giving out correct information. This will inevitably slow the reception team down and we appreciate it may take longer to get through on the phones at times, so we thank you very much for your consideration and patience.

Community Navigator

A community navigator is a trained volunteer who is able to help patients identify any community support needs they may have. They will signpost you to appropriate sources of social support and other non medical services within the community. Linking with these organisations can help to improve your general health and well being, reduce feelings of isolation and allow you to meet others who share your diagnosis.



For information on Carers Support across Wokingham Borough contact Rhiann Jivani - Email: Rhiann.Jivani@involve.community or Call: 01344 304404

Smoke Free Life - Berkshire

You can do it! Over the twelve month period from April 2015 - March 2016 there have been a total of 857 '4 week' quits in GP Surgery clinics across Berkshire.

To find out more about the Smoking Cessation Clinic we have here at the Swallowfield Medical Practice please contact Reception for details on 0118 9883473

Volunteering Opportunity

Are you an excellent communicator, IT literate and have team management experience? Shinfield Voluntary Car Service is looking for a Voluntary General Manger to work around 20 flexible hours a month based at their Spencers Wood Office and from home. This is a rewarding role helping to run a small established local charity which aims to get less able people out and about and helps to bring patients to and from routine bookings at Swallowfield Medical Practice Surgeries. If you are interested in finding out more then please leave your name and number on 0118 9883400 for Sandy Smith who will get back to you.



Letter from the Doctors to all Patients of Swallowfield Medical Practice

Dear Patients

The NHS and General Practice are increasingly under pressure and we would like to share some of the issues we are facing with you, so that you might understand our difficulties. We know that you are waiting longer for appointments and know how frustrating this is. The demand on our services has been growing for many years and we find ourselves in a position where we are unable to provide you with the level of service that we have been able to in the past. We are working in an unsustainable situation where we are constantly being expected to do more and more work, without the funding and resources to support this. Did you know the average GP practice receives an annual payment of just £136 per patient from the government?

Why are GPs busier than they used to be? Life expectancy is greater than ever before, and older people have far more complicated medical and social problems. Hospitals are discharging patients earlier after admissions and many conditions which were once managed in hospital now fall under the GP's remit. Hospital services are also under pressure with long waiting times - this has a knock on effect as GPs are having to plug the gap while patients wait for appointments eg by prescribing pain relief, injecting joints, providing sick notes etc. As GPs, we are not only managing patients who are ill; we also do a lot of work on disease prevention and treating conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and raised cholesterol to stop them causing life threatening illnesses in the first place.

In the hours before, after and between surgeries the doctors check their test results (there could be upwards of 50 each day), follow up letters from the hospital (all have to be checked against patient records and changes in medication etc put in place), sign prescriptions, organise referrals, liaise with district nurses, hospitals and social services, do home visits for house bound patients and ensure that the necessary admin has been completed and everything has been done for our patients.

Some people think that GPs should work a bit harder or see a few extra patients each day. The average working week is 50 hours + already and we work in the evenings and at weekends to ensure that paperwork is up to date. Working longer hours would make it unsafe for us to make life and death decisions. During our 10 minute appointments we see a range of conditions from back ache to brain tumours, diabetes to domestic abuse. We have to spot whether a cough is just a cough or something more sinister, decide if bruises in children are a result of neglect or just normal play.

At Swallowfield we have already introduced our Acute Illness Nurse-led clinics which has relieved some the pressure on GPs for minor conditions. This is a really important area where you could help too. Many conditions could be self-managed. Before phoning us, we strongly urge you to consider whether anyone else can help you. Below are some areas for you to consider:

Your local pharmacist may be able to give you the help you need so you won't have to spend time trying to get an appointment. Pharmacists are highly trained health professionals who are experts in medicines. They can offer advice about minor ailments, coughs, colds, sore throats, aches and pains, upset stomachs, medication queries as well as contraceptive advice and lifestyle advice.

You may be able to manage your condition yourself using reliable internet sources such as www.nhs.uk/conditions or www.patient.co.uk. They offer excellent advice about when you need to be concerned, how long an illness should last and when you should contact your doctor. Make sure you have a thermometer at home - when you or our child are unwell, knowing what your temperature is makes a big difference to any advice given. Have simple remedies at home - PARACETAMOL is great for easing pain and lowering temperatures. Pick up our Self Care leaflet when you are in the surgery - this gives handy tips on treating common ailments.

We are not the only GPs feeling the strain - this is a national problem. We can't provide a platinum service without the resources so we ask 2 things from our patients to help us. Firstly consider whether you can manage your health in other ways as suggested above, and secondly that you be patient with us and our staff if we can't always give you what you want when you want. We are doing our very best in a very difficult climate.

Thank you for your continued support.

Dr Beacham, Dr Prabhakar, Dr Ansari, Dr Hegarty, Dr Dugmore, Dr Smith

Useful Numbers and Contact details

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|------------------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| Main Line: | 0118 9883134 | Appointments: | 0118 9883473 |
| 24hr Automated System: | 0118 9769606 | Dispensary: | 0118 9883459 |
| Fax: | 0118 9885759 | Website: | www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk |