



Swallowfield Medical Practice Newsletter Summer 2018



Welcome to the Summer 2018 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 2018

There has been a slight change to the national flu immunisation guidelines for this year with 2 different vaccines available based on patient age. Patients aged 65 and over will receive a trivalent vaccine which has shown to be more effective in this age group. Those under 65 and in a clinical risk group (Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, Heart Disease, pregnant or immunosuppressed) will receive the same vaccine as in previous years. We are still awaiting definitive delivery information from our suppliers. However, we hope to have enough stocks in to cover our first planned flu clinic which is on:

Saturday 29 September - 8.30am – 12 noon.

There is no need to book an appointment – just turn up and get jabbed!

We will be holding another Saturday drop-in flu clinic in November – dates to be confirmed once we have exact delivery dates from our suppliers, so keep looking out for information on our website and in the surgeries.

508 appointments were missed between January and March 2018. This equates to **84.5** hours of clinical time wasted - more than 2 weeks' worth of clinics.

PLEASE, PLEASE let us know if you cannot attend your appointment so that we can release it for someone who needs it.

We do send out appointment reminders by text – if you haven't registered for this and would like to please let reception have your mobile details. Thank you.

Extension Update

The extension and refurbishment of the practice is well underway. We have now moved the administrative team into the new offices. The refurbishment of existing rooms to create extra consulting rooms is going well and we hope that by mid July all works will be complete. In total we will have gained 3 additional consulting rooms, a multipurpose room (which could be used for clinical and non-clinical use), a dedicated file storage room, a ground floor meeting room and additional office space.

We would like to thank all of our patients for their patience and understanding during the build. It hasn't been easy – in fact at times it's been downright noisy! But the end result is worth it.



Staff Update

We welcomed Beena Patel-Parker to our team in April. Beena is a clinical pharmacist who works alongside our GPs and will be available for medication reviews and medication queries.

At the end of September we will bid farewell to Bonny Croker, our dispensary manager. After 14 years Bonny has decided to retire from the NHS to spend more time with her family. I'm sure everyone will join us in wishing Bonny every happiness in the future – she has deserved the rest! We have successfully recruited a replacement – Helen Knipe. Helen has previous experience in general practice and specifically in dispensing and will bring lots of ideas and enthusiasm to the practice team. Sadly, we're also saying goodbye to Dr Rehala Choudry who has decided to have a break from general practice to pursue other avenues. Rehala will be greatly missed by both staff and patients and we wish her well for the future in whatever she chooses to do.

Did You Know These Facts?

- An ambulance call out costs a minimum of £223
- A visit to A&E costs at least £114
- A visit to your GP costs a minimum of £36
- A call to NHS 111 costs £12
- The cost of self-care is FREE - see our articles in this and previous newsletters

Shingles – are you eligible for your vaccination?



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Shingles is an infection that causes a painful rash – usually on the tummy, chest but sometimes face, eyes or genitals. It can take 4 weeks for the rash to heal but the skin can be painful for weeks after the rash has gone. You can't get shingles from chickenpox – but you can get chickenpox from someone with shingles if you haven't had chickenpox before!

When people get chickenpox, the virus remains in the body. It can be reactivated later and cause shingles if someone's immune system is lowered. This can be because of stress, certain conditions or treatments like chemotherapy.

Since the start of the national shingles vaccination programme in 2013 evidence has shown that there has been a marked reduction in cases and long term complications - an estimated 17,000 GP visits for shingles were avoided among the 5.5 million individuals who were given the vaccination in the first 3 years of the programme across England, according to the study.

Once you reach 70 years of age you are eligible to receive a shingles vaccination – you remain eligible until your 80th birthday – the reason for this cut off is due to the reduced efficacy of the vaccine as age increases.

If you haven't had your vaccination already and are in the eligible age group please phone reception and book your appointment.

Long term Conditions

Did you know that 30% of the population are living with one or more long term condition eg asthma, diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure). As we get older the number of conditions we live with increases – some patients may have 4 or 5 different conditions to cope with. This can be quite a daunting prospect and we want to help our patients to have the confidence to be able to manage their conditions well themselves – in general patients spend only 4 hours per year with a healthcare professional whereas

they have to manage the remaining 8756 hours themselves.

So, with this in mind we are introducing a different approach to our routine annual monitoring of patients with some of these long term conditions. We want the consultations you have to be collaborative – you will be involved in devising your own care plan to identify goals, support needs, develop your action plan and monitor your progress.

We will be inviting some patients to attend for their review in their birth month. You will need to book two appointments – the first one with the healthcare assistant (HCA). Our HCA will gather information at your first appointment eg height, weight, take bloods etc. You will receive a result letter a week or so later informing you which nurse to book your second review appointment with. At this appointment, together with the nurse you will be able agree a plan of care going forward. Any issues or worries can be explained so that you can go away with a clear understanding of how you can help yourself to manage your own health.

We already do this with our diabetic patients and this has proved successful. Our aim initially is to roll this out to patients who may have diabetes and COPD, extending this to other chronic disease areas eventually. We hope that this will be an efficient use of time for both you as a patient and for us as a GP practice, reducing the number of times you need to come to see us for annual check-ups.

New Practice Website

Have you seen our new look website? Accessible via the same link www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk this is an interactive site and has more functionality than our old site. You can also see copies of our previous newsletters too!

Why not log on and check it out? www.swallowfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk



Who's who at the Practice

Q. How many people do you think are employed at Swallowfield Medical Practice?

- a) 15 b) 25 c) 45

A. You may be surprised to learn that we have 45 people working here, who carry out around fifteen different roles required to provide your healthcare.

The Practice has dedicated teams who all work closely together to provide clinical care and essential support services. Here's a brief guide to who we are and what we do.

Health Care Professionals:

- Probably best known are our 4 GP Partners, plus our salaried Doctors. We also use Locum Doctors to cover absence when required
- Our Nurse Practitioner is a highly qualified health professional who can diagnose, treat and prescribe for patients
- The Nursing team is comprised of Asthma and Diabetes Nurse Specialists and Practice Nurses who are all Sister graded. We also have Health Care Assistants who perform various skilled duties and we have two Phlebotomists who take blood samples.

- The Dispensary is vital as we dispense to nearly half of our 12000 patients. A team of trained Dispensers work with the Dispensary Manager and Doctors to ensure your prescriptions and medications are ready for you
- We also have a Clinical Pharmacist whose major role is to carry out patients' medication reviews

Support Services:

- The Practice Manager and Assistant Practice Manager help the Partners to run and staff the Practice. Some of their activities include recruitment, finance, analysis of statistics & performance indicators, surveys, helping to ensure that statutory targets are met and preparation for CQC inspections
- The Reception Team are highly trained and handle a wide range of patient enquiries They will be able to help you book your appointments and signpost you to the right clinician. They also carry out other detailed administrative activities
- The Administrative Team manage Medical Records and ensure that patients' notes are kept up to date which includes special scanning and summarising skills
- Your referral letters are typed by our Secretary, who ensures that the doctors manage their referral workload efficiently
- The Cleaning Team maintain high standards and are important in helping with the control of infection
- The IT Manager has a key role managing all computer and communications systems within the practice
- We also have an active Patient Participation Group of Volunteers who meet regularly with the Practice to help give us a patient's eye view of the services we provide and also our Patient Reference Group of several hundred patients who respond to online surveys

You ask us

Q. What does NHS 111 do and when should I call it?

A. If you're worried about an **urgent medical concern** and can't get through to the Medical Practice you can call NHS 111 to speak to a fully trained advisor.

Depending on the situation they can:

- ✓ Give you self-care advice
- ✓ Direct you to a local service that can best help with your concern
- ✓ Connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist or GP
- ✓ Book you a face-to-face appointment
- ✓ Send an ambulance directly, if necessary



The NHS 111 service is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. It is free to call from landlines and mobile phones. You can also call them if you think you need to go to a hospital Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) or another NHS Urgent Care Service.

Life threatening emergencies

999 is still the number to call when somebody is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk

Ear Syringing

If you suffer from blocked ears it is really important that you oil your ears with olive oil for **at least 3 weeks** to soften the wax before booking any appointment. The oil facilitates the natural movement of wax and this may solve your problem. Ear syringing has always been an additional service carried out by the nursing staff at Swallowfield – most other GP surgeries do not offer this service at all. With the increasing demand for appointments we can now only offer a very limited number of appointments for this. There are, however, many alternative clinics within the local area which would be able to help – just go online to find the nearest one or speak to a member of our reception team.

Hypertension - Is this you? By Mike Hillier, PPG member,

In this article we are looking at hypertension or high blood pressure. High blood pressure costs the NHS over £2.1 billion every year but we can all improve our own health and wellbeing as well as help the NHS save money by following Dr Prabhakar's guidelines at the end of the article.



When your heart beats, it pumps blood round your body to give it the energy and oxygen it needs. As the blood moves, it pushes against the sides of the blood vessels. The strength of this pushing is your blood pressure. If your blood pressure is too high, it puts extra strain on your arteries and your heart.

Here are a few interesting facts about high blood pressure:

- **High blood pressure is responsible for more than half of all strokes and heart attacks.** High blood pressure is also a risk factor for heart disease, kidney disease and vascular dementia
- **In the UK high blood pressure is the third biggest risk factor for all diseases after smoking and poor diet**
- Around one in three adults in the UK has high blood pressure. In England 31% of men and 26% of women have high blood pressure. In England alone there are more than five million people that are undiagnosed
- High blood pressure rarely has any symptoms which is why it is called the 'silent killer'. The only way to know you have the condition is to get your blood pressure measured. It is recommended that everyone over the age of 45 gets their blood pressure checked at least every 5 years – annually if you have been diagnosed with hypertension or other condition
- Every blood pressure reading consists of two numbers. The first (top) number is your **systolic** blood pressure. It is the highest level your blood pressure reaches when your heart beats. The second (or bottom) number is your **diastolic** blood pressure. It is the lowest level your blood pressure reaches as your heart relaxes between beats
- An ideal blood pressure reading is between 90/60mmHg (millimetres of mercury) and 120/80mmHg
- You have high blood pressure if your readings are consistently above 140/90mmHg
- **High blood pressure is one of the most preventable and treatable conditions. However, between 50-80% of people with high blood pressure do not take all of their prescribed medication**

- High blood pressure was responsible for approximately 75,000 deaths in the UK in 2015 and accounts for **accounts for 12% of all GP appointments in England**
- Someone with high blood pressure that is well controlled reduces their risk of stroke and heart disease to almost that of a person who does not have high blood pressure.

At Swallowfield we have nearly 1500 patients on our hypertension register, many of whom are also being treated for other long term conditions. Dr Prabhakar is our resident expert on cardiovascular disease and below he has given some useful advice for anyone who has hypertension:-



Take your hypertension medication daily



Consult your doctor for alternative medication if there are unpleasant side effects with your current prescription – don't just stop taking it



Check your bloods once every year – for cholesterol, sugar levels and kidney functions



Eat lots of fruit, vegetables and lean proteins



Follow a low sodium diet (one teaspoon of salt a day)



Exercise regularly – at least 30 minutes per day of moderate intensity



Reduce amount of processed food – biscuits, chocolates, crisps etc



Cut alcohol intake – no more than 14 units a week



Reduce caffeine intake – no more than 4 cups of coffee or tea a day



Stop smoking



Get a good night's sleep



Keep your blood pressure under 140/90mmHG. Learn to check your BP at home, log your results and bring it to your doctor's appointment. Have your BP machine checked for accuracy at least one a year.

Useful Numbers and Contact details

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