

Hathaway Medical Centre Winter Newsletter 2011

Written *by* Patients – *for* Patients



FACT

Week beginning Monday 21 November our doctors and clinical staff made 2,279 patient contacts either in the surgery or by telephone and we also produced more than 1,000 repeat prescriptions

Hathaway Patient Reference Group.

We currently have an active Patient Liaison Group with whom we discuss issues of concern. However we feel that we need to do more to ensure that patients are and feel fully involved in decisions about the range and quality of services that we provide. To that end we intend to set up a Patient Reference Group that we hope can be as representative as possible of the 15,600 patients on our list in terms of age, sex, background, ethnicity and healthcare needs. We recognise that we need to make the process as easy for participants as possible and we envisage using both mail and e-mail communications plus having questionnaires available in the practice and on our website as the principal means of capturing patient's views. We are therefore seeking volunteers to help us form a Patient Reference Group and hope that you will consider joining and through giving your views in what you want from the Practice, help us to serve you better. All contributions will be confidential and not attributed to individuals.

Our recruiting drive is starting now. Although e-mail will be a major means of communication, just because you do not have access to e-mail facilities certainly does not exclude you from participating! Further information is available from reception, telephone staff or website or use the application on the back of this newsletter

Updated and enhanced Surgery website. The existing website is being revamped and will be launched online on 31 December. We have taken the opportunity to expand the information available and we are particularly pleased to be introducing an **updated repeat prescription ordering service**. Once you have registered and entered your list of regular medications it will be very much easier to request further supplies. Providing "cookies" are enabled on your computer, the system will remember your requirements and save you the bother of having to re-type them all. Ordering on-line saves you time and saves us time too making the whole process more efficient for all of us.

Not only will the website have links to useful contacts but will also include latest news of developments within the Practice and key information regarding the services we offer and the staff who provide them. It is our aim to provide a website that answers most of the questions you may have about your health care and that develops into a facility providing a real interactive experience for our patients. Try it for yourself as soon as you can! The link is www.hathawaysurgery.co.uk

New Faces at Hathaway

Dr Jennifer Millard joined us early in December as our new Foundation GP. Dr Millard is a fully trained doctor who is spending time in general practice to extend her experience of different aspects of medicine before deciding the area that she wants to specialise in.

Dr Remilekun Odetoynbo will be leaving us at the end of January as she moves on to another placement. In her place will be **Dr Brian Mackay** who will be with us from February and July this year. Dr Mackay is in his second year of specialist training as a GP.

Dr Peggy Van Lany left the practice at the end of 2011 and we wish her well for the New Year.

Dr Phil Grimmer will be starting with us in January 2012. Dr Grimmer has a special interest in GP education and training and has previously worked as a GP in the RAF and in Swindon.

FACT 70% of patients arrive more than 5 minutes before their appointment time; 11% arrive late.

Do you really need to see your doctor?

We take our responsibilities to respond to concerns that patients have regarding their health very seriously and repeat our pledge that if you really need to see a doctor during the times our surgery is open we will always ensure that you do so. **However, a great deal of our doctors' and nursing time is spent on attending to patients with conditions that can quite suitably be managed by self-medication.** Sore throats, colds, tonsillitis and influenza are good examples - currently there is a steady stream of adult patients visiting the surgery with these conditions. Unfortunately there is no antibiotic or other remedy that the doctor can prescribe to cure colds, flu and most forms of tonsillitis and patients need to take home or over-the-counter remedies to relieve their symptoms that make you feel more comfortable. By deciding to manage the symptoms yourself, you avoid a visit to the surgery, eliminate the risk of infecting other patients and also reduce the workload on the staff enabling them to devote their time to more serious conditions where treatment by medical staff will be effective. Almost all coughs and colds will get better on their own but if the symptoms persist for an unreasonable length of time or develop into something more sinister, then of course an appointment with our staff is appropriate and we will always be here to help. Pharmacists and NHS Direct (0845 46 47) are trained to help you decide whether a visit to the doctor's is really necessary.

What is in your home medicine chest? Having decided that your condition is not serious enough to trouble your doctor and that you will treat yourself, what medications should you be keeping at home and when should you use them? Before we go into the details of what to keep in the home, it is important to say that all medicines should be kept out of the sight and reach of children. A high lockable cupboard in a cool, dry place is ideal. Always follow the directions on packets and read and follow the instructions on the enclosed leaflets and never exceed the stated dose. Regularly check the expiry dates and if it is past its use-by date, don't use it or throw it away. Take it to a pharmacy where it can be disposed of safely.

Cold & Flu relief - there are many varieties of such remedies to relieve the symptoms of colds and flu. Be aware that many contain paracetamol and should not be taken with other medication that includes paracetamol

For **pain relief**: painkillers such as aspirin, paracetamol and ibuprofen are highly effective at relieving most minor aches and pains such as headaches, menstrual pains and relieving high temperatures, aches and pains from colds and flu. Note though that aspirin should not be given to children under 16.

Antihistamines: useful to relieve discomfort from insect bites, allergies and hay fever. Available in both tablet form and creams they can also calm minor allergic reactions to food and calm itchiness during chicken pox. Bear in mind that some antihistamines can cause drowsiness.

Anti-diarrhoea tablets - diarrhoea can happen without warning and can be caused by a range of issues including food poisoning or a stomach virus. It is a good idea to include an anti-diarrhoea medicine in your home but note that while they can quickly control the unpleasant symptoms they do not deal with the underlying cause.

Indigestion treatment - for stomach ache, heartburn or trapped wind, a simple antacid will reduce stomach acidity and bring relief. Ideal treatment if symptoms occur after a celebration or a party.

Sunscreen - keep a lotion of at least factor 15. While perhaps not items to be kept in the medicine cabinet, wearing a hat and sunglasses gives further protection.

First aid - as well as the medicines described above, keep a well-prepared first aid kit to treat minor cuts, sprains and bruises and will reduce the risk of cuts becoming infected. The following items are suggested: bandages, plasters in a range of sizes, thermometer, antiseptic, an eyewash solution to help remove grit or dust from eyes and sterile dressings for larger injuries together with medical tape to secure them. A pair of tweezers is also a useful addition for removing splinters.

Any pharmacist will be very willing to advise further on these and other suitable items.

www.hathawaysurgery.co.uk Tel: 08444 120023



Application to join the patient reference group - please pass to reception

Full name _____ DOB _____

Contact telephone _____ Contact e-mail _____