

Patient Newsletter

Autumn 2010

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The Team

Dr Laura Bethune has now started her maternity leave and I am sure everyone will join me in wishing her well. We are pleased to welcome Dr Theresa Foxton to the team, who along with Dr Ryce Rajak will be providing maternity cover for Dr Bethune.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Dr Beth Orford who has been placed with the team for the last 12 months as a GP registrar. You will however continue to see Dr Orford on an occasional basis as she will be providing some locum cover for the team over the next few months.

We are, however, pleased to welcome Dr Hadley Skidmore who has joined us as a GP Registrar in Dr Orford's place.



We are pleased to welcome Staff Nurse Eddie Rawlison to our Community Nursing Team. Many of you will know Eddie as he joins us from the Williton Hospital Team.

We would also ask patients to note that DR BARCLAY IS ABSENT ON A SABBATICAL and will not be available for appointments until October. Any member of the team will be happy to see patients who would normally see Dr Barclay during this period until he returns.

Whole Practice Training Days

Training sessions during the next quarter will be held on the following afternoons:

21 Sept 2010 – 1.30 pm to 5.00 pm
20 Oct 2010 – 1.30 pm to 5.00 pm
18 Nov 2010 – 1.30 pm to 5.00 pm

Once again we thank our patients for their patience and understanding in connection with this important matter.

Annual 'Flu Jabs

We once again plan to hold all our routine 'flu vaccination sessions on site at the surgeries and this year we will again be holding them on a Saturday to improve attendance.

All 'drop-in' sessions will be held between 9.00 am and 12.00 noon, no appointment is necessary. Dates for our annual 'Flu Jab Sessions are as follows:

WILLITON

Saturday 9 October 2010
9.00 am – 12.00 noon

WATCHET

Saturday 16 October 2010
9.00 am – 12.00 noon

To help us administer the process PLEASE TRY AND ATTEND YOUR USUAL SURGERY AND DO NOT ALL ARRIVE FOR 9.00 AM START – THERE ARE PLENTY OF VACCINES FOR EVERYONE.

We do not anticipate being able to hold any further 'flu sessions for patients, so please make every effort to attend on one of these days.

The annual 'flu jab is still the best protection against influenza for people with underlying health problems that put them at risk of complications from this virus, including all those aged 65 and over. Priority will be given to patients who fall within these 'at risk' groups.



The NHS recommends that all patients over the age of 65 or who suffer from diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or kidney disease should be immunised. We strongly recommend that if you suffer from such a condition then you should come along to one of our 'Flu Jab Sessions to protect yourself from this potential killer.

If you want to be immunised and are unable to make any of these sessions, please contact the surgery so that arrangements can be made for you.

Immunisation is one of the most effective healthcare interventions and 'flu jabs are highly effective in preventing illness. Previous annual immunisation programmes have been very effective in helping to reduce the instances of ill health due to 'flu nationally.

Appointment System

The recent changes to our appointment system appear to have settled down and seems to be working well.

Our concerns about no longer being able to offer a same day appointment with the patients doctor of choice for acute medical concerns does not seem

to be causing any problems and the dedicated 'Same Day' doctor system appears to be working well.

If you would like any further information about how to book an appointment or access our services then please speak to one of the team.

EXTENDED HOURS

Remember that the practice routinely offers bookable evening appointments (most evenings of the week) and early Saturday morning appointments for those patients who are unable to attend the surgery during normal working hours. Please ask one of our receptionists for more information if you would like to book one of these appointments.

Appointment Length

It has recently become apparent that many patients are unaware that a standard GP appointment is *ten* minutes in total duration. There have been recent cases where patients feel that, because they have not seen a doctor in a while, they have the option of spending more time with their GP. Unfortunately the system does not work this way and extending an appointment means that all the patients booked in to see that doctor are inconvenienced.



Obviously we would like to try and accommodate your needs and, if you have complex problems or a list of problems that you feel may need more than 10 minutes, then it is worth letting the receptionist know this when you make your appointment. Whilst we cannot always guarantee that we can

give you a double appointment, the receptionist will discuss this with the doctor so that, if necessary, we can make one available.

Same day appointments are obviously deemed as being for urgent problems and that implies *one* problem only. In the course of a morning a doctor may consult with over 20 patients and it is imperative, therefore, that these appointments are kept for emergencies and that complex, long-standing problems get booked into routine appointments, preferably with your own doctor.

Repeat Prescription Ordering

Many of you have expressed concern about the withdrawal of the telephone ordering service for repeat prescriptions from October. It is therefore probably worthwhile outlining in more details, the reasons for this change.

We recognised that this would be a difficult and fairly unpopular decision. Before making it, the matter was discussed fully with representatives from our Practice Patient Group in order to gain the patient perspective. We were reassured by the fact that they fully supported the suggested change being made in the interest of patient safety.

It is recognised that taking requests for medication by phone can lead to a number of unintentional errors. Reducing potential patient risk is important and not accepting telephone instructions for drugs is generally considered safer prescribing practice. As a result, this is becoming the medicines management process for many more practices nationally.

Where medication is being ordered over the phone there is a greater risk of human error on both sides. In addition drug names are often similar, mispronounced or unknown by patients which may lead to further errors. As the practice is no longer a dispensing

practice, our administrative staff now have less working experience with the names and appearance of the individual items, so requests from patients wanting to order 'the small blue ones' can no longer safely be handled.

We also feel that this may ultimately prove to be a more responsible approach for NHS finances, as experience has shown that there are often instances where patients find it easier to ring in and order everything, rather than go through by name, for each of the specific items that they actually require, which leads to wastage of NHS funding. Overspends against the practice's allocated prescribing budget mean that we have less to spend on new services and equipment for our patients.

In addition, we will also be able to divert the spare capacity from our incoming telephone lines to help patients who are trying to get through to the surgery in an emergency, to make or cancel an appointment, or to speak to a clinician, thus improving access to these services at peak times, such as first thing in a morning.

We accept that it will take patients a while to plan for this change, which is why we have delayed the change until October. For the majority of our patients the ability to order on line, by slip at the surgery when they are passing, or by post, using the tear off portion of their medication request, will not cause too many difficulties. Ordering medication on a monthly basis will allow patients to plan ahead.

Where patients have either long term or specific one off problems, they should bring this to the attention of the practice staff, so that we can work with them at that time to help find solutions. We appreciate that not everyone will be able to use the new system all of the time and that there will, at times, need to be exceptions. Should you personally have any difficulties at any time please let us know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for you.

PLEASE GIVE THE CHANGE A CHANCE AND HELP US TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY.

Medication Rules

Follow these simple dos and don'ts with all medicines:



Do finish the course, especially with antibiotics, even if you feel better.

Do tell your pharmacist if you're combining one medicine with another – whether they're medicines you bought over the counter, herbal remedies, vitamins or prescription drugs.

Do see your GP if your symptoms don't clear up.

Do read the label and follow the instructions.

Do keep medicines out of reach of children and away from heat, light and moisture.

Don't be afraid to ask questions! Your pharmacist will be able to find a quiet spot where you can talk about your worries in confidence.

Don't take someone else's medicine or give yours to another person.

Don't throw out-of-date or unwanted medicines in the bin. Return them to your pharmacist.

If you have any concerns or queries and would like further advice or information about any of your medications then please speak to your pharmacist or doctor who will be pleased to help.

Our doctors continually review many of the medications we prescribe to ensure

that our prescribing meets current formulary standards.

This helps ensure that, most importantly, your medication is the most appropriate for your condition but it also helps us to ensure that NHS money is utilised responsibly. As a result you may find that some of the routine medication you are prescribed changes. Please be assured that this will not have any adverse effect on your condition.

Watchet Surgery

We would just remind patients who use our Watchet Surgery that from 1 September the surgery will no longer be open on a Friday afternoon.

ALL OTHER OPENING HOURS REMAIN UNCHANGED and Watchet will continue to open every morning and each Monday and Thursday afternoon.

Speaking to us on the Telephone

To help us deal with your call more effectively we have a number of dedicated telephone lines to our surgeries:

WILLITON SURGERY

Main reception 01984 632701
Appointments 01984 635920
Prescription Queries 01984 635929
Home Visit Requests 01984 935921

WATCHET SURGERY

Enquiries 01984 634365
Appointments 01984 634365
Prescription Queries 01984 634312

If you have been experiencing difficulty in getting through to us on the phone, could you be phoning at the wrong time of day? Unless your call is urgent and you need to speak to us first thing in a morning, you will find it easier to get through to the surgery either late on a

morning or early in the afternoon when the lines are less busy.

The best time to try and talk to a doctor or nurse on the phone is either late morning or early afternoon. We do not interrupt the clinician when they are in surgery unless it is an emergency.

Bonfire Safety

As bonfire night approaches, so do the instances of accidental burns. EVERYONE WANTS TO ENJOY BONFIRE NIGHT.

We would once again like to encourage everyone to please take special care when handling fireworks. Advice on how to safely enjoy your fireworks display can be obtained from the local fire brigade.



When accidents happen you may be happy to manage small, mild (first degree) burns at home. Mild sunburn, small mild burns or scalds are best left uncovered. They will heal quicker if left to the fresh air. Even a small blister or two is best left uncovered to heal. If the blisters burst, you can use a dry, non-adhesive, non-fluffy sterile dressing. This will soak up the weeping blister and stop dirt and bacteria from getting into the wound. However, see a doctor or nurse if you are unsure about what to do after a burn.

You should also see a doctor or nurse if:

- The burn becomes infected – infection causes a spreading redness from the burn, which becomes more painful
- You are not up to date with tetanus immunisation

- Blisters occur, as this indicates a second-degree burn

Go straight to Casualty (after cooling with water) for:

- Third-degree (deep) burns, even if the area affected is small
- Second-degree (partial thickness) burns on the face, hands, arms, feet, legs, or genitals
- Any burn that is larger than the size of the hand of the person affected

You should place a non-fluffy, non-adhesive material over larger or more serious burns before going to Casualty. Cling-film is ideal, and is also soothing.

Fraud Warning

It has been brought to our attention that a number of patients in Somerset have received phone calls originating from 0208 6190071. The caller often implies that they are phoning from 'the health centre' and elderly patients may believe that they are calling from the GP surgery.

THIS IS NOT THE CASE. THEY ARE CALLING FROM A PRIVATE COMPANY AND ARE TRYING TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS. THIS COMPANY IS IN NO WAY LINKED TO THE NHS

Please be wary of any unsolicited calls or callers stating they are ringing from –

- The Health Centre
- Sandra Wellness
- Sandra Wellwise
- Wellwise
- Wellness
- The Wellness Centre

We have made no assessment of the products being offered by the company.

Please always take appropriate steps to verify the caller before disclosing any medical information over the phone. If you are unsure whether or not the caller is genuine please ask for further information.

Recipe

An easy Italian style dish to try for the family over the coming colder months!

CREAMY TOMATO & CHICKEN STEW

Serves 4

1.5kg (3lb 5oz) chicken pieces, trimmed of excess fat
4 bacon slices, fat removed & roughly chopped
2 onions, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
400g (14 oz) tin chopped tomatoes
300g (10.5 oz) small button mushrooms, halved
250ml (9 fl oz/1 cup) cream
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 tbsp fresh lemon thyme

1. Put the chicken, bacon, onion, garlic and tomatoes in an oven casserole at 180°C and cook until the chicken is nearly tender.

2. Add the mushrooms and cream and cook for further 30 minutes, then remove the lid and cook for a further 30 minutes to thicken the sauce. Stir through the lemon, thyme and parsley. Serve with mashed potatoes and green beans or pasta.



WE ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ OUR NEWSLETTER, WE HOPE YOU FOUND IT INFORMATIVE.