

# Patient Newsletter

Winter 2010/11

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## Team Message

All the staff at Williton & Watchet Surgeries would like to take this opportunity to wish all our patients a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## Whole Practice Training Days

The surgery in Williton will be closed on the following dates for staff training:

7 December 2011 – 12.30 to 5.00 pm  
20 January 2012- 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm  
21 February 2012 - 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm

Once again we apologise for any inconvenience caused to our patients.

## Medicines for Self Care

The practice **DOES NOT PESCRIPTION** medicines which have limited clinical value or are more suitable for patients to buy for themselves over the counter for self care. This includes:

- Painkillers for minor aches and pains
- Soluble painkillers (because of high salt content)
- Hay fever preparations
- Cough and cold remedies

- Nasal decongestants (and Sterimar)
- Tonic, vitamin, and health supplements
- Antiperspirants
- Homeopathic remedies
- Treatments for non-serious constipation or diarrhoea
- Ear wax removers (a few drops of olive oil is just as good as anything on prescription)
- Treatments for minor facial spots
- Threadworm tablets
- Lozenges, throat sprays, mouthwashes, gargles and toothpastes
- Slimming preparations (except within national guidelines)
- Creams, gels, oils and dressings for minor sprains, sports injuries and scars.
- Indigestion remedies for occasional use
- Creams for bruising, tattoos, varicose veins and scars
- Nappy rash barrier creams
- Hair removing creams
- Head lice lotions and shampoos (wet combing is recommended)
- Athletes' foot creams and powders
- Moisturisers and bath additives for minor dry skin conditions
- Travel medicines
- Foods and toilet preparations (except where clinically indicated) including gluten-free cakes, cake mixes & luxury biscuits; sip feeds; readymade thickened juices; soya milks and sun creams.

Many of these products are cheap to buy and are readily available along with advice from pharmacies, as well as shops and supermarkets (which are often open until late). Some of them do not actually work very well, e.g. cough syrups.

In Somerset we spent over half a million pounds last year on these medicines.

This money could be better spent on treating serious conditions.

In some circumstances your doctor can still prescribe these medicines on the NHS if they believe a true clinical need exists. For more information from the National Health Service on conditions, treatments, local services and healthy living please visit the NHS Choices website [www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage).

## 'Flu Jabs

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 is given to patients who fall within these 'at risk' groups.



Please contact the surgery as soon as possible if you missed our Saturday sessions or haven't had a jab yet and would like one as we have a small number of vaccines still available.

## Half of the UK Obese by 2030?

Many newspapers have reported that half of UK men could be obese by 2030 if trends continue, with four in ten women similarly overweight by that year – a staggering rise of 73% from the current statistics. These are frightening claims – but are they just meant to scare us?

These news stories are based on a series of published clinical papers examining issues surrounding the current worldwide obesity 'pandemic'. The predictions come from studies looking at obesity data from the US and UK,

which have had the highest obesity levels in the world over the past 20 years. If the current trend continues, up to 48% of men and 43% of women in the UK could be obese by 2030.

Obesity is when a person is carrying too much body fat for their height and sex. A person is considered obese if they have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater. In 2008, nearly a quarter of adults (over 16 years of age) in England were obese (had a BMI over 30). Just under a third of women, 32%, were overweight (a BMI of 25-30), and 42% of men were overweight. Worryingly amongst children (2-15 years of age), one in six boys and one in seven girls in England were obese in 2008. The number of overweight children was also around one in seven.

Today's way of life is less physically active than it used to be. People travel on buses and cars, rather than walking, and many people work in offices, where they are sitting still for most of the day. This means that the calories they eat are not getting burnt off as energy. Instead, the extra calories are stored as fat. Over time, eating excess calories leads to weight gain. Without lifestyle changes to increase the amount of physical activity done on a daily basis, or reduce the amount of calories consumed, people can become obese.



Obesity can cause a number of health problems, such as type 2 diabetes (a condition caused by too much glucose in the blood) and heart disease (when the heart's blood supply is blocked). Being overweight or obese can also shorten life expectancy (how long a person should live). In obese adults over 40 years of age, obesity can shorten life expectancy by 6-7 years.

Obesity is treated by losing weight, which can be achieved through a healthy, calorie-controlled diet and increased exercise. The lifestyle changes necessary for long-term weight loss can be challenging to achieve, but there is a wide range of support available and small simple changes can make a big difference. Please speak to a member of the team if you are concerned about your weight and need further advice.

## Patient Group

We have an advisory Patients Group for the surgeries, whose members work voluntarily with us, acting as our 'critical friends' to help us improve services for our patient population.

Some of you may have met some of the members of the group who helped us with the recent 'Flu Jab sessions and undertook a patient survey to help understand your priorities about practice services.

The group is extremely beneficial to the practice and offers constructive views which help us to better understand the patient perspective when making decisions and to be more responsive in our service delivery.

The NHS is under considerable financial pressure and the delivery of general practice services will change significantly under the new government during the next couple of years as the NHS undergoes one of the largest reorganisations in recent history. It is envisaged that the group will provide a forum to work with us on a variety of areas and be crucial in ensuring that the patient point of view is considered in all service decisions.

Watch out for the information on the Patient Group noticeboards at each surgery. The group plans to produce routine Newsletters and the next issue which should be available shortly, will give feedback on their findings following the recent 'Flu Session questionnaire.

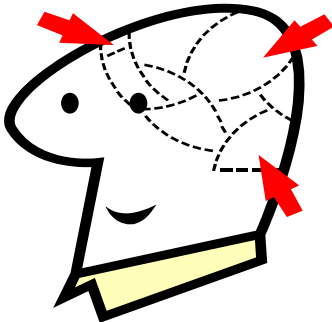
Should you wish to contact members of the group, this can be done by writing to the Chairman, Mr Peter Rowe at Williton Surgery or emailing him on [Patient.Group@willitonsurgery.nhs.uk](mailto:Patient.Group@willitonsurgery.nhs.uk).

## Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, which is a group of symptoms associated with a decline in mental abilities, such as memory and reasoning. Alzheimer's disease attacks nerves, brain cells and neurotransmitters (chemicals that carry messages to and from the brain). Alzheimer's disease is caused by parts of the brain wasting away, which damages the structure of the brain and how it works. It is a progressive condition, which means that it will continue to get worse as it develops.

Early symptoms include:

- minor memory problems
- difficulty saying the right words



These symptoms change as Alzheimer's disease develops, and it may lead to:

- confusion
- personality changes
- a total change in behaviour

Alzheimer's disease is most common in people over 65 years of age, and affects slightly more women than men. The Alzheimer's Society estimates that, in people over 65 years of age, 1 in 14 is affected by Alzheimer's disease. The risk increases with age, and people who are over 80 years of age are thought to have a 1 in 6 chance of developing the condition. Alzheimer's disease is responsible for around 60% of all dementia cases. Although Alzheimer's disease is often associated

with increasing age, the exact cause is unknown.

Although there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease, medication is available that can slow down the development of the condition. As with the treatment of any type of dementia, a care plan can be arranged to provide any necessary care and support for someone who is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

As the cause of Alzheimer's disease is still unknown, there is no way to prevent the condition, however, there are some steps that you can take to try to delay the onset of dementia. You should:

- stop smoking
- avoid drinking large amounts of alcohol
- eat a healthy, balanced diet, including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day
- exercise for at least at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (i.e. cycling or fast walking) every week as this will improve both your physical and mental health
- stay mentally active, for example, by reading, writing or taking an adult education course

As always, if you have concerns or exhibit any of the symptoms outlined in this article, please speak to your clinician for further advice and support.

## Keep Warm & Well

To keep well during winter it is essential to keep warm. This is especially true for older people, or if you have a chronic disease, or are vulnerable due to a physical disability. To get ready for winter we need to look at what we normally do every day.

As part of keeping well it is vital to keep your home warm and to keep yourself warm when you go out.

If you can't keep the whole of your house warm, at least try to keep your living room warm throughout the day

and warm your bedroom and bed before going to sleep.



Wear several thin layers of clothes rather than one thick layer, as this will ensure that your body warmth is trapped between the layers. When going outside wear a warm coat over the layers and wear something on your head to keep your body heat in.

Food is the fuel that helps to keep your body warm and you should aim to have at least one hot meal a day and have hot drinks regularly throughout the day. Have a hot drink before bedtime.

Moving around generates extra body heat, so any kind of activity will help to keep you warm. Spread your chores throughout the day so that you can alternate between rest and activity.

The best way to combat winter is to keep warm and to follow as healthy a lifestyle as possible.

## Coronary Heart Disease Prevention

There are several ways that you can help to reduce your risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD).

**Eat a healthy, balanced diet** - A low-fat, high-fibre diet is recommended, including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables (five portions a day) and whole grains. You should limit the amount of salt that you eat to no more than 6g (about a teaspoon) a day because too much salt will increase your blood pressure. You should avoid food containing saturated fats because these will increase your cholesterol levels.

**Be more physically active** - Combining a healthy diet with regular exercise is the best way to maintain a healthy weight. Having a healthy weight reduces your chances of developing high blood pressure. Regular exercise will make your heart and blood circulatory system more efficient, it will lower your cholesterol level, and also keep your blood pressure at a healthy level.

**Give up smoking** - If you smoke, giving up will reduce your risk of developing CHD. Smoking is a major risk factor for developing atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). It also causes the majority of cases of coronary thrombosis in people under the age of 50.

**Reduce your alcohol consumption** - If you drink, make sure that you stick to recommended guidelines. The recommended daily amount of alcohol for men is three to four units a day and two to three units for women. Always avoid binge drinking.

**Keep your blood pressure under control** - You can keep your blood pressure under control by eating a healthy diet that is low in saturated fat, exercising regularly and, if required, taking the appropriate medication to lower your blood pressure.

**Keep your diabetes under control** - If you are diabetic you have a greater risk of developing CHD. You can reduce your chances of developing diabetes by being physically active, controlling your weight and keeping your blood pressure under control.

**Take any medication that is prescribed for you** - If you have CHD you may be prescribed medication to help relieve your symptoms and stop further problems developing. If you do not have CHD but you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or a history of family heart disease, your doctor may prescribe medication to prevent you developing heart-related problems.

## Winter Sniffles

It's the time of year again for all those annoying sniffles and colds. The following list offers some quick initial remedial advice which you may find helpful when you are suffering.

**High Temperature, Headache, Aches & Pains** - The three most common remedies for pain, fever and headaches are **paracetamol**, **aspirin\*** or **ibuprofen\*\***. Aspirin\* and ibuprofen\*\* also have anti-inflammatory properties (good for sprains, aches and pains).

\* *Children under 16 years old and people with asthma should not take aspirin.*

\*\* *If you are asthmatic speak to a GP before taking ibuprofen.*



**Cough** - There are many **cough medicines** available. Ensure you get the right variant for your type of cough (like dry or chesty).

**Sore Throat** - Sore throat relief comes in the form of **lozenges**, **pastilles** and **sprays** as well as traditional pain relief remedies such as **paracetamol**.

**Runny Nose** - The most common remedies for runny nose can be taken orally as a tablet or as a liquid.

**Blocked Nose** - There are several **decongestants** available which are generally taken orally as a tablet or by spraying or inhaling the remedy.

**INFORMATION FACT** : Colds and 'flu are caused by viruses. Antibiotics do not work on viruses so will not cure colds and flu.

## Recipe – Alternative to Christmas Turkey

### Slow Roasted Pork with Fennel

For a totally stress free for Christmas dinner and an absolute winner with all the family, it couldn't be more simple.

#### INGREDIENTS

- small, whole shoulder of pork (skin on)
- ½ garlic clove, peeled
- 110g/4oz fennel seeds
- sea salt and pepper
- 5-6 small dried red chillies, crumbled
- 5 lemons, juice only
- 3 tbsp olive oil

1. For the pork, preheat the oven to 230C/450F/Gas 8. Using a small, sharp knife, score the whole skin of the shoulder with deep cuts about 5mm/¼in wide.

2. Smash the garlic with the fennel seeds, then mix with salt, pepper and chilli to taste. Rub and push this mixture into and over the skin and all the surfaces of the meat.

3. Place the shoulder on a rack in a roasting tin and roast for 30 minutes or until the skin begins to crackle up, blister and brown. Turn the shoulder and pour over half the lemon juice and 2 tbsp olive oil.

4. Turn the oven down to 110C/225F/Gas ½ and leave the meat to roast overnight, or all day (from 8 - 24 hours). Turn over occasionally and baste with extra lemon juice and if necessary a little oil.

5. The shoulder is ready when it is completely soft under the crisp skin. Push with your finger and the meat will give way or may even fall off the bone. Serve everyone with some of the crisp skin and meat cut from different parts of the shoulder.

ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ OUR NEWSLETTER.