

## The Newsletter of Heathgate Medical Practice – January 2017



Welcome to our latest newsletter – Happy New Year! Our front page feature reports the results of our recent patient consultation around accepting repeat medication requests by telephone. Based on the responses, our proposal has been accepted by the Practice patient reference group and it is ‘good news’ for those that currently use the telephone to order their regular medication.

Safety is key to everything we do in Practice and this month we highlight our dispensary team who work hard to ensure that patients receive their correct medication. There is a lighter mention for the team too, after our Practice Christmas edition of Blankety Blank!

We had a huge response to our feature last month about helping us manage patient expectations over the busy winter period; thank you for your support. This edition highlights the minor injury service we offer to help prevent unnecessary visits to the Accident and Emergency Department at the hospital and we feature Health Watch and the role it plays in championing health and social care in Norfolk. Enjoy the read!

---

### Patient consultation - the results!



A big thank you to all of you that responded to our recent patient consultation on ordering repeat prescriptions by telephone. Over 300 of you responded, including those that currently use the telephone to order regular medication and those that do not.

You may recall being handed a questionnaire when you attended the Saturday flu clinic this year or picked one up when you visited the Practice during two weeks in October.

So why did we consult on this? To reduce the risk of possible errors, for a while, there has been a view from NHS safety organisations about accepting requests for repeat medication by telephone and a number of local Practices stopped accepting such requests a while ago. However, we have been very aware of the number of patients that still use the service we offer and how, many of those that do, are our more elderly patients living in the more rural parts of our patch and may have difficulty ordering in other ways. In the week prior to the consultation, we received 218 requests for medication by telephone. This equates to around 20% of the total number of items requested.

Our patient reference group (PRG) helped us design the consultation and have worked with us on this process. Patients were asked two questions.

1. Whether they order their repeat medication by telephone
2. If this service ended, how they would order their regular medication

We saw a 32% response rate, of which 44% of patients confirmed they currently order their medication by telephone, 9% sometimes do and 53% indicated they already used an alternative method. The full results and outcomes are detailed overleaf.

Of those that answered the second question, the majority (43%) suggested they would return the repeat slip provided with your medication if the telephone option was not available. 19% indicated they would use our on-line service, 27% would visit the surgery in person and only 5% chose no option and made comment.

Of those that made a comment, these included:



- *My prescriptions have always been correct when ordering by phone*
- *Why don't you call back and confirm orders to everyone*
- *The phones work well*
- *Any option rather than the phone would cause great difficulty*
- *Can't see why the phone is any less secure than other ways*
- *Why is it so difficult on the phone*
- *Just seems an excuse to stop something – cost cutting*

Discussing the responses in Practice and then with the PRG, we have agreed that for the benefit of patients who order in this way, whilst it is not our preferred option, we will continue with this service, but by answerphone only. Here is the full agreement.

- We will still accept telephone requests for repeat medication to the designated answerphone number (01508) 494344, twenty four hours a day. The answerphone option allows us to listen again to check that orders are placed correctly.
- Whilst we agree to continuing, we will promote on-line ordering as our preferred option.
- Our answerphone greeting message will ask for a succinct message to be left with specific details of the medication required and a daytime contact number in case of queries.
- We will not accept messages that say 'I would like everything'. This can create waste medication.
- We will continue to monitor the service and any incidents that occur.



In summary, we hope you agree that we considered a possible safety issue, asked you for your views, listened to what you said and created a plan to deal with your responses.



## Supporting weight loss via Slimming World

Norfolk County Council is now supporting patients with weight loss by funding a 12 week programme with Slimming World. If, as a result of an NHS Health Check with the Practice team, we recommend lifestyle changes including weight loss (and you have not been part of a previous commercial programme), we can refer you for NHS funded support from this organisation.

# A&E, minor injury and Heathgate

There is regularly press comment about pressures at Accident and Emergency Departments across the country and the public is asked to consider other options before attending. This could mean visiting your local pharmacy, taking advice from 111 or from your GP surgery.

Each month we are provided with statistics from the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group in South Norfolk on both the number of our patients that have attended A&E the previous month and the cost of those attendances to the NHS. In the 12 months to March 2016, over 1,300 of our patients attended A&E Departments across the country costing the NHS just under £150,000. The trend for the year to date is showing a similar number.

Whilst we can see from the notifications we receive from the hospital, a large number of these attendances seem appropriate, there are those which from the information provided could appear to have been dealt with in other healthcare settings. We hope this illustration below highlights how we can help with some injuries without needing to visit A&E.

## Our Minor Injury Service

**NHS**

**Minor scald or burn** →

Visit the surgery and our nurses will review the injury, provide the appropriate treatment or a temporary dressing and direct you on to A&E.

**Eye injury** →

If the injury to your eye is considered minor and you are safely able to reach the surgery, our doctors and nurses will assess the situation, decide whether it is something we can help with or arrange an appointment at the eye clinic.

**Lacerations and cuts** →

There are many types of cuts and lacerations. If you are unable to control serious bleeding, ring 999 or go to A&E immediately. If the injury is of a less serious nature, then our clinicians can help with dressings, steri strips, gluing or stitching of the wound. If we feel the cut needs more specialist attention, we will provide a temporary dressing and direct you to A&E.

**Insect bites** →

Many insect bites can be managed by a pharmacist at your local chemist. If there is a large reaction to the bite or sting, we can provide advice or medication to help manage the situation. Please advise us if you have just returned from abroad.

**Rashes** →

Most rashes can be dealt with in the surgery. If you think the rash may be a feature of meningitis, then call us for immediate advice or go straight to A&E.

**Sprains & soft tissue injuries** →

Most mild to moderate sprains and strains can be treated using pain killers, rest, ice and elevation. If you have an injury and need advice, call the surgery first and see one of our Doctors or our Nurse Practitioner.

Heathgate Medical Practice  
Poringland 01508 494343  
Rockland 01508 538750  
[www.heathgatemedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.heathgatemedicalpractice.co.uk)

**NHS**

Healthwatch Norfolk is the consumer champion for health and social care in the county. The remit of the organisation is to gather views and experiences of patients

using healthcare services that are commissioned and provided in Norfolk.

They have five main objectives:

1. Gather patient views and experiences (both good and bad)
2. Pay particular attention to underrepresented groups
3. Show how they contribute to making services better
4. Promote better signposting of services
5. Work with national organisations to help create better services

We have worked with Healthwatch Norfolk recently contributing to their project on understanding working relationships between GP surgeries and other services within the health and social care system. The Project Officer spent a day in our Practice interviewing team members and many of our patients. The full report has now been published and is available on the Healthwatch Norfolk website, [www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk)

The Healthwatch team has recently spoken with our Managing Partner about transport schemes for healthcare appointments. We will flag with you that report when published too!

## Thankyou!

Thank you for your great support following last month's article on helping us manage winter pressures, demands and expectations on our services. It is great to know that you are keen to support us, in turn supporting you, with your healthcare needs. Our receptionists were really appreciative of the feedback on the role they have in helping patients.

## Our Dispensary Team



These are hopefully familiar faces from our Practice dispensaries at both sites in Poringland and Rockland St Mary.

Under the leadership of our new Dispensary Manager, Lindsay Wortley, Christine, Fran and Kerry prepare your prescriptions for collection. With patient safety in mind, they ensure your prescriptions are prepared accurately, labelled clearly, stored at the correct temperatures, in containers that allow you to access your medication and that items are ready in good time for collection.

The team work well together and are all appropriately qualified to work in the dispensary using a number of protocols, processes and policies to ensure safety.

In early February, we will be conducting a patient survey specifically about the service provided by our dispensary team and we hope you will spend a moment to tell us your thoughts.

Without their new green uniforms this more relaxed picture shows the team celebrating their part in our Christmas staff edition of Blankety Blank!

