



Welcome to our latest newsletter! This edition focuses on a range of matters including local Wellbeing services, how we can work together to manage appointments during the busier autumn and winter months, the launch of our military veterans policy and a reminder for those patients still eligible for flu and shingles vaccinations this year.

There is a little more this time about prescribing habits, specifically around pain relief and an interim update on our consultation with you last month around ordering repeat medication on the telephone. Finally, we mention the 'C' word as we head to the festive season! Enjoy the read.

Self-care and the appropriate route for care and support

The NHS frequently takes the front page in the national press and last month was no exception. One of the latest headlines referring to the report from the Local Government Association suggesting how a greater degree of patient self-care and help from pharmacies or NHS web sites, could save GPs, on average, an hour a day to make room for patients that need to see their doctor.

One of the other reports which certainly created a lot of discussion in our Practice was that around how receptionists are asking 'too many questions of patients' needs' and they are preventing them getting to see a GP or a Nurse. We feel that whilst these two reports are somewhat linked the issues do resonate in our Practice in different ways.

Patients can book routine appointments to see our clinicians at times that are convenient to them from the range of days and sessions we offer. This now includes early Friday mornings from 7am, later on Wednesday evenings until 7.30pm and ad hoc Saturday morning clinics. For routine GP appointments we do not enquire about the nature of the booking but for appointments with our nursing team we do. This is so we can ensure you see the appropriately qualified person. For example, it is important that a patient looking to discuss their diabetes sees a nurse who specialises in that field and likewise it would not be appropriate for our experienced phlebotomist, who purely deals with blood taking (including INR), sees someone for their hearing test.

However, with the increasing number of patients that are looking to be seen 'on the day' they contact us, because of a perceived urgent need, it is important that we understand a little more about that need to ensure we find the most appropriate way to help them. This could be by directing a patient to a specialist service locally, arranging for a repeat prescription when appropriate, seeing the nurse in connection with a suspected urine infection, talking to the GP on the telephone about a sick note or seeing a doctor. We had a good example recently where a patient expressed an urgent need to see the doctor and would not offer the reason why. We arranged for her to be seen by a GP that day only then for a

further appointment required to be seen by a nurse to dress a wound on her leg. If when asked, she had shared her need, we could have arranged for her to see the nurse direct and allow the GP appointment to be offered to someone else. In this example, our nurse was the most appropriate person to have seen the patient.

We recognise this can be a sensitive or delicate area but our receptionists are encouraged to enquire about the need to be seen on the day in a non-intrusive way using telephone techniques such as 'tell me a little more about your need today so we can find the appropriate way to help you'.

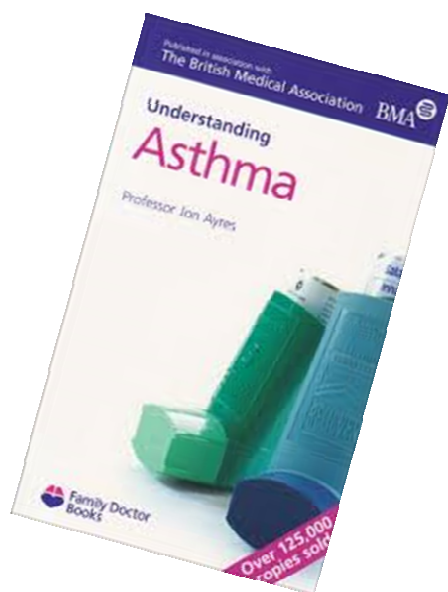
Our receptionists are not clinically trained and they are not being asked to make clinical decisions about patients' needs but through their training and experience in the role, can signpost and direct patients to the range of healthcare options that may be available. All our staff sign confidentiality agreements and understand the need to respect information they become aware of as part of their role.

Linking this to the self-care report from the Local Government Association, which holds responsibility for health promotion and awareness, we would generally support their suggestion that there are ways of obtaining support from other healthcare sources for things like minor illness, coughs, colds and indigestion. Again we recognise that there are times when this may not be appropriate but making patients aware of self-help options is important. Most people are entirely capable of looking after themselves most of the time, self-treating when it's safe and knowing where and when to seek help when they need it.

At the time of year when demand for appointments at the surgery generally increases, we would ask for your support in these two areas, considering when appropriate, self-care and engaging with our Reception team when they are helping signpost and identifying the most appropriate options for the help you need.

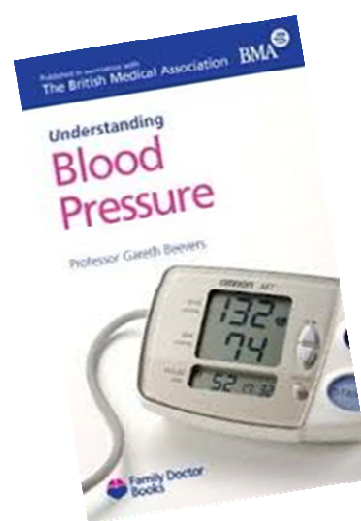
Finally, we have over the next few months extended some of our clinics to meet the expected increase in demand for appointments.

BMA Books



We are pleased to be able to offer an extended range of these useful and inexpensive books to support patients with their medical conditions.

These titles are recognised as one of the most credible sources of health information available today for the general public. They are written by expert doctors and endorsed by the British Medical Association.



Our new range of titles includes Alzheimer's and Dementia, Blood Pressure, COPD, Diabetes, Stress, Thyroid and Prostate Disorders. They are particularly useful for patients that may have been diagnosed with a new condition and would like to understand this a little more. The books are available from our Poringland Surgery for just £4.95 each.

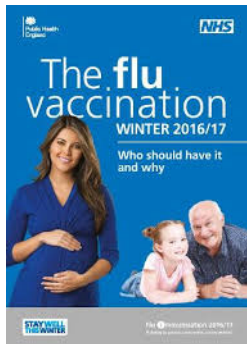
Vaccination update

Flu and Shingles



Thank you to everyone who again this year, made our flu day such a success. Over 1,000 patients visited either the Poringland Community Centre or our Rockland St Mary Surgery for their annual flu vaccination on Saturday 8th October.

For those who qualify for this year's vaccination and would still like to receive protection against flu, please contact the Practice to book an appointment to see one of our nursing team. You can also ask for vaccination when you are seeing a doctor or nurse for something else!



If you are 65 or over (by 31/3/2017) you automatically qualify. There are several other groups of patients, which are also eligible for vaccination. Full details available at the NHS website www.nhs.uk.

Likewise, children aged 2, 3 or 4 on 31st August 2016 also qualify for a Flu nasal spray this year. We have clinics available for vaccination too. Some older children in Primary Schools are also being offered this form of protection. Your child's school will be in touch if they qualify.



We also have supplies of this vaccination available for patients in qualifying age groups. This year all patients that were 70, 71, 72, 73, 78 and 79 on 1st September 2016 qualify. The age groups are reviewed every year by NHS England and so please do not ask for vaccination if you are outside these groups as we will not be able to provide this.

Patient consultation

Thank you to everyone who took part in our latest patient consultation between 8th and 26th October.

We were seeking your views on alternative ways of ordering repeat prescriptions if we ended the telephone answering service. The main reason for the change is linked to patient safety and we are currently reviewing the 300 responses we received and compiling an analysis for discussion with our Patient Reference Group. We will share the results and the outcome of the consultation in due course.



We know that many of you use the Well Pharmacy in Poringland to collect your regular medications. The Manager has made us aware of a change in their opening times from the New Year. From 7th January 2017, the Pharmacy will close at 1pm on Saturday afternoons.

Thank you!

Our regular INR monitoring patients will recognise this

machine which is used to measure the thickness of their blood. A big thank you to Mr and Mrs Pearson of Brooke, who donated a considerable sum to our Practice equipment fund which enabled us to buy a second machine for use in our busy clinics.



Military Veterans



We are pleased to advise that we have worked with Healthwatch Norfolk on a number of projects and have recently adopted their 'treatment policy' for Military Veterans. By adopting the policy, we are encouraging veterans to identify themselves to our team as a member of the Armed Forces community.

With their agreement, we will then include this information in any referral made for specialist services so their need can, where appropriate, be prioritised. We are pleased to support this policy, a copy of which is available on our website.



Prescribing pain relief

Every year the NHS in South Norfolk and Breckland spends around £400,000 on prescribing paracetamol and ibuprofen. When required in small quantities or for short periods, it is better for the NHS if people are able to buy these items without a prescription.

For this reason, the local NHS organisation responsible for planning and financing healthcare, including prescriptions (South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group or CCG) is asking for patients to buy these items from a shop or pharmacy. These items are available at less expensive 'generic' or 'own brands' than when they are provided on NHS prescription.

The Practice is keen to support the CCG make the most effective use of public money and we will be suggesting that, where appropriate, patients buy these items. If though you are a patient needing these drugs in regular larger quantities that you cannot buy over the counter, we will continue to provide a prescription.

focus
on.....

wellbeing
Helping you live your life

Our regular 'focus on' feature highlights different services which are available to patients. This time we look at the Wellbeing service, which offers a range of free and confidential support to help people make changes to help them cope with common mental health and emotional issues such as low mood, stress, anxiety and depression.

The service works with patients to help make the necessary changes to improve their wellbeing and quality of life. For most of us, there are times in our lives when we can feel overwhelmed, out of control, confused or simply cannot cope. These feelings can affect our daily lives and stop us doing the things that we enjoy, or stop us just living our lives.

To help people who are feeling like this, Wellbeing offers a whole range of services and activities so that people can be supported to find out what is best for them. These include one to one support, self-help advice, specialist services for young people aged between 16 and 25, relationship counselling, workshop and group sessions, peer support and helping people find contacts for issues such as debt, housing and employment that can affect Wellbeing.

You can learn more about the service by visiting the website below or by calling 0300 123 1503 where the support is free and confidential. You can also talk to our GPs about your feelings and the support available. www.wellbeingandw.co.uk

Advance notice



Our opening times for the forthcoming festive period will see the surgery closed between Saturday 24th & Tuesday 27th December and Saturday 31st January & Monday 2nd January 2017 inclusive. NHS 111 will offer medical care during this time.