



# SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER



**THE WESTBANK PRACTICE**  
Email: [westbank.practice@nhs.net](mailto:westbank.practice@nhs.net)

Firstly, we would like to start by saying thank you to everyone who came to the assistance of the practice by providing transport for our staff during the snow, and to everyone who offered help. This enabled us to open the practice to patients and provide urgent services. We really appreciate your kindness.

We have said a sad farewell to Clare Humphrey, our practice nurse for over 10 years, who has left us to take up a full time role as a Nurse Practitioner in Newton Abbot. We wish her all the best for the future.

Included in this newsletter are items on how to deal with hay fever and “a day in the life of a GP” written by our Senior Partner Dr Rachel Mann. We are sure you will find this very interesting reading.

We always appreciate your feedback on our newsletters so if there is anything you would like to see included please do let us know.

The Westbank Practice Team.

On behalf of all the Reception Team, can I say a very big "Thank You" for all good wishes & the generous gifts we received at Christmas. We are always so appreciative & very grateful for all the chocolates, biscuits, home-made cakes (& bottles even!) that we receive every year, and although our waistlines might not agree, we are always more than happy to enjoy them .

Thank you again

Sue.

## **Do you ever wonder what happens to old medical equipment from the practice?**



This year we have donated two of our older doctor's couches to a local charity, Christian Response to Eastern Europe, which provides humanitarian and medical aid to thousands of people in Moldova. This is a voluntary charity which has been providing aid for over twenty-seven years. More information on the charity can be found online at [www.cr2ee.org.uk](http://www.cr2ee.org.uk) .

## **FEES FOR NON-NHS WORK**

We would like to remind you that not all work is covered under the NHS Scheme. If, for example, you need a letter to allow you to carry your medications on a plane, we do make a charge of £20. You will always be advised if there is a fee when you speak to the Doctor or receptionist.

## IT'S HAY FEVER SEASON

**Hay fever is usually worse between late March and September, especially when it's warm, humid and windy. This is when the pollen count is at its highest.**

Symptoms of hay fever include:

- sneezing and coughing
- a runny or blocked nose
- itchy, red or watery eyes
- itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears
- loss of smell
- pain around your temples and forehead
- headache
- earache
- feeling tired



If you have asthma, you might also:

- have a tight feeling in your chest
- be short of breath
- wheeze and cough

Hay fever will last for weeks or months, unlike a cold, which usually goes away after 1 to 2 weeks.

### **How to treat hay fever yourself**

There's currently no cure for hay fever and you can't prevent it. But you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high.

#### **Do**

- put Vaseline around your nostrils to trap pollen
- wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
- shower and change your clothes after you've been outside to wash pollen off
- stay indoors whenever possible
- keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth
- buy a pollen filter for the air vents in your car and a vacuum cleaner with a special HEPA filter

#### **Don't**

- cut grass or walk on grass
- spend too much time outside
- keep fresh flowers in the house
- smoke or be around smoke – it makes your symptoms worse
- dry clothes outside – they can catch pollen
- let pets into the house if possible – they can carry pollen indoors

Allergy UK has more tips on managing hay fever.

### **A pharmacist can help with hay fever**

Speak to your pharmacist if you have hay fever. They can give advice and suggest the best treatments. These may include:

- Antihistamine tablets (or liquids for children) e.g. Cetirizine or Loratidine
- Nasal steroid spray e.g. Bedometasone
- Anti-allergy eye drops eg Cromoglicate

These medicines are inexpensive to buy and often cost the NHS more to put on prescription

Start treatments at least 2 weeks before your symptoms begin; so for grass pollen hay fever, treatment may need to commence in May and even earlier for tree pollen allergy.

Some people think treatment has failed because they do not continue their medication regularly through the season but it is important to do so regularly for at least 4 weeks before assessing how well the treatment has worked.

You may need to use all the medicines in combination to get your symptoms under control. If, despite regular use of the above medications, you are still experiencing troublesome symptoms, you may need to see your GP.

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### **Changes to the appointment system**

Recently, the Doctors have tweaked some of the appointments we offer on the day, so I thought it might be worth clarifying how we try to run the appointment system as best as we can to suit everyone (not always easy but honestly we do try).



As a general rule, appointments with the Doctors, Practice Nurses and Phlebotomists can be booked up to four weeks in advance. This can sometimes be extended for minor op clinics and coil fits.

On Monday's we tend to keep the majority of the appointments available for on the day booking, that way if the Doctor that you like to see is already booked up in advance, you have the option of ringing on a Monday for a same day appointment (as long as that Doctor works on a Monday or isn't on leave of course).

We have slightly reduced the number of same day appointments that the Doctors previously had each morning and instead have replaced a few with urgent slots; this way it gives the opportunity for those patients that have an acute problem get seen as soon as possible. So, if the receptionist asks "is it urgent for today please" it is not us being nosey but it just helps the patient and the Doctor to get the best possible outcome of their appointment. This is because sometimes patients will make a same day 10 minute appointment and come along with a whole list of things to discuss that they have been saving up. If you ever feel you may need more than a single appointment please don't be afraid to ask. We also try to encourage patients to travel between the two surgeries if at all possible

We have late surgeries with Doctors on a Monday evening in Exminster and an early morning surgery in Starcross with a Doctor, Nurse and Phlebotomist on a Wednesday morning. Since last year we have also been offering some Saturday or Sunday appointments in Exminster – not every week I hasten to add.

If you have any questions please do ask.

Sue (Senior Receptionist)

**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GP –  
WRITTEN BY DR RACHEL MANN, SENIOR PARTNER**

On a routine Monday I will arrive at work before 8 o'clock. Although the surgery doesn't open until 08.30am for patients we are beavering away in the background checking results, clearing some paperwork and reading any messages from the weekend. Surgery starts at 08.30am and we will have a full set of appointments going through until lunchtime. This is followed by a number of 'phone calls, which may be telephone consultations from patients but could also be from other Health Professionals, for example from the hospital, social services or from the voluntary sector. We then head into visits which hopefully are usually local. There are usually a number of visits which we share out.

We then settle down to try and clear the pathology results and documents that have come in from the hospital and from other sources. A number of these will require action in the form of telephone calls, letters, prescriptions or messages. We haven't usually finished this area of work before we head straight back into afternoon surgery. This usually starts at 3 o'clock and can go on as long as is needed when there are emergencies. Typically, however, we will finish afternoon surgery about 6.30pm and if we are doing an extended hours surgery we head straight into the late evening surgery.

Finally, we complete another batch of 'phone calls followed by a significant amount of paperwork. We go through all the results that have come in from blood tests, x-rays and scans. We receive many letters a day from hospital clinic appointments, hospital admissions and operation notes. There are often forms to complete e.g. for insurance companies and the DVLA.

Prescriptions also take up a large amount of time and these are done in between surgeries and late into the evening. Medicines need reviewing and issuing after being checked.

Typically, on a Monday evening, I will probably wind up approximately 10.00pm – 10.30pm (and aim to be home by 11.00pm in time for a snack and bed.) When I work a "half day" I would expect to be home earlier at around 6.00pm. I spend a couple of hours most evenings at home processing results, paperwork, letters etc. The workload has increased very significantly since I started at the Westbank Practice 20 years ago.

We do appreciate how hard it is for you sometimes to get appointments and we apologise for any inconvenience that this causes. Please do bear with us – we are peddling as fast as we can and we promise we will see you when possible.

If you have an urgent problem that you really feel does need to be addressed promptly, please do contact our reception team who will be able to organise an appointment, or a telephone consultation, as needed.

## GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

**The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a new law that determines how your personal data is processed and kept safe, and the legal rights you have in relation to your own data. The regulation applies from 25 May 2018 and will apply even after the UK leaves the EU.**

### **What GDPR will mean for our patients**

The GDPR sets out the key principles about processing personal data, for staff or patients;

- Data must be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- It must be collected for specific, explicit and legitimate purposes
- It must be limited to what is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed
- Information must be accurate and kept up-to-date
- Data must be held securely
- It can only be retained for as long as is necessary for the reasons it was collected

There are also stronger rights for patients regarding the information that practices hold about them. These include:

- Being informed about how their data is used
- Patients to have access to their own data
- Patients can ask to have incorrect information changed
- Restrict how their data is used
- Move their patient data from one organisation to another
- The right to object to their patient information being processed (in certain circumstances)

The changes in GDPR mean that we must get explicit permission from patients when using their data. This is to protect your right to privacy, and we may ask you to provide consent to do certain things like contact you or record certain information about you for your clinical records.

Individuals have the right to withdraw their consent at any time.

You can request access to your online records – please ask at reception for full details.

## Accessing Your GP Records Online

In addition to requesting repeat prescriptions and booking appointments online patients can now apply for online access to their detailed medical record.

This will include:

- Demographic data
- Investigation results
- Problems/ diagnoses
- Procedure codes and codes in consultations
- Biological values
- Immunisations
- Medication
- Allergies and adverse reactions
- Codes, including those showing referrals made or letters received

This requires additional considerations as outlined in this leaflet. You will be asked that you have read and understood this leaflet before consenting and applying to access your records online. The practice will also need to verify your identity.

**Please note:**

- **It will be your responsibility to keep your login details and password safe and secure. If you know or suspect that your record has been accessed by someone that you have not agreed should see it, then you should change your password immediately.**
- **If you can't do this for some reason, we recommend that you contact the practice so that they can remove online access until you are able to reset your password.**
- **If you print out any information from your record, it is also your responsibility to keep this secure. If you are at all worried about keeping printed copies safe, we recommend that you do not make copies at all.**
- **The Practice may not be able to offer online access due to a number of reasons such as concerns that it could cause harm to physical or mental health or where there is reference to third parties. The Practice has the right to remove online access to services for anyone that doesn't use them responsibly.**

Further information and access to the leaflet: 'Keeping your online health and social care records safe and secure' is available via

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/records/healthrecords/Documents/PatientGuidanceBooklet.pdf>

### ***Key considerations***

#### ***Forgotten history***

There may be something you have forgotten about in your record that you might find upsetting.

#### ***Abnormal results or bad news***

If your GP has given you access to test results or letters, you may see something that you find upsetting to you. This may occur before you have spoken to your doctor or while the surgery is closed and you cannot contact them.

#### ***Choosing to share your information with someone***

It's up to you whether or not you share your information with others – perhaps family members or carers. It's your choice, but also your responsibility to keep the information safe and secure.

#### ***Coercion***

If you think you may be pressured into revealing details from your patient record to someone else against your will, it is best that you do not register for access at this time.

#### ***Misunderstood information***

Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals to ensure that you receive the best possible care. Some of the information within your medical record may be highly technical, written by specialists and not easily understood. If you require further clarification, please contact the Practice for a clearer explanation.

#### ***Information about someone else***

If you spot something in the record that is not about you or notice any other errors, please log out of the system immediately and contact the Practice as soon as possible.

