

The Practice

The Stoke Road Surgery Newsletter
Delivering quality primary care



AUGUST 2011
FIRST EDITION

News Letter Returns

Anyone who was here back in 2001—2003 may remember “pick-me-up”, our Newsletter, well it’s back - with a face lift and a new name; “**The Practice**”.

A lot has changed since 2001 (and we’ve had fun looking at all the old photos!) and we thought we should bring back the newsletter to keep all our patients informed about what’s going on at Stoke Road Surgery.

We hope to be able to entertain as well as inform, so if you have any ideas for articles for the newsletter (or jokes, puzzles, etc) please drop a note in to the practice!

Our recent practice survey was very positive in terms of the overall satisfaction with care received at the surgery, ease of speaking to a doctor on the phone, and feeling that the problem was being taken seriously. However we are aware that there is some dissatisfaction with the availability of routine appointments with a chosen doctor, and we are making some changes to try to improve this - read on to find out more...

We would also like to update the waiting room, and have a competition to design a poster with a health related message for the children of Bishop’s Cleeve, with a display of the winning poster in the waiting room – details on page 3.

Introducing INR Star

We are pleased to be introducing a new way of managing warfarin medication for our patients.

We will be introducing a one-stop warfarin/INR clinic. When you come for your INR blood test, this will no longer be a needle in your arm, but a simple finger prick test. The result is analysed by the computer, which will then tell you the INR result and warfarin dose.

You will be given a print out to take home, and you may choose to copy the details into your yellow book.

This system has many advantages. It is quick and easy to do, with just a finger-prick test. There is no need to phone the surgery later on for the result and dose, and you will know when your next appointment will be due at the same time.

Our phlebotomist, Chrissie, and our health care assistants, Rachel and Angie, will be running these clinics in conjunction with the doctors, but all the practice nurses and doctors will be fully trained.

It would be very helpful if you could bring your yellow book with you to the first INR clinic appointment, so we can double check the current dose, previous result, indication for warfarin and target INR. After that you will not need to bring the yellow book again.

News in brief

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Useful contacts

Appointments:
01242 672 007

District Nurse:
01242 679946

Health Visitor:
08454 221 388

Fax:
01242 678857

Out of Hours Service:
08454 220 220

NHS Direct
0845 4647

Flu vaccination

Get a head of the game.

Flu vaccination clinics always start at the beginning of October.

We do not routinely send invitations for these clinics, but the flu vaccination season is widely publicised in the media, and on posters in the waiting room, and in this newsletter.

Flu vaccinations are available for everyone over the age of 65 and anyone with heart, lung or kidney disease.

Look out for the posters to see if you are eligible for flu vaccination.



Farewell and thank you to Connie!

Our long serving colleague Connie Legg, left us in July 2011. She has been weighing babies for almost 40 years and has been a valued member of staff who will be greatly missed. A big thank you, Connie, from all of us! We wish you the very best in your retirement.



Connie, Dr Hardwick & Jenny Gooding who was one of the babies weighed by Connie who is now one of our reception staff.

Appointment access...



... and what we are doing about it

We accept there have been problems with booking appointments recently.

The root of this problem goes right back to 2004 when the Department of Health (DoH) set targets for access to a GP within 48 hours of a request, irrespective of that patient's clinical need. The effect of this has been; To raise public expectation of the availability of immediately-accessible, face-to-face consultations with GPs. An actual increase in the volume of requests for GP appointments from our existing patients.

As well as this, the population in and around Bishops Cleeve has been steadily increasing and this expansion has added its own additional volume of demand for GP appointments.

In a typical full week we are able to provide around 850 individual GP consultations. This is close to a 50% increase in the last 10 years from what is essentially the same service.

The difference is that proportionally more of our GPs' time has had to become dedicated to providing this 'fast access' and consequently less is available for routine, book-ahead appointments.

This is something we have always disagreed with and we welcome the recent change in the Government's emphasis away from fast access and back towards high quality of service.

Patient Feedback

At Stoke Road Surgery, we appreciate patient feedback. We would particularly like to hear what you like or dislike about the new newsletter and any ideas or information you would like included in future editions.

Perhaps you have a favourite photograph that you would like to share, or have written a poem?

Please send any ideas to us via the comments box on the website – www.stokeroadsurgery.co.uk



Where has 674676 gone ?????



You may have noticed that our appointments line 674676 is not currently available. We have asked our telephone company to make some changes to the way the system works because some patients were reporting being 'stuck' in the system for long periods of time waiting for someone to answer the phone. Unfortunately whilst carrying out this work our 674676 number has been deleted! This has been much to the frustration of you our patients and ourselves. We have been promised that the number will be reinstated around the middle of August and normal service will then be resumed.

We are now actively working to revert to a more routine appointment approach, based on the actual clinical needs of our patients. **Some of the actions we have already taken in response to the increased demand on our services include;**

- ❖ Investment in a digital telephone system and increased number of telephone lines in response to numerous complaints from patients that they 'always get the engaged tone'. The length of time some people had to queue in the system waiting to speak to a receptionist was excessive and we have changed the configuration to try to help this.
- ❖ Increased number of receptionists to enable us to have more people answering the phones at busy times of the day. We have employed 2 Healthcare Assistants and our own Phlebotomist to reduce the pressure on the GPs where an issue can be more appropriately handled by one of our nursing staff. We offer "Extended Hours" appointments twice a week. These are GP appointments before 8:00am or after 6:30pm to allow people who are at work to have the option of an appointment out of normal working hours.
- ❖ We introduced a significant number of telephone consultations for GPs. Sometimes, issues can be dealt with over the phone and there is no need to book a face to face consultation. These are very popular with lots of our patients as they often do not need to attend the surgery at all.
- ❖ We have patient self check-in on arrival, online and fax repeat prescription ordering and a website with links to lots of medical information. These are all in place for the benefit of our patients and to help free up some of our receptionists' time to deal with patients face to face and answer the telephone.

"The 10 minute Tyranny"

The first edition of this newsletter, back in 2001, had an article about the 10 minute tyranny, which seems as true today as it was back then...

What can you achieve in 10 minutes?... A quick hair wash? A little washing up? A bedtime story? 10 minutes is the appointment time for patients seeing their General Practitioner.

When you think about it, 10 minutes is not very long at all, and almost all GPs have problems with keeping to time.

You can help us by only coming with one problem at a time (or telling us at the start if there is more than one thing you must discuss).

Occasionally we do run to time, (honest!) so if you are late for your appointment, this will also result in the surgery running behind.

Please bear with us if we are running late—the reason is usually because we are trying to provide a thorough and conscientious service!

Don't forget:

Advice can also be obtained
from the pharmacist or
NHS direct (0845 4647)
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

The poster competition



We offer the following types of appointments to try to meet the increasing demand for access. Pre-booked—with a doctor of your choice. These are standard appointments, and can be booked up to 2 weeks in advance

Urgent— if you have an urgent problem, and need to be seen in the next couple of days, we have appointments in the mornings (which may be with any doctor). These can get very busy, and we apologise if you have to wait.

Emergency—if you have a problem which is an emergency for the same day, the duty doctor or nurse will call you back. It is helpful if you can tell the receptionist (briefly) the nature of the problem so the best person can call you back. Please try to call between 8.30 and 10.30am if possible, so we can see you later in the day if needed.

Telephone—please consider if you need to actually see the doctor, or if you could simply speak to him or her on the phone. We offer routine telephone appointments, and can give a general idea of the time we will call you back—you can leave several numbers if necessary! These are very popular with people who are working, and are especially useful for test results (check with reception that the results are actually back first) and medication queries.

Visits—if you are genuinely housebound and require a visit, please call the surgery before 10.30am. Visits are usually done between morning and afternoon surgery, and late visit requests may mean a very long delay.

Blood tests—we have two phlebotomists who can take blood tests. Our nurses are very busy doing other things so please tell reception what your appointment is for so they can book the correct person to see you!

NHS health checks—we are offering NHS health checks to people aged 40-75 who have no illnesses. We are sending out invitations with questionnaires, but due to a much higher take up than the national average, it may be some time before we can offer this to everyone—please bear with us!



A visitor to the surgery commented the other day that our waiting room looks like it is “stuck in a time warp”.

We would like to make it a more inviting place to be, and we will be having a children’s poster competition.

The competition is open to anyone under the age of 11 (with a separate category for the under 7’s), to make some posters for our waiting room with a health-related theme. It can be any topic you like—maybe healthy lifestyle, stopping smoking, or maybe something you have been learning about at school.

It can be as colorful as you like, and the more inventive the better. The maximum size is A3 (This is the size of two pieces of A4 paper stuck together), but A4 entries will also be welcomed.

We will announce the winners in the newsletter, and display their posters in the waiting room, and there will be a small prize for the winning entry in each category.

The closing date for entries is: Wednesday November 30th 2011

Send entries to:

The Poster Competition

Stoke Road Surgery, 4 Stoke Road, Bishops Cleeve
Cheltenham. GL52 8RP

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The New doctor starting

We have a new doctor starting at the practice in July. She is Dr Helen Hardy, and she is a fully qualified doctor, training to be a GP. She will be with us for one year, and we would all like to welcome her to Stoke Road Surgery!



What are the benefits of a Patient Participation Group?

When people are involved in and can influence decisions which directly affect their lives, their self esteem and self confidence increases and this in turn improves health and well being. There is growing evidence that having strong social networks and cohesion benefits health. Involvement in discussions about health and health services can help to encourage this social cohesion "within communities". The PPG will make real, constructive changes to the provision of services, aiding the responsiveness of the practice and providing services that truly reflect what you the patients want and need.

PPG can also play a key role in encouraging healthier communities, through the provision of information, advice and support to help local people lead healthier lives. There are many benefits to involving, consulting and actively listening to our patients, including:

The Benefits for you the Patients are:

- ✓ High quality, patient focused services and care.
- ✓ Better informed access to care.
- ✓ Clarity of understanding of rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ Building strong relationships between patients and healthcare professionals.
- ✓ Clear information about care pathways.
- ✓ Ability to influence service delivery and future service provision.
- ✓ Involved in and an ability to influence commissioning decisions.



We are serious about listening to our patients and having a practice that truly reflects the health needs of the 10,000 people we serve. All patients registered at the surgery are welcome to join the group and your input would be very much welcomed. Everyone has an opportunity to join and we will start with a group that tries to reflect the demography of the community. If you wish to be involved, or express an interest please do so via the facilitator :

Mr. J S Gangotra – PPG Consultant: Stoke Road Surgery 4 Stoke Road Bishops Cleeve Cheltenham GL52 8RP

Telephone (Surgery hrs) 01242 674676 Fax: 01242 678857 e-mail via website www.stokeroadsurgery.co.uk

The Poets Corner

Daffodils

By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and
hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the
trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the
breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending
line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly
dance.

The waves beside them danced,
but they
Out-did the sparkling leaves in
glee;
A poet could not be but gay,
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little
thought
What wealth the show to me had
brought.

The Joke Corner

Doctor, doctor, I just swallowed a £10 note. Come back next week and we'll see if there's any change.

Prisoner: Look here, doctor! You've already removed my spleen, tonsils, adenoids, and one of my kidneys. I only came to see if you could get me out of this place!
Doctor: I am, bit by bit.

I was sitting in the waiting room of the hospital after my wife had gone into labour and the nurse walked out and said to the man sitting next to me, "Congratulations sir, you're the new father of twins!"
The man replied, "How about that, I work for the Doublemint Chewing Gum Company."
About an hour later, the same nurse entered the waiting room and announced that Mr. Smith's wife has just had triplets. Mr. Smith stood up and said, "Well, how do ya like that, I work for the 3M Company."
The gentleman that was sitting next to me then got up and started to leave. When I asked him why he was leaving, he remarked, "I think I need a breath of fresh air."
The man continued, "I work for 7-UP."

Do you order repeat prescriptions?

We do not accept repeat prescription requests by phone. Because of the huge number of repeat prescriptions we process, and the fact that our hard-working reception staff are not medically trained, we feel it is safer not to accept repeat prescription requests by phone.

You can request a repeat by—

- ❖ ticking the box on the right hand side of your repeat list, and don't forget to tick the box at the top to say where you want to collect it from!
- ❖ go to the website www.stokeroadsurgery.co.uk Drop us a note in writing, making sure you put your full name, address and date of birth on it. If you have lost the repeat list, you can ask at reception for a copy to be reprinted for you.

Please allow 2 full working days for the script to be processed. Any medication that is not on the repeat list may need more than 2 working days, and it is useful to make sure we have a contact telephone number for you, just in case of queries!

Please try to request prescriptions in plenty of time—you do not need to wait until you have run out (or nearly run out) to request a repeat.

Don't forget to plan for bank holidays and your own holidays well in advance!

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If you wish to contribute to the surgery Newsletter please contact:
Mr. J S Gangotra via www.stokeroadsurgery.co.uk