

The Practice

The Stoke Road Surgery Newsletter
Delivering quality primary care



WINTER 2011
SECOND EDITION



Minor illness

Dr Catherine Archibald

Did you know that there are many ways, other than seeing the Doctor, that you can get advice about simple minor illnesses?

Pharmacists are a great first point of call. They are trained professionals who can offer lots of advice about minor ailments and offer over the counter treatments. You can now purchase some medicines that used to be prescription only, such as antibiotic drops for infected eyes, sprays for infected ears, etc. They can also give you advice about what conditions you do need to see the Nurse or Doctor about.

Another option is using NHS Direct. This is a free national helpline which is staffed by trained Nurses. They can deal with your query effectively, suggesting how or who is best placed to help you. The NHS Direct phone line is **0845 4647**. There is also a national website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk. This is a great source of information and help about minor illnesses and simple ailments, as well as more detailed information about other conditions.

Remember the old adage "mother knows best"? Well sometimes she might do, so it is always worth discussing things you feel able to, with family members. They might be able to offer some valuable and practical advice.

At Stoke Road Surgery we are also starting to change the way we deal with some common minor illnesses. All of our Practice Nurses are very experienced professionals, who have many years of nursing service between them. Some of the Nurses have previously been midwives, health visitors as well as general, surgical & paediatric Nurses. Our Practice Nurses are now working alongside our Duty Doctor, to deal with telephone queries and **triage** (*this is the process of deciding which people in a surgery should get medical treatment first, according to how serious their condition is*). They are all undergoing extra training to enable them to help you with your queries on the phone as well as seeing minor illness conditions.

It really helps us to decide who is best placed to deal with your query if you can outline to the receptionist what sort of problem you are ringing about. For example "I have a cough" or "I have cystitis". Please do not be offended by the receptionists asking you for these details, it is only to try to offer you the best service we can. If you do not want to pass on any information then just say it's personal, and no more questions will be asked.

Remember, if you are requesting a telephone call back from the Nurse or Doctor; please make sure we have your correct telephone number! We are aware in these days of mobiles, that people update their phones regularly, but often forget to inform us with the new number. Lastly we hope that you find our new minor illness service an efficient and positive one. We are sure that it will benefit everyone.

Congratulations to Mrs. Jennifer Green

Jen, one of our receptionists, married Adrian Green who is a local builder on the 27th August this year. Many of the staff at the Surgery helped celebrate her wonderful day. Jen & Adrian went on to Turkey for their honeymoon for three weeks. We all wish them a long and wonderful life together.



Jen Gooding becomes Mrs. Jen Green

Don't forget:

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

News in brief

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Useful contacts

Appointments:
01242 672007

District Nurse:
01242 679946

Health Visitor:
08454 221388

Fax:
01242 678857

Out of Hours Service:
08454 220220

NHS Direct:
0845 4647

Flu vaccination - Get ahead of the game

Flu vaccination clinics always start at the beginning of October. Hopefully most patients will have had their vaccinations by now, however if you have not had it yet, it's not too late. We still have vaccinations available. Flu vaccinations are available for everyone over the age of 65 and anyone with heart, lung or kidney disease. Please ask for an appointment with the Practice Nurse or Rachel, our Health Care Assistant.



Art Award puts Anita in the Frame

Anita Harrison one of our patients at Stoke Road Surgery, did not let her age stand in the way of winning a national art award. Mrs. Harrison a resident at Pullar Court won the trophy at the Elderly Accommodation Council's, annual art competition for over 60s.

Anita's portrait of a Bavarian man was chosen from more than 1000 entries as one of the 100 pieces of work exhibited in the Royal Birmingham Society of Arts Gallery. She said "all the residents at Pullar Court encouraged people to vote for my entry and I went to the Royal Birmingham Society of Arts gallery to see my portrait hung with the selected finalists. As I read the title and description I noticed that I was the winner - what a shock!"



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Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives

Dr Vivien Smellie

... with a focus on the **Sub-dermal Implant**

If you need contraception and are looking for an easy, safe and reliable method, you may wish to consider a long acting reversible contraceptive or LARC. This effectively means that it is administered less than once a month.

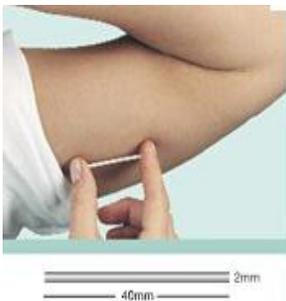
These methods include the copper intrauterine device (or copper coil as it used to be called) and the three long-acting progestogen hormone methods, which are the sub-dermal implant (Nexplanon), the depo-provera injection and the progestogen containing intrauterine system (Mirena).

The benefits of LARCS are that you do not have to 'remember' to use contraception when it is needed, it doesn't matter if you are unwell, taking other medication (only one or two exceptions) and there are no pills to take on a daily basis. Above all, they are very reliable, more than 99% effective and much more reliable than the oral contraceptive pill.

All methods are provided at Stoke Road Surgery and the Doctors and Nurses would be happy to discuss these with you. Dr Smellie is accredited to fit intrauterine devices and sub-dermal implants at the surgery. In this issue, we are focusing on the sub-dermal implant, which used to be called 'Implanon' and is now called 'Nexplanon'.

Nexplanon is a contraceptive implant which consists of a single, small, white, flexible rod, inserted just under the skin on the inside of the upper arm. The implant is approximately 40 mm long and 2 mm wide (about the same size as a hairgrip or a matchstick). Local anesthetic is used to numb the skin.

The implant releases a small amount of progestogen hormone (etonogestrel) every day, which stops the egg being released from the ovary and changes the mucous at the entrance to the womb making it difficult for sperm to get through and fertilise the egg. It also makes the lining of the womb thinner, and less able to accept a fertilised egg.



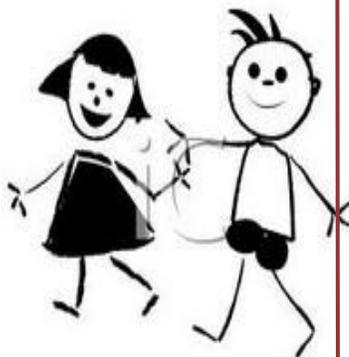
It lasts 3 years and is extremely effective. Over the course of its 3 years, less than 1 in 1000 women will become pregnant. Like other forms of hormonal contraception, some patients do experience some side effects, such as; acne, breast tenderness and pain, headache, irregular bleeding and weight changes. There is help at hand if you experience irregular bleeding. Its effectiveness can be reduced by some medicines (eg St Johns Wort, some types of epilepsy medication).

Nexplanon is a popular form of contraception, especially amongst young women. If you would like to know more about Nexplanon or would like one fitted, please speak to our receptionists who will be happy to arrange an appointment for you to discuss this further.

Chaperones

By Dr Whybrow

Did you know that we have a policy at the practice to offer a chaperone whenever anyone is going to have an intimate examination? There is a poster on the wall of every consulting room which says you can ask for a chaperone at any time. Occasionally there may be no staff member available to be a chaperone, and if this is the case we will be happy to arrange another appointment for you. If you would like someone else to be present during an examination, you only need to ask!



Eat Drink & Staying Slim

By Mr. J S Gangotra

With the festive season fast approaching, we look at ways to enjoy your food and drink without packing on the usual Christmas holiday pounds...



Hands up if you have ever said to yourself that you are going to cut down on your Christmas eating out and drinking this year only to give in on the over indulgence that makes the festive season be exactly that festive!

According to the British Dietetic Association (BDA), on average we eat our way through as many as 6,000 calories just on Christmas day, thanks to all the treats we buy over Christmas and not forgetting the variety of alcohol.

Christmas is a time to find it difficult to resist, after all it's not that it's just one day! The problem is also in the run up to it, due to social commitments with friends and families. According to the BDA we gain a staggering 5lbs over the festive season.

Whilst many festive foods are low in fat, it's the trimmings and extra nibbles that can put on the weight.

Healthy habits to adhere to over Christmas.

- Swap Champagne for Bucks Fizz – adding orange juice not only makes the bubbles go further, but the added vitamin B is good for you.
- Swap chocolate truffles for chocolate liqueurs: Chocolates with a liqueur centre have around half the number of calories of a chocolate truffle.
- Swap stilton for goat's cheese. If you find it hard to pass the cheese board, then select your slices carefully. For instance a 20g serving of stilton has 3g more fat than the same six servings of goat's cheese.

High fat festive foods

The official recommendation for daily fat intake in this country is 70g (or 20g saturated fat) for women and 95g (or 30g saturated fat) for men. When you start eating Christmas food your daily fat intake might more than double. Here is a list of what to avoid or at least eat in moderation.

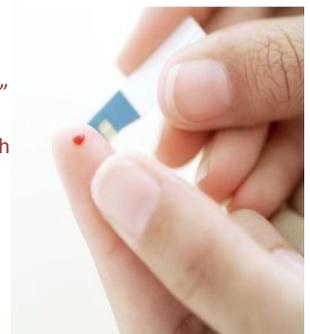
- Roast potatoes 4.5g fat per 100g
- Sausage meat stuffing 16g fat per 100g
- Macadamia nuts 23g per handful
- Wrapped chocolates 8g for 4 assorted
- Brandy butter 5g per teaspoon

The New Handy Service for INR

By Brian Peacey

Sat in the surgery full of gloom
When is it my time, I hope it's soon
The appointment time goes ticking by
Once again a great big sigh
The surgery door is opened wide
A cheery face says "come inside"
"How are you today?" she asks
Whilst settling down to do her task
She explains I am going to "milk your digit"
A startled look came on my face
Nothing to worry about she says with grace
A little prick it will be fine
Check the result it takes just time
Your test result is looking great
The dose you need to take is eight
I stand to go feeling dizzy
After all I have been served by Chrissie!
She smiles and says I'm looking fine
Will enjoy it more when I come next time

Brian Peacey one of our patients has written this little ditty about INR star which is our new anti coagulation service. Enjoy!



GP receptionists are unsung heroes

By Dr T Hardwick

Contrary to popular belief, GP receptionists play a major and important role in ensuring that patients receive the correct treatments.

Leading researchers at the Queen Mary's University of London found that more than half of repeat prescriptions requested by patients were classed as "exceptions" by receptionists because the medication, the dose or the timing of drugs differed from what was on the patient's electronic record. It showed that receptionists use their judgment to decide which prescriptions can be processed by the automated system and which need to be looked at by a Doctor.

In most cases they were able to resolve complex queries within 48 hours. Lead researcher Dr Deborah Swinglehurst, clinical lecturer at Queen Mary's, said the study, which is published in the British Medical Journal, had revealed the extent to which frontline staff carry out "unseen and unappreciated work" to implement repeat prescriptions. "It is often assumed by patients and by some Doctors that processing repeat prescriptions is a safe, automated process driven by cleverly programmed computers".

She said "our research suggests that in the majority of cases it's far more complicated; we've also found that staff feel a strong sense of responsibility for ensuring that patients get their prescriptions quickly and safely" which is in contrast to some popular stereotypes of Doctors' receptionists.

Professor Trisha Greenhalgh of primary health care at Queen Mary's said the safety implications of giving repeat prescriptions were enormous. "Many of these repeat prescriptions are far from simple and require careful but quick decisions by non-clinical staff". "The study revealed how high quality medical care can depend as much on the common sense and the practical judgment of frontline reception staff as it does on the formal safety features built into computer systems."

Looking after your health as you get older

By Jaswant Gangotra

Keeping healthy as you grow older means anticipating potential health problems, as well as keeping fit and watching what you eat. As we get older the body's tissues and organs start to work less efficiently. We have to work harder and harder to stay fit and active. But keeping well is also about anticipating what's increasingly likely to go wrong and taking steps to prevent harmful events from happening. This may mean not just eating the right foods and taking regular exercise, but also changing our living environment and watching out for possible dangers. Preventative tactics are particularly important because our health doesn't just decline in a gradual way. Instead what's often more important is a step-by-step decline on top of a slow deterioration in health. Every so often we have a major illness or event from which we never quite recover to previous levels of fitness. The most common causes include:

- **Infections**
- **Broken bones**
- **Cancers**
- **Conditions or diseases requiring an operation**

As we get older we have more and more of these acute episodes of illness and drop further and further back down the scale of general health. If we could dodge the acute illness we could stay well for longer, even as ageing takes a general toll.



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

NHS A day in the life

of...

The Practice will feature a different person from Stoke Road Surgery in each edition to give an insight into the working life of the dedicated, caring staff. In this edition we start with Jane Tillottson, who some of you may have spoken to on various visits. Jane joined the surgery in 1997 and has seen many changes in the way the NHS and the surgery operate.



My name is Jane and I am one of the ten Reception staff at the surgery. Since joining the team back in 1997 I have seen many changes in the way the NHS and the surgery operate. Here is a quick overview of the varied and interesting duties that are carried out every day by our receptionists; At 08:00, we boot up the computers for each of our 5 reception workstations and check that the reception area and waiting room are tidy and ready for the 150 to 200 patients who will pass through the surgery during the day.

Our doors open and our phone lines go live at 08:30. The calls we generally deal with are for routine appointments with the GPs, Nurses, Healthcare Assistants, Phlebotomists and Midwife. We also have a Triage (prioritising) system for patients needing to be seen "today". Sometimes we have emergency contacts from patients where ambulances are needed to be called or a GP has to attend urgently.

We have 5 receptionists each morning and 4 each afternoon. During busy periods, like Monday mornings, 3 people will be taking and dealing with phone calls. There can be as many as 150 calls in a morning session, all of which require personalised, individual attention. One receptionist deals with patients in our reception area, helping them to "check-in", make new and follow-up appointments, give out prescriptions ready for collection and meeting and registering new patients to our practice. We deal with a large amount of paperwork at the front desk, from collection of the "choose and book" forms for making hospital appointments to travel vaccination forms for patients travelling abroad.

Another Receptionist will be processing repeat prescription requests, which have arrived via our website, by fax, in the mail, from Nursing Homes, from Pharmacies or have been left in the collection box in reception. Due to the very high volume of prescriptions, we need 2 working days from receiving your requests to the forms being generated, checked and signed by the doctor and being ready for collection.

Another member of the team deals with day-to-day administrative tasks such as producing all the forms needed for the Phlebotomist clinics, contacting patients on behalf of the GPs and taking and actioning internal phone calls. Each day we have contact with the Local Health Authority, who require us to collect and collate the medical notes of all patients who have moved out of the area. We also receive medical notes of recently newly-registered patients. We have around 800 patients registering and leaving each year.

It really is a 'full-on', 'fast-pace' job being a Doctors' receptionist, and it's a great, often very rewarding job, NEVER boring. We work within a fantastic supportive team and try to give the very best service and support to all our patients.

Do you order repeat prescriptions?

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!

Making the most of family time

By Jaswant Gangotra

Time spent with your family is always precious, even more so if you have little of it. If there are two working parents in your household, it's important to make the most of the time you have together with your children.

Top priority: The best way of making your family time count is to guard it carefully. As your children grow you'll find there are ever-increasing and conflicting demands on everyone's time. Supposedly 'free' time can be taken up with party invites, friends dropping by, and phone calls from your mother and must-watch TV programmes. You'll soon find that if you don't fence off some time to spend as a family, it won't happen.

Plan ahead: The secret is to plan ahead and make clear to everyone what you're planning. Don't worry if you haven't actually decided where you're going on Saturday afternoon (or whether you'll all just stay in with a video). The vital first step is to block off a few hours for a family activity. As your children grow it's worth making them aware of how much you value time spent together by talking about it. Tell them that Saturday afternoons with the family mean a lot to you – they'll appreciate that you want to be with them. Don't waste family time on chores. Shop online instead of dragging the children round the supermarket. Sharing the load by being organised will maximise the time you can spend enjoying life with your family. Take ten minutes every evening to plan what you need to achieve the following day, and make a list. This will help you to be more focused. Share the load with your partner, for example:

- Spend time together planning how you will spend the week ahead
- Try to manage the children's lives equally
- Let go of responsibilities your partner is taking on
- Organise areas of responsibility so you each do the jobs that are easiest and most enjoyable for you

Finally, never underestimate how much you can get out of just a few moments' concentrated time with your child. Even babies know and appreciate when they're being fully engaged with and enjoyed for their own sake. As they grow up, nothing pleases children as much as their parents' undivided attention. Family time is the hardest to prioritise, because other demands always seem more urgent, but it's the time that matters most of all.

Surgery Information

Closures times over the festive season:

Monday 26th December 2011

Tuesday 27th December 2011

Monday 2nd January 2012

The Out of Hours service will take any emergency calls as usual and NHS direct is always available for any queries.

The surgery will be open for the rest of the festive season. However, we will be offering limited routine appointments over this period, to accommodate the reduced service availability due to the bank holidays.

Remember to plan well in advance for your prescription requests to cover the bank holiday period.

We are happy to accept early requests for repeat prescriptions to ensure patients have enough medication to last over the holiday period.



The Patient Participation Group

The PPG has its first meeting

By Peter Badham

I am delighted to report that Stoke Road Surgery now has a Patient Participation Group (PPG). The first meeting of the group was a few weeks ago in October, where we all learned about PPGs and how patients can assist in the planning and delivery of services. It was great to see so many of the team from Stoke Road there to get this off to a good start.

The members of the PPG come from a range of backgrounds and can all offer something unique to the group. A PPG is a group of patients meeting on a voluntary basis to try to enhance the practice by offering support to the Doctors, Nurses and admin staff. We represent patients' views and can be a useful sounding board for new services and for improving existing services. In essence we want patients to get the best from Stoke Road Surgery.

The current work with the PPG and deploying a consultant for developing the group illustrates a measure of the forward thinking by the team at Stoke Road. I think this group has been formed at the right time, particularly when we have so many changes coming into the delivery of healthcare in the NHS in general and into Bishops Cleeve in particular.

In our first meeting we discussed the following:

- Introductions and presentation on PPGs by Jaswant Gangotra.
- Mike Otter advised that a good source of information on PPGs is the NAPP website (National Association for Patient Participation)
- Peter Badham offered to distribute the practice newsletter with script deliveries.
- There was a request that the newsletter also be distributed electronically in future.
- Discussion as to whether the demographics of the group were representative of the practice population.
- Brief profile of each person to be sent to Mike Otter for collation of group skills.
- Peter Badham suggested doing a SWOT analysis of the surgery.

General areas of work which we want to consider:

- Try to help provide a quality, responsive, patient-centered service to the community.
- Improve patients' experiences of the surgery and the services it provides.
- PPG to communicate effectively with the local community.
- Utilise the strengths and skills of the PPG members.
- Ensure that the partners remain involved with the group.

Date of next meeting:

- 8th December 2011, 7.30pm to 9:00pm.

Agenda items to be discussed:

- Discuss and agree terms of reference for the PPG.
- Group skills and strengths.
- Roles and responsibilities within the group.
- Focus areas for a Patient Questionnaire (eg. Clinical care, getting an appointment, reception issues, opening times, parking, etc.)
- Plan to do a SWOT analysis of the surgery.



Happy Christmas & New Year from all at Stoke Road Surgery!

