

# ASHWELL AND BASSINGBOURN SURGERIES WINTER 2017 NEWSLETTER

Ashwell – 01462 417377      Bassingbourn 01763  
290555



## **STAFF MATTERS**

We would like to welcome our new GP Dr Katherine Cole. Dr Cole was previously working as a GP Registrar at Papworth Surgery and joined us in November. She is now working as a salaried GP and will be working at the surgery every Thursday and Friday at both Ashwell and Bassingbourn surgeries.

Dr Bhakti Upadhyay, GP Registrar left us early December and we would like to welcome our new GP registrar Jessica Warrington. Registrars can only stay with us few months at the surgery whilst they are training. Some patients are reluctant to see registrars, but they are fully qualified doctors but are specialising their training to be future GPs.

## **MEDICATION**

Please make sure that you order your medications in advance of the Christmas period. Please note that we require 48 hours' notice on any repeat prescriptions currently. We are still experiencing patients asking for prescriptions on the same day. Our dispensary team are already under a lot of pressure to fulfil prescription requests and must ask that you allow them 48 hours to dispense your prescription. As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, we will require 72 hours' notice on a prescription (3 days) to fulfil a script. The email address for prescriptions for both Ashwell and Bassingbourn are as follows:

[Ashwell.dispensary@nhs.net](mailto:Ashwell.dispensary@nhs.net)

[Bassingbourn.dispensary@nhs.net](mailto:Bassingbourn.dispensary@nhs.net)

These email addresses are in use now and supersede any previous addresses. You can also order your repeat prescriptions online at [www.ashwellsurgery.co.uk](http://www.ashwellsurgery.co.uk) we have recently updated our website. Click on Prescriptions and Medicines Centre link, click on Request Medication Online. You will then be asked if you have registered online already. If you are set up for online Patient Access you can order through this medium as you will be directed to the login screen. However, you can still order online if you have not registered and will need to click NO and you will need to fill out as much information on the online form as possible with your medication and then submit. Please allow 3 working days for your prescription to be issued after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018.

## **BLOOD TESTS**

Please do not book a blood test with reception unless you have been advised to do so by your GP. You are not able to just ask for a cholesterol test etc. unless it has been advised by the GP to do so. If you are unsure please ask at reception.

### **DECORATING THE SURGERY**

As you may be aware we have been decorating Ashwell surgery. We apologise for any inconvenience caused by the paint smells, but hope that this will be worthwhile and it is long overdue! The decorating will be continuing until the end of December.



### **FACTS ABOUT THE COMMON COLD**

An adult can expect to get 2-4 colds a year and young children 3-8 colds a year. Usually symptoms peak and after 2-3 days they ease off. Symptoms are usually gone within a week.

There is no magic cure for the common cold and antibiotics do not kill viruses so they are no use for colds. The best treatment for a cold is:

- Paracetamol
- Drinking plenty of fluids
- Steam inhalation to help clear a blocked nose and sinuses

Most colds clear up without complications, however if you develop a persistent problem with your ears, chest or sinuses, you may need to see a GP.

### **ZERO TOLERANCE**

The Practice supports the NHS policy of zero tolerance with regard to verbal abuse towards the doctors, staff or others on the Practice premises. Unfortunately our reception team have experienced an increase in verbal abuse both in person and the phone at the surgery. Such actions will be reported to the Practice Manager and it could result in patients being removed from our Practice list. Telephone calls may be recorded in the interest of all parties.

### **DROP INS**

We have noticed over the past year an increase in patients presenting at the surgery without calling first. We do not operate a drop in surgery and request that patients ring the reception team in the first instance if they wish to be seen by a clinician. Can we also request that patients do not drop in urine samples at the front desk without first consulting with a GP? We are unable to accept any samples unless a GP has directed you to bring one down to the surgery. Samples are tested at the end of the morning. Please do not ask to sit and wait for a result as the GP will still be consulting or on a home visit at that time.

### **PRIVATE FEES**

Some services provided by the NHS practices are not funded by the NHS. A fee is charged to the patient which is payable on completion of the work. These include:

- HGV Medicals, insurance claims

- Sickness or accident claim forms
- Private healthcare forms, holiday cancellation letters, fitness to fly letters or holiday cancellations letters

Requests for such things as support of housing benefits all fall into this category. Requests for copies of medical reports or records under the Freedom of Information Act are also chargeable.

This work falls outside of NHS work and therefore GPs are under immense pressure to complete this work. NHS work will always take priority over private. The surgery has by law has 30 days to complete such requests. Please can you give us as much notice as possible to complete this work? You will be advised at the time of submitting your form that you may be charged a fee. GPs no longer countersign passport applications.

### **WINTER PRESSURES – ADDITIONAL HOURS**

As many of our patients are aware, we already have a minor illness clinic at Ashwell each morning. Clinicians Daren and Paul work alongside the on call GP every day seeing patients with minor complaints and illnesses. Due to winter pressures i.e. more patients becoming ill over the winter period and more demands on the GPs time, we will now have the minor illness clinic running on Monday and Friday afternoons as well as the mornings. You will only be able to be book into these clinics on the day. These appointments are for new and acute problems. Any long standing problems that are urgent need to be put on the GP list and you will be called. These are for patients who feel that their condition requires to be seen on the day and cannot wait for a routine appointment. Please be advised that the reception staff are asked by the clinicians to ascertain the nature of your problem so they can direct you to the correct clinician for assessment.

### **KEY SAFE**

Do you have a key safe where you live? If so, could you please let the surgery know so that we can keep our records up to date. If a GP or nurse visits you they will need to know this information to access your property. Please be assured that this information is not given out to any third parties and is kept strictly confidential.

### **DNA'D APPOINTMENTS (Did not attend)**

We acknowledge that everybody has busy lives and occasionally we forget things. However if you do not need an appointment, can you please ring the surgery to cancel so that your appointment can be allocated to another patient. With the lead up to Christmas we are extremely pressured with appointments and GPs time.

**In October –     Ashwell           71 patients DNA'd clinical appointments**  
                          **Bassingbourn   33 patients DNA'd clinical appointments**

**In November -   Ashwell           62 patients DNA'd clinical appointments**  
                          **Bassingbourn   42 patients DNA'd clinical appointments**

This equates to **104** GP and nurses appointments wasted in October and November. These are appointments that could have been used for other patients.

A while back, we introduced text messaging appointment reminders. If you are unable to make your appointment you can cancel by using our text messaging system. Just text

CANCEL back when you receive your reminder. Please can you make sure the surgery has your up to date contact details if you would like to start receiving appointment reminders.

### **PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

The NHS has recently launched a consultation on radiotherapy services. Radiotherapy is a vitally important part of cancer treatment. It can cure or alleviate cancer symptoms and is cost effective. It is second only to surgery in its effectiveness in treating cancer. The NHS is

Investing £130 million in new radiotherapy equipment and is seeking to modernise the service appropriately. Your views would be welcome and you can express them by visiting: [www.enhertscg.nhs.uk](http://www.enhertscg.nhs.uk) and clicking on the link regarding radiotherapy services.

You may also like to look at a video which explains how the NHS works. [www.kingsfund.org.uk](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk) – then click on the video “How does the NHS in England work?”

### **JUST A REMINDER**

We have an early morning clinics every Tuesday mornings for GP appointments and nurses. These appointments are pre-bookable in advance. We also have a late night surgery on Thursday evenings. These appointments are primarily for patients who work and find it difficult to come to see a GP during normal working hours.

### **MESSAGE TO OUR PATIENTS**

We often have patients complaining that GPs are on holiday when you want to see them, but your GP needs to take breaks in order for them to be fit and well enough to deal with patients and their issues. GPs are only human and like the rest of us suffer from their own ailments, stresses and worries. There have been articles in the press recently stating that GP morale is at an all-time low due to high workloads. Nine out of 10 GPs regularly work beyond their normal working hours and half of those stated that at some point their morale was “low”. Patient demand is increasing and the funding for GP surgeries is decreasing. This is a worry as GPs are constantly being told by the government to do more with less money. The environment in which GPs are now working to provide services to our patients is increasingly challenging. We do our best at the surgery under considerable constraints to give patients the best possible service.

### **PATIENT ACCESS**

Please talk to reception if you would like to book your appointments online. You will be asked for ID and given paperwork with password and access ID to enable our website. We can only register yourself and not any other members of your family, unless you are a parent and your child is under 15 years old. We have recently introduced a new facility that allows you to order your repeat medication requests online. Over the next few years the amount of information available to patients online will be increasing. We have a duty to our patients to ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times and that the information is only available to the appropriate patient. By asking for ID we can ensure that access to the online services is given to the correct patient – we want to make sure that we don’t give somebody else access to your information. It is also a requirement of the service we are using that we ask for id.

It is also for this reason that we will only be able to grant access in person and you will be unable to complete the registration on behalf of someone else.

## **ACCESS FOR CHILDREN**

We will be allowing children access to the system, in most cases we will allow the parents of children under 15 to register on behalf of their child.

When a child reaches 15 (or earlier in some circumstances) we will suspend access to the system until the child attends the surgery and requests access in person. This is to help maintain confidentiality for the child as they grow into adulthood.

**We maintain the right to revoke access at any time for patients who abuse the system or where access to the service could breach confidentiality for the patient and or family of the patient.**

## **STAFF TRAINING DATES**

The Bassingbourn Surgery will be closed on the following days for staff training:

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018

The phone lines will go through to our out of hours service. Ashwell will be closing as normal at 1:30pm.



## **CHRISTMAS SURGERY HOURS**

The surgeries will be closed on the following days over the Christmas period:

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> December – Boxing Day

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January – New Year's Day

If you require any medical assistance during this period, please call NHS 111 or 999 for emergencies.

## **An extract from the book Tales from the Surgery by Dr Jovita Ojadi who is a local GP in the Lincolnshire – she writes;**

“Ever wonder why your doctor seems grumpy most of the time? When I was a registrar doctor in a suburban area, I went out one to a do a home visit. The patient asked me how the “grumpy doctor” was. She explained to me that this doctor had been nicknamed the “grump” by some patients. As I left the house I couldn’t help reflecting on why my fellow GP was called “the grump”. Outside of work this man was the friendliest person you could ever meet. I thought maybe being grumpy at work was his way of putting patients off coming to see him by the way it didn’t work!

On the other hand being grumpy could be a sign that your doctor is under a great deal of stress. Stress doesn’t necessarily come dressed up but rather in the form of fatigue, irritability, short temper, frustration and grumpiness. During the course of a day the GP has to perhaps deliver bad news, sad news or engage in some very difficult conversations with patients. Your GP may well be suffering from “burn out” and indeed need some support.”

## **Cerebrospinal fluid leaks – not just a headache!**

by Deborah Lunnon CSF leak, hEDS and Tarlov cyst sufferer.

A Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) leak is a serious and often incapacitating medical condition stemming from a tear or hole in the membrane that contains the fluid surrounding the spinal cord and brain. It can occur in the head or spine as result of trauma, surgery, an underlying disorder or spontaneously. The condition is characterised by symptoms that occur or worsen when a patient is sitting or standing.

Once considered rare, experts now acknowledge that CSF leaks are far more common than previously thought. Increasingly, the 5 in 100,000 annual incidence rate for spontaneous spinal leaks alone is thought to be rather conservative, but nonetheless means that the condition occurs more frequently than a range of other conditions that are generally better recognised. CSF leaks – particularly those occurring at a spinal level – are frequently misdiagnosed as migraine, tension headache, new persistent daily headache and even postural tachycardia syndrome (PoTS). When the CSF leaks out, intracranial pressure and/or CSF volume reduces (known as intracranial hypotension) which allows the brain to sag within the skull and the brain stem becomes compressed. As a result of this 'brain sag', sufferers often experience severe and unrelenting head pain, pressure, visual disturbances, hearing impairment, tinnitus, spasms, seizures and a wide range of other symptoms. At the extreme end of the spectrum a leak can result in quadriplegia, seizure, stupor or coma, early onset Dementia and Parkinson's disease.

While many people who experience a CSF leak will heal on their own, it is not uncommon for sufferers to require clinical intervention. Particularly when caught early, injecting a small amount of a patient's own blood into the space around the spinal cord (known as a

'blood patch') can often be used to good effect, however blood patches do not work for all and some patients will require surgery. While less common, for some a leak may also persist despite multiple attempts to fix it.

For more information on CSF leaks visit <https://www.csfleak.info/>

**WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR PATIENTS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY  
AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.**