



# THE MERRIDALE MEDICAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



## Appointments

Following a further review of our appointment system (taking into account feedback from patients and staff) we will be making some further changes as summarised below. Please therefore note that from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October we will be:

**Introducing pre-bookable GP appointments on Monday and Tuesday evenings solely for patients who are at work during the day.** (Patients will be asked to provide details of their occupation at the time of booking)

**Increasing the quantity of online appointments** which we offer as over the last few months we have seen a marked increase in the number of patients who have registered to use our online services (to book an appointment or order a repeat prescription). We will continue to monitor the online usage as we are keen to ensure that an appropriate

and fair balance of appointments is maintained between the traditional methods of booking appointments (by telephone or at the front desk) and via our website.

**Enabling the pre-booking of appointments by our admin team** (on behalf of patients up to 2 weeks ahead) for reviews of test results (as explained later in this Newsletter).

**Changing the options on our telephone system** so that only urgent same day appointments will be able to be booked between 8am-11am. Anyone wishing to pre-book a non-urgent appointment will need to ring after 11am. This change is being made mainly to ensure that patients needing to book an urgent same day appointment can get through to a receptionist more easily at our busiest time so please respect this.

AUTUMN 2015



## Keeping contact details up to date

Please remember to let us know if any of your contact details change in case we ever need to contact you.

A summary of the appointment options we now offer is included below:

**Urgent "same day" appointments (bookable from 8am daily)** These are for 1 x urgent problem (not for any ongoing matters) and will be allocated with any one of the GP's/Nurse Practitioners who are on duty on the day. These appointments have to be booked in time order. Our receptionists are not in a position to say who a same day appointment has been allocated with. Patients wishing to book an appointment with a specific person will need to pre-book an appointment instead of expecting to see that person 'on the day'.

### Pre-bookable appointments

**GP Saturday morning appointments can be booked up to 2 weeks ahead**

**GP Monday-Friday appointments can be booked up to 2 working days in advance** with Dr Alizadeh; Dr Griffiths or Dr Stanly. Patients wishing to pre-book a GP appointment are therefore encouraged to book in with one of those GP's. Please note that neither Dr Clarke nor Dr Tew are offering pre bookable appointments currently for the reasons explained in previous newsletters.

**GP Monday/Tuesday evening appointments (between 6.30 7.30pm) for 'workers' –bookable up to 2 working days ahead**

**Nurse Practitioner appointments –these are mainly 'same day' appointments** though on occasions we can book into the next day.

**Practice Nurse/Health Care assistant appointments** for blood tests, reviews of chronic conditions etc bookable usually up to 6 weeks in advance.

### Methods of booking an appointment

**Urgent Same Day appointments can be booked from 8am** at the front desk or over the phone

**Pre-bookable appointments can be booked via telephone or at the front desk –but only after 11am**

**Online appointments can be booked 24/7** –patients who wish to use this facility firstly need to call into reception with photographic identification/proof of address. A unique user ID/ password will then be issued.

### Missed Appointments

We have been reviewing the extent to which patients fail to attend their appointments and we are running a campaign with the aim of significantly reducing the amount of missed appointments. Letters have been sent out to patients who regularly fail to attend, pointing out the serious impact repeatedly missing appointments has on other patients. Any recurring problems will be dealt with as deemed appropriate by the Practice Manager. The monthly attendance levels are available to view in our main reception area and also on the Practice's website.

### How to cancel an appointment

**By ringing our main number of 01162166996 during our opening times and choosing the 'cancel Appointment option**

Instead of having to wait to speak to someone the call will be directed to our 'cancelled appointments' voicemail. Simply leave a message with details of the appointment you wish to cancel and your name and contact number. Patients can also cancel an appointment even when we are closed by ringing our main number and leaving a voicemail message. Please give us as much notice as possible when wishing to cancel an appointment so it can be offered to someone else



## **MESSAGE FROM PPG CHAIR**

Welcome to the latest practice newsletter. For those of you not familiar with the Patient Participation Group (PPG) we are a growing group of approximately twenty volunteer patients who represent the wider patient population and help the practice to improve the service it delivers.

The PPG essentially act as a critical friend to the practice and we meet with doctors, nurses and members of the practice team every 6-8 weeks. The minutes of all our meetings are available via the practice website [[www.merridalemedicalcentre.co.uk](http://www.merridalemedicalcentre.co.uk)] and members of our group frequently raise key discussion points with practice staff. In addition, the practice invite the PPG to assist them in a number of undertakings, for example: we have recently reviewed the annual patient survey and helped the practice devise an action plan to address key issues, provided feedback and input into the format of practice newsletter and we help monitor ongoing changes to the practice appointments system.

As part of national PPG awareness week, members of the PPG held a small event in the practice reception to raise awareness of the electronic prescribing system as well as helping patients to complete the Friends and Family Test survey. We are helping the practice to monitor the ongoing problem of patients who do not attend for their appointments and we would like to endorse the wider message within this newsletter and remind all patients that they must cancel unwanted and/or unneeded appointments. Not doing this prevents other ill patients from seeing the doctor and nurse.

On a final note, we would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions or ideas for possible social and/or fundraising events that the PPG could plan. We are aware that other PPGs support a huge range of activities from Asthma management/advice groups through to Zumba classes. Of course, we can't promise to support all ideas, but if you have a suggestion then we would like to hear from you. Please email the PPG Secretary, Vin Davda on [v.davda@btinternet.com](mailto:v.davda@btinternet.com)

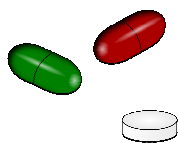
We hope you find this newsletter helpful.

Stephen Ashmore

Chairman of the PPG

## **Flu season**

Patients under 65 with a chronic condition are being contacted to remind them to book in for a flu jab. Patients over 65 also need to book in. Anyone eligible for a shingles vaccination will be given one at the same time.



## **Paracetamol**

A decision has been made by the partners of the practice that paracetamol will no longer be prescribed to any patient with a minor illness by any of the clinical team

here. It is available for a low price in pharmacies and local shops. Paracetamol liquid can be obtained for children for free through the pharmacy first scheme (if the pharmacist concerned considers that the child would benefit).

## **Test results**

Having reviewed certain procedures we are removing the option for patients to ring up for their tests results. This is because we have a robust system in place whereby patients will be contacted if necessary once their results have been received back and the GP/nurse who ordered the tests has reviewed those. If the patient concerned then needs to be seen or spoken to by that GP or nurse our admin team will ring the patient and pre-book a follow-up appointment or telephone consultation.



## **On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October we will be closed from 1pm for the rest of the afternoon**

Our telephone lines will be diverted to an appropriate Healthcare provider between 1pm and 6.30pm on that day and we will reopen at 8am on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

## **CHANGES TO OUR CLINICAL TEAM**

We are delighted to welcome Dr Nancy Stanly who will be joining the Practice on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

Unfortunately Dr Atwal left the Practice last month but we wish him all the very best in his new role.

Nationally there is a general shortage of GP's. We would like to assure patients however that our "GP recruitment campaign" is continuing as we are keen to boost the number of GP's at the Practice. This will then enable us to increase the amount of appointments we can offer to patients.



## **Mouth or dental problems**



Patients are strongly advised to go and see their dentist if they consider that they have a tooth or mouth abscess or dental problems rather than asking for an appointment at the Practice. Please note that antibiotics will not be prescribed by any of our GP's or Nurse Practitioners for such problems.

## **Next Newsletter - December 2015**

This newsletter is available in other formats— please ask at reception



### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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