

ELM TREE SURGERY NEWSLETTER

Issue 3 - 2010

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ELM TREE MEDICAL PARTNERSHIP

Staff Changes And Updates



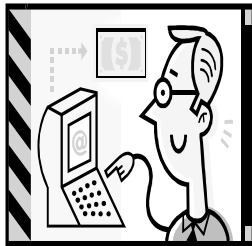
We would like to extend a warm welcome to Ruth Saville, who has joined our Health Visiting team as a Nursery Nurse and Dr Ayla Atun (Registrar) who will be joining us in January.

We say a fond farewell to Amanda Russell (District Nurse) and Beccy Green (Nursery Nurse) who have left our practice and wish good luck to them both.



We would also like to advise our patients that Jenni Murray (Practice Nurse) has had a healthy little girl and will be returning to work in 2011.

Automatic Check-In



You may have noticed that we have a new automatic check-in in the lobby. This has been installed in response to patient comments in our recent practice survey. It is for the use of patients who already have a booked appointment, and means that you can bypass the queue at reception. There is no need to speak to reception, the Doctor/Nurse will be aware that you have arrived.

Independent Sector - Treatment Centres

From November 2009 a new service is being provided by United Kingdom Specialist Hospitals (UKSH). Our nearest hospitals are at Devizes, Cirencester and Emerson Green (Bristol). These hospitals are run by the independent sector but have been funded to treat NHS patients. They also treat patients privately. In general the waiting lists will be shorter at the new Independent Sector Treatment Centres (ISTCs) than in NHS hospitals.

They cover a wide range of surgical disciplines including orthopaedics, general surgery, ENT, gynaecology, urology, endoscopy and ophthalmology. We will be able to provide further details at the time of referral.

More information is available at www.uk-sh.co.uk.



Parking in Church Walk



Please be aware of the "KEEP CLEAR" markings on the road surface when parking in Church Walk. It is important that this area is kept free of parked cars to allow access to the rest of Church Walk and neighbouring properties.

Swindon Listening Line

- Is a confidential listening service for adults in the Swindon area who may be feeling stressed, worried or lonely.
- They offer a friendly ear and can signpost you to places that can help.

Call them on: 01793 836871
Or mobile/text: 07850708317



Prescription Requests

Please note that the telephone line used to order your repeat prescription - 01793 784440 - is now available between 13:30 and 15:00 only.

Please consider using one of the alternative methods of obtaining your medication:

- By fax - please fax your request to 01793 784429
- Online - please ask at Reception for information on how to set up an account
- By post - please send your repeat prescription list and make it clear which medication you require
- By hand - please bring your repeat prescription list to the surgery and leave it in the "red box" marked "prescriptions" at the Front Desk



Breast Screening



Until recently ladies requiring routine breast screening have been seen at the mobile unit in Faringdon. The service is now Swindon based, patients being seen at the mobile unit at Merchiston Surgery, Swindon.

Allergy & Clinics



Did you know about the new services now available at Elm Tree Surgery?

Dr Crockett has started an Allergy Clinic which is suitable for patients of any age who have a suspected or known allergy and who are not receiving specialist care. If you think you may be suitable please phone Dr Crockett on 01793 782207.

The service is also available privately to patients registered at other practices.

We also have a comprehensive Travel Clinic providing a full range of immunisations including Yellow Fever and advice on travel abroad, including travel packs. Appointments can be made through Reception.

This is also available privately to patients registered elsewhere, telephone number 01793 787462.

Research

The Practice has decided to increase its involvement in a number of Research projects. The benefit is to increase the sum total of medical knowledge which should lead to improvement in the health of the general population or in certain sections of it.

All the Research projects will have received full ethical approval nationally and locally and nearly all of them will be approved through the Primary Care Research Network based in Bath. We will not be doing any 'experimentation' type research but will mostly be concentrating on people's attitudes to specific diseases or managements. These studies are observational and do not actually involve any intervention in each patient's management, merely a reflection and data gathering of how people feel.

Patient confidentiality will always be at the forefront of every researcher's mind and we will be no different. Participation in any Research project by any patient is of course entirely voluntary and will not affect your current or future care in anyway whatsoever. Should you decide to take part in any study you will be given full information about it before being asked to give your consent. You can withdraw your consent at anytime without necessarily giving any reason whatsoever.

We would like to thank those patients who have taken part in previous Research projects over the years. Your time has proven very valuable and will help the NHS to provide better treatment for our patients in the future.

If anyone would like to discuss any aspect concerning research please do feel free to talk to any of the Partners or Dr Crockett, who is the lead for this aspect of our care.



Swindon Primary Care Psychology



Swindon Primary Care Psychology Service has recently started running a series of courses to help people cope with certain chronic illnesses. Currently the courses are being run to help people cope with diabetes, long term pain and chronic fatigue. If you would like details please ring 01793 835710/835711 or visit www.awp.nhs.uk/swindonandwiltspsychology.

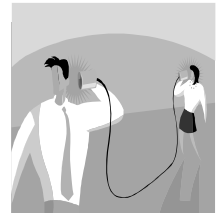
SUNS

SUNS is a local charity in Swindon run by Mental Health Service Users allowing them to have a voice about the care they receive.

Their aim is to support, train and encourage Mental Health Service Users to speak out about their experiences of Mental Health Services.

They offer space and support to build confidence and be heard. They also run “have a voice” groups where you can talk about your experiences while doing crafts or playing games. They also provide opportunities to influence change within the local Mental Health Service, as well as training to help you gain self-confidence.

They are based at 163 Victoria Road, Swindon. Telephone: 01793 436174
Email: suns161@lineone.net www.swindonsuns.org



Acorn Club



The Acorn Club is now meeting regularly on the third Monday of each month at the Village Hall in Watchfield. The club is primarily aimed at people over the age of 65, however if a younger person would benefit from the service then they are welcome to attend.

The club runs from 10:30 - 3:00pm, lunch is provided and the cost is £6.00 per session. Various activities and visiting entertainers are provided for future sessions.

For further details please contact Mrs Ruth Holman 01793 782234.

Local Travel Information

THE NATIONAL BUS PASS

Free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in England for those over 60 and eligible disabled people. For more information please see www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk or contact 0845 300 6129.

THE HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS ALLOWANCE

Transport cost reimbursements for eligible people visiting local hospitals who are unable, or find it difficult, to use public transport. For more information see www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk or contact 0845 300 6129.



OCTABUS DIAL-A-RIDE

A door-to-door service for older or disabled people who are unable or find it difficult to use public transport. For more information please see www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk or contact 01865 876176.

Acute Sinusitis

What are sinuses?

The sinuses are small, air filled spaces inside the cheekbones and forehead. They make some mucus which drains into the nose through small channels

What is sinusitis?

Sinusitis means inflammation of a sinus. Most bouts of sinusitis are caused by an infection. The cheekbone (maxillary) sinuses are the most commonly affected.

Acute sinusitis means that the infection develops quickly (over a few days) and lasts a short time. Many cases of acute sinusitis last a week or so but it is not unusual for it to last 2-3 weeks (that is, longer than most colds). Sometimes it lasts longer. Sinusitis is said to be 'acute' if it lasts no longer than 12 weeks. A mild bout of acute sinusitis is common and many people will have some degree of sinusitis with a cold. However, severe acute sinusitis is uncommon. Most people only ever have one or two bouts of acute sinusitis in their life. However, some people have recurring bouts of acute sinusitis.

Chronic sinusitis means that a sinusitis becomes persistent and lasts for longer than 12 weeks. Chronic sinusitis is uncommon.

How do you get acute sinusitis?

After a cold or the flu

In most people, acute sinusitis develops after a cold or flu-like illness. Colds and flu are caused by viruses which may spread to the sinuses. The infection usually remains 'viral' before clearing, causing a viral sinus infection. In a small number of cases, bacteria 'add on' to an infection that started with a virus. This can cause a bacterial sinus infection which can make the infection worse and last longer.

Spread from a dental infection

In some cases, infection spreads to a maxillary sinus from an infected tooth.

Other risk factors for sinus infection

In some people, one or more factors are present that may cause the sinuses to be more prone to infection. These include:

- Allergic rhinitis (nose allergy). The allergy may cause swelling of the tissues on the inside lining of the nose and block the sinus drainage channels. This makes the sinuses more susceptible to infection.
- Other causes of a blockage to the sinus drainage channels, such as nasal polyps, objects pushed into the nose (especially in children such as peas or plastic beads), facial injury or surgery, and certain congenital abnormalities in children.
- Asthma.
- Cystic fibrosis.
- A poor immune system - for example, people with HIV, people on chemotherapy, etc.
- Pregnancy, which makes you more prone to rhinitis (nose inflammation).
- Rare tumours of the nose.
- Smoking.

Acute Sinusitis cont.

What are the symptoms of acute sinusitis?

Symptoms that commonly occur include:

- **Pain and tenderness** over the infected sinus. The pain is often throbbing, and worse when you bend your head forward. Chewing may be painful.
- **Nose symptoms.** You may have either:
 - **A blocked nose.** Both sides of your nose usually feel blocked. Your sense of smell may also go for a while.
 - **A runny nose.** If the discharge is green/yellow, it is more likely that you have a bacterial infection in your sinuses. The green/yellow colour is due to infected mucus and pus. A runny nose may dry up if the sinus drainage channels become blocked with thick mucus. If this happens, pain and tenderness over the infected sinus may become worse.
- **A high temperature.** A fever may develop and you may feel generally unwell.

Other symptoms that may occur include: headache, bad breath, toothache, cough, a feeling of pressure or fullness in the ears and tiredness. In children, symptoms may include irritability, ear discomfort, snoring, mouth breathing, feeding difficulty and 'nasal' speech.

What are the treatments for sinusitis?

Are antibiotics needed?

Most cases of acute sinusitis are due to a virus infection. Like with colds, the immune system usually clears the virus and symptoms usually go within a week or so. Antibiotics do not kill viruses. Also, even if the infection is caused by bacteria, the immune system will usually clear it away. So, for most people with acute sinusitis, antibiotics are not needed. Antibiotics can also cause side effects. Side effects can include diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, skin rashes and thrush.

However, antibiotics are sometimes useful. Your doctor is not likely to prescribe an antibiotic for a mild bout of acute sinusitis. But a course of antibiotics may be prescribed in some cases, for example:

- If your symptoms are severe.
- If you are very unwell.
- If you have another illness such as cystic fibrosis, heart problems or a weakened immune system.
- If your symptoms have not settled within seven days or are worsening..

Treatment to relieve symptoms

Some treatments may help to relieve symptoms whilst waiting for your immune system to 'do the work'. These include the following;

- **Painkillers** such as paracetamol or ibuprofen will usually ease any pain. They will also help to bring down any fever that you may have. Sometimes stronger painkillers such as codeine are needed for a short time.
- **Decongestant nasal sprays or drops** are sometimes used. You can buy these from pharmacies. They may briefly relieve a blocked nose. However, they are not thought to shorten the duration of acute sinusitis. You should not use a decongestant spray or drops for more than 5-7 days at a time. If they are used longer than this, they may cause a worse 'rebound' congestion in the nose.
- **Keeping hydrated** can be helpful.
- **Warm face packs** held over the sinuses may help to ease the pain.
- **Saline nose drops** may help to relieve congestion and 'blockage' in the nose.

Steam inhalation is a traditional remedy, but is now not usually advised. This is because there is little evidence that it helps. Also, there have been some reports of people burning themselves trying to breathe in steam from a kettle. However, some people say that their nose feels clearer for a short while after a hot shower.

Travel Advice



If you are planning a holiday or trip abroad this year, please see one of the Practice Nurses at least eight weeks before departure. This is so that we can give you advice on how to reduce travel-related health risks, which may include vaccinations and anti-malarial tablets. We can also give advice for patients with a particular itinerary, for example, cruise travel, back-packing or travelling to high altitude. We can give you information regarding travelling with certain conditions, such as diabetes, or for special considerations, including pregnancy, children or the elderly.

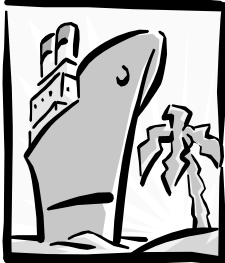
Last minute bookings are sometimes made and we would still like to see you before you depart. Whilst certain vaccinations require a full course to ensure protection, we can make an assessment according to the length and type of trip you have booked.

We prefer you to make an appointment with one of the Nurses, rather than discuss your vaccination history with the receptionists, as we are able to provide up-to-date information about where you are going. If no vaccinations are required, or yours are all current, please do not feel that you have wasted an appointment, as we can give you important advice about other health-related travel matters.



If you have recently moved to the area and are new to Elm Tree Surgery, it is very useful if you bring with you any vaccination records when you see the Nurse.

For your first travel assessment, we offer a 20-minute appointment per person. We are happy to see parents for an initial discussion on behalf of any children, but it is useful to let the receptionists know you will be doing this, so that we have enough time allocated to check all their records.



Please note that we make a charge for some vaccines, although others are given on the NHS.

We are unable to administer travel vaccinations that have been dispensed elsewhere. We are only able to administer travel vaccinations that have been prescribed at Elm Tree Surgery.

Are You A Carer?

Are you looking after someone who ill, frail or disabled?"

South & Vale Carers and Swindon Carers Centres can help you will free and confidential advice, information, emotional and practical support:

- A sympathetic listening ear
- Claiming benefits
- Liaising with Social Services and a whole host of other agencies
- Help towards taking break
- Trips and activities and a chance to meet like-minded people
- Practical training courses to help with your caring role

Please call South & Vale Carers Centre on 01235 510212 if you have a "Vale of White Horse" post code or Swindon Carers Centre on 01793 531133 if you have a Swindon Borough Council post code.

Access to Health Services for Military Veterans

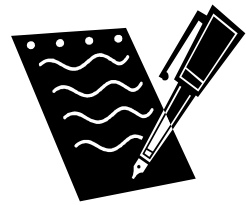


The Chief Medical Officer has recently confirmed that military veterans (somebody who has served at least one day in the UK Armed Forces) should receive priority access to NHS secondary care (hospital treatment) for any conditions which are likely to be related to their service.

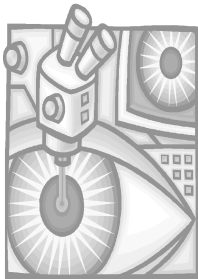
If you are a military veteran and would like this recording on your medical records please let us know. We will inform the hospital at the time of your referral, it is the responsibility of the hospital to prioritise your appointment.

Examinations & Medical Certificates for Absence

GPs are not obliged to provide sick notes for pupils who are off sick from school. They are also not obliged to provide sickness certifications for students who miss an exam or believe their performance was affected due to illness. The BMA has written to the Office of the Qualifications & Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) and they have confirmed that medical proof should not be required.



Cataracts



Cataracts are a common eye problem, found more commonly with increasing age. Inside the eye is a lens, just like the one found at the front of a camera. It is the gradual clouding-up of this lens that leads to the formation of a 'cataract'. The word derives from the waterfalls that are found on rivers like the Nile, where clear water is turned white by turbulent motion. It is rare for cataracts to get this far in the eye nowadays, but occasionally such "mature" cataracts are found. Fortunately an optician usually spots the onset long before it can be seen with the naked eye, and will arrange a referral to the eye clinic for its removal if and when it causes significant difficulties for the patient. Cataracts usually only need to be removed if they are causing persistent visual problems. This is done with a simple 20 minute operation, almost always under local anaesthetic, requiring few hours stay in the hospital. Recently the opticians have made an arrangement with the local health authority (Swindon PCT) to allow them to refer NHS patients directly, without the need to come via the G.P. You will still be able to choose where the hospital consultation and operation takes place, and we will forward on any relevant medical details such as allergies or current medication. After the operation you go back to the optician after about 8 weeks, to have the lens in your glasses altered to maximise the improvement given by the new plastic lens inside the eye.

COUGHS & COLDS

As winter rapidly descends on us our surgeries are filling up with patients with seasonal sniffles and coughs. The greater majority of these infections are caused by viruses and the frustrating fact is that there is no cure for upper respiratory viral infections.



What are the symptoms of a URTI?

Symptoms of upper respiratory infections include sore throat, runny nose, fever, headache, earache, generalised aching and cough. Symptoms typically peak after 2-3 days and then gradually clear. However, the cough may persist after the infection has gone. This is because inflammation in the airways caused by the infection can take a while to settle. It may take 2-3 weeks after other symptoms have gone for a cough to clear completely.

What is the treatment for a URTI?

- **Take Paracetamol, Ibuprofen or Aspirin** to reduce fever (high temperature) and to ease any aches, pains and headaches. (Children under 16 should not take Aspirin).
- **Have lots to drink** if you have a fever, to prevent mild dehydration.
- **There is no “quick fix” for the cough.** You need to be patient until it goes. Cough medicines that you can buy rarely help and there is little scientific evidence that they ease a cough. They often contain several ingredients. Some contain Paracetamol, so be careful that you do not take these in addition to Paracetamol tablets.
- **Antibiotics are not usually advised** if you are normally in good health. Your immune system can usually clear the infection. Antibiotics do not kill viruses. Even if a bacterium is the cause, antibiotics usually do little to speed up recovery of a URTI and some people may develop side-effects such as diarrhoea, feeling sick and rashes. Antibiotics may be prescribed if you become more unwell, or if you already have an ongoing (chronic) lung disease. They may also be prescribed if a complication develops such as pneumonia—but this is unlikely to occur if you are otherwise healthy.



What symptoms should I look out for?

Most URTIs clear without complications. Occasionally the infection travels to the lung tissue to cause pneumonia. Consult a doctor if any of the following occur:

- If fever, wheezing or headaches become worse or severe.
- If you develop: fast breathing, shortness of breath, chest pains, or if you cough up blood.
- If you become drowsy or confused.
- If a cough persists longer than 3-4 weeks.
- If you have recurring bouts of URTI.
- If any other symptom develops that you are concerned about.



GP Patient Survey

We have received the result of the latest GP Patient Survey conducted nationally by IPSOS Mori on behalf of the Department of Health.

We are extremely pleased to report our excellent results and would like to thank all our hardworking staff for their help in achieving the results.



	Elm Tree Surgery	PCT Average	National Average
Able to see Doctor on same day or next day	84%	98%	82%
Able to get an appointment with a doctor more than 2 days in advance	97%	78%	76%
Frequency of seeing preferred doctor % saying always, almost always or a lot of the time	90%	76%	77%
% of people who find it easy to get through on the phone	82%	74%	70%
% of patients who are satisfied with our opening hours	90%	82%	82%
% of patients satisfied with overall care received at the surgery	97%	92%	91%
% of patients who find it easy to get an appointment with the Practice Nurse	99%	92%	92%
% of patients who had had a discussion with a doctor/nurse about managing a longstanding health problem	78%	75%	74%

The Treatment of Warts with Duct Tape

Ordinary over-the-counter hardware duct tape can be used as a treatment for warts. Research has shown it to be a more effective, less painful alternative to liquid nitrogen, which has in the past been used to freeze warts.

Instructions for Use

Apply the duct tape over the wart for six days.

Then remove the tape, soak the area in water and use an emery board or pumice stone to scrape the spot.

Reapply the tape the next morning.

Continue the treatment until the wart goes away or for a maximum of two months.