

ELM TREE SURGERY NEWSLETTER

Issue 1- 2011

Staff Changes	2
Automatic Check-In	2
Independent Sector Treatment Centres	2
Parking - Church Walk	2
Swindon Listening Service	3
Prescription Requests	3
Breast Screening	3
Swindon Primary Care Psychology	3
Allergy & Clinics	4
Research	4
Examinations & Medical Certificates for Absence	4
SUNS	5
Acorn Club	5
Local Travel Information	5
Hayfever	6&7
Travel Advice	8
Are you a Carer?	8
Access to Health Services for Mili- tary Veterans	9
Cataracts	9
The Treatment of Warts with Duct Tape	9
GP Patient Survey	10



ELM TREE
MEDICAL
PARTNERSHIP

Staff Changes And Updates

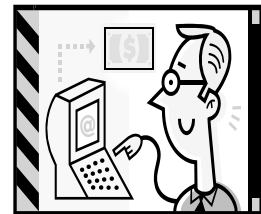
We would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr Ayla Atun (Registrar), who has joined the practice, we also welcome Helen Foster (Receptionist) and Emma Frayne the new Community Midwife.



We say a sad and fond farewell to Ann Hanwell (Receptionist) who retired on 1 April 2011 after working at the surgery for 24 years. Her knowledge and experience will be sorely missed. We wish her a long healthy and happy retirement and hope that she enjoys her time of rest with her family and hobbies. We also say farewell to Angie Dyer (community Midwife) and wish her well in the future.

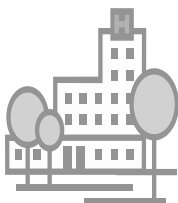
Automatic Check-In

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.

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/swindonandwiltspychology.



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.

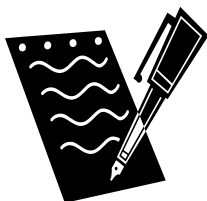
Patient confidentiality will always be at the forefront of every researcher's mind and we will be no different. Participation in any Research project by any patient is of course entirely voluntary and will not affect your current or future care in anyway whatsoever. Should you decide to take part in 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.



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.

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.

HAYFEVER

What is hay fever?

Strictly speaking, hay fever (also called seasonal allergic rhinitis) is caused by an allergy to grass or hay pollens. Grass pollen is the most common cause (May to July). However, the term is sometimes used when allergies are caused by other pollens such as from tree pollens (March to May). Symptoms are due to the immune system reacting to the pollen.

Who gets hay fever?

Hay fever is very common. It often first develops in the teenage years. Symptoms return for a season each year, but it eventually goes away or improves in many cases (often after having had symptoms each season for several years).

What are the symptoms of hay fever?

- **Common symptoms** are a runny and itchy nose, blocked nose, sneezing, itchy and watery red eyes and an itchy throat. In some cases only nose symptoms occur and in some cases only the eye symptoms occur.
- **Less common symptoms** are loss of smell, face pain, sweats and headache.
- **Asthma symptoms** such as wheeze and breathlessness may get worse if you already have asthma. Some people have asthma symptoms *only* during the hay fever season.

Will it help if I avoid pollen?

It is impossible to totally avoid pollen. However, symptoms tend to be less severe if you reduce your exposure to pollen. The pollen count is often given with TV, radio, internet or newspaper weather forecasts. The following may help when the pollen count is high.

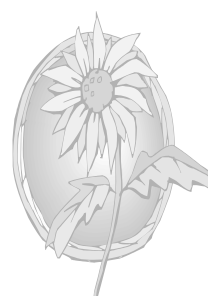
- Stay indoors as much as possible, and keep windows and doors shut.
- Avoid cutting grass, large grassy places and camping.
- Shower and wash your hair after being outdoors, especially after going to the countryside.
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses when you are out.
- Keep car windows closed and consider buying a pollen filter for the air vents in your car.

What are the commonly used treatments?

Antihistamine tablets

Antihistamine's ease most of the symptoms but may not be so good at relieving nasal congestion (blocked nose). A dose usually works within an hour. Therefore, one can be taken 'as required' if symptoms are mild, or come and go. One can also be taken regularly if symptoms occur each day.

There are several brands of antihistamines that you can buy at pharmacies or get on prescription, older brands can cause drowsiness. Never non-sedating medication is usually prescribed.



HAYFEVER cont.

Steroid nose sprays

A steroid nose spray usually works well to clear all the nose symptoms (itch, sneezing and congestion). It works by reducing inflammation in the nose. A steroid spray also tends to ease eye symptoms. It is not clear how it helps the eye symptoms - but it does!

It takes several days for a steroid spray to build up to its full effect. In some people it can take up to three weeks or longer to be fully effective. So do persevere. (It is best to start taking it a week before the hay fever season begins if you know that you have hay fever).



You need to take it each day over the hay fever season to keep symptoms away. However, once symptoms have gone, the dose of a steroid spray can often be reduced to a low 'maintenance' dose each day.

Other treatment options

Eye drops

If necessary, you can use eye drops in addition to other treatments.

- *Antihistamine eye drops* work quickly, so you can use them 'as required' to ease a flare up of eye symptoms. There are several brands available
- *Mast cell stabilisers* are another type of eye drop - again several brands are available. They are thought to work by stopping the release of histamine from certain cells (mast cells). You need to use them regularly to prevent symptoms.



Treatment for severe symptoms

Rarely, a short course of steroid tablets is prescribed. For example for students sitting exams who have severe symptoms which are not eased by other treatments. Steroids usually work well to reduce inflammation. A short course is usually safe. However, you should not take steroid tablets for long periods to treat hay fever as serious side-effects may develop.

Asthma and hay fever

If you develop asthma symptoms during the hay fever season you may be prescribed an inhaler. If you already have asthma, your asthma may become worse in the hay fever season. You may need an increase in the dose of your usual inhalers (or other treatment that you take for asthma).

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.

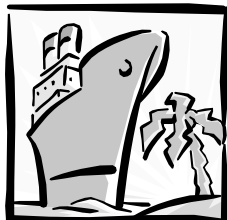
We prefer you to make an appointment with one of the Nurses, rather than discuss your vaccination history with the receptionists, as we are able to provide up-to-date information about where you are going. If no vaccinations are required, or yours are all current, please do not feel that you have wasted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

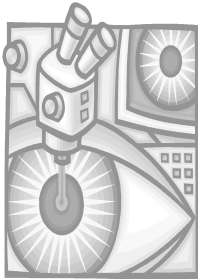
Access to Health Services for Military Veterans

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.



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.

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.

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	98%	82%	84%
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%