St Albans Medical Centre
January 2014
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Surgery phone number: 01202 517333

Telephone Options
- Emergencies Only
- Appointments
- Visits
- Results/Enquiries
- Prescriptions

Please try to make the correct selection to avoid blocking lines inappropriately.

Alternative GP services for problems that won’t wait until we re-open and treatment for minor injuries are available at
Boscombe and Springbourne Health Centre,
Palmerston Road Boscombe
8am – 8pm Saturdays and Sundays only

NHS 111
If you require URGENT attention for more serious medical problems and advice outside surgery opening hours, please contact the NHS on:
111
Editorial

Happy New Year one and all! It is the month when I think most of us are reflecting on the year gone by, looking ahead and perhaps making resolutions. A method used in business and indeed in my development portfolio, is the SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time); applying this to your resolutions means you will be more likely to keep them. Try it!

I would like to welcome Liz Smith to the surgery as the newest member of the prescriptions team, she has been here for a couple of months now and along with Dr Mistry & Dr Davies this means that I am no longer feeling like the newcomer.

I must congratulate the rest of the team, in particular the nurses, on an excellent seasonal flu campaign so far; the first time that I have been so involved in one of these. More detail later in this newsletter. We are also well underway with the new shingles vaccine; those of you who are eligible will have been invited to take this up in the last few months – apologies to those of you affected by the problems with vaccine supply nationally. The age cohorts were very strict, but more people will be offered the vaccine next year.

As the population ages, there are ever more challenges on providing appropriate care. We welcome the recently announced changes to the GP contract. All practices are required to have a named GP for all patients aged 75 or older – St Alban’s has always worked on a personal list basis, so we have been doing this for many years anyway. There will be more investment in care of vulnerable patients, of which more later in this newsletter.

Julie Barrett

RAFFLE

Win one of the original paintings displayed in the waiting room in our winter draw.

Both were painted and donated by local artist Geoff Storer.

Tickets only £1.00 each at reception

We would like to raise £500 to put towards the purchase of a second 24 hour blood pressure monitor. We will have the draw at the end of January. DON’T MISS OUT

BIG THANK YOU!

The Doctors and Staff of St Alban’s Medical Centre and East Way Clinic would like to thank all our patients who gave so generously at Christmas both in gifts and words.

Your kindness and appreciation is warmly received and goes a long way to making Christmas a happy and rewarding time for everyone within the St Alban’s team in recognition of our efforts throughout the year to give you the best possible care and attention.

May we now wish you all a Happy Healthy and Peaceful New Year.
**Practice and Community nurses**

The role of the nurse has come on leaps and bounds in the past 30 years.

In the practice, we have one Nurse Prescriber, three Practice nurses and a Healthcare Assistant. Our nurse prescriber, Pauline, sees and treats patients with minor illness or injury. All practice nurses see patients for dressings, injections, ear syringing, as well as some other procedures. The senior nurses have responsibility for review and case management of patients with chronic diseases (Heart disease, stroke, diabetes and respiratory disease) and are also qualified to give travel advice and vaccinations. Our healthcare assistant helps out with dressings, some injections, and blood tests for patients who are not able to get to the hospital or to Moordown.

If you can’t get up to the surgery but you need nursing care, you may be visited by a District nurse at your home. This could be arranged if you need care after an operation, but also if you have become housebound. As well as carrying out routine nursing tasks, they are also able to perform continence assessments. We’ve moved from a practice team to a larger team serving a number of practices.

We can also call on the services of the Community Matrons, who are highly skilled nurses with specialist skills in areas such as respiratory disease and heart failure. Part of their role is to support patients to avoid emergency admissions and they usually work with patients aged 65 or over. They visit the patient at home, and are able to offer input and advice as well as signpost patients to other services. As well as being responsible for the home oxygen scheme, the Community Matrons are monitoring our patients who are using Telehealth to monitor their symptoms so that they are better able to manage their health for themselves and are less likely to be admitted to hospital as an emergency.

Patients needing palliative care may be referred to the Community Palliative Care team – their doctors and nurses can assess the needs of the individual and their family, and offer support in the home or at the hospice if appropriate.

If you have complex leg ulcers or needed wound dressings at the weekend, you may have come into contact with the Tissue Viability nurses, who specialize in the assessment and treatment of leg ulcers. (The practice nurses are very skilled in management of complex leg ulcers, but there are still cases that need their input and advice.)

And don’t forget that midwives and health visitors are specialist nurses in their own right! Our new midwife is Kelly, and she works out of Royal Bournemouth / East Way. The practice linked Health visitors are Penny and Tina, supporting our families with children under 5.

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**X-Ray Department Bournemouth Hospital**

From 16th December 2013, all GP X-ray referrals will require a booked appointment, except chest x-ray referrals and patients referred post trauma (if GP/nurse thinks you may have a fracture).

The GP will give you a referral form and instructions for booking the appointment. You can phone 01202 704106 any time between 9am and 5pm Mon – Fri for an appointment which will be either at the main X-Ray department or at the Derwent Centre.

Appointments will be available Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8.30am - 5.15pm and Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am – 6.45pm.
**Practice Survey**

We ran a practice survey in August / September 2013. Thank you to everyone who took part. We had 203 respondents, and results are shown as actual numbers, and as a percentage of the responses to that specific question. We then met with our Patient Representative Group at the beginning of December, and had a useful discussion about possible changes that would be helpful for patients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>Availability of particular</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>GP</td>
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<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<td>Availability of ANY GP /</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Triage</td>
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<td>40%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>Continuity of care</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>Waiting time in surgery</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Being treated with</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>respect</td>
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<td>Opening hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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**Difficulty getting through on phone**
- Yes 64  35%
- No 34   19%
- Some 83  46%

**Time of difficulty**
- Between 8 – 9 147  94%
- Between 9 – 1  5   3%
- Between 2 – 6.30 4   3%

**Know about online booking?**
- Yes 78  43%
- No 47   26%
- No computer 53  30%

**What change to system would help?**
- More book ahead appointments 32  14%
- More short term book ahead appointments 75  32%
- More book on the day appointments 67  29%
- More of all options 9   4%
- No change 14  6%

**What’s changed at the practice in recent months?**

We have reviewed our staffing and have recruited new GPs. Compared to our staffing at December 2012, we now have an additional 4.5 sessions per week, equating to around 60 extra appointments each week.

We have shared the patients who were registered with Dr Sutherland and Dr Kidman between our three newest GPs, Dr Barrett, Dr Mistry and Dr Davies. This will give patients greater continuity of care as well as evening out the workload for the doctors. We have tried to keep patients who have been seeing one of the newer GPs regularly registered with that GP, to allow continuity of care.

We tried but were not successful in recruiting another triage nurse. However, our lead Practice Nurse Tania has started a two year course so she will be able to take on this role when she completes it.
We have promoted the Online access for appointments and more people are signed up to EMIS Access and able to book appointments online. Do ask if you’d like to register – you can book appointments and order prescriptions via a secure online system. It could be an easier system for you, and frees up phone lines and reception time for people without access to a computer. We have continued to have an additional member of staff answering the telephone between 8 and 8.30, when the phones are at their busiest.

We are finding that with the additional GP appointments available, we are able to offer more book on the day appointments than previously, and we are offering more short-notice prebookable appointments too.

We talked a lot about communication at the meeting – we try to use posters in the surgery, the website and the practice newsletter to keep people informed, but these methods don’t always reach the audience intended. Patients were not clear about when a specific GP was working or the appointment times of the nurses. We do have this information in the practice booklet but only give that out to newly registering families unless someone specifically asks for a copy. We will put up posters in the waiting room and a display in the outdoor noticeboard to give this information.

Many patients commended the prescription collection service run by most of the local pharmacies. When your prescription is generated, it is sent direct to the pharmacy of your choice. Not only does that mean you don’t need to queue to collect your prescription at the surgery, but you often find that your medication is all ready for you when you go to the pharmacy, saving you another wait! If you would like your prescription to be sent to a specific pharmacy, either sign up at the pharmacy or make a note on the bottom of your request slip when you next put your request in. You do need to stick to the same pharmacy, so this system will not suit you if you use different chemists each time.

Thank you to the patients who gave up their time to meet with us; their input is very valued in helping us make improvements to the service we offer.

Dr Nelemans and Denise Lavey

Flu vaccination campaign – How did we do?

Flu vaccination is really important. A high uptake will protect the vaccinated individual and the wider community by reducing the incidence and severity of the infection. Those at-risk groups are protected against the commonest strains of virus circulating this winter, and new for this year all 2-3 year-olds were offered a nasal spray vaccine. We have reached the Department of Health target of 71% of eligible at risk patients vaccinated, and have managed to immunise over 93% of patients with CHD/Diabetes/COPD/Stroke.

The uptake for flu vaccination in the 2 – 3 year old age group is 62% for two year olds and 65% for three year olds, which is excellent for a first campaign. This is likely to be extended to other ages in future years. The nasal spray was available to all children up to the age of 16 – this was very well received by the younger children (and their carers), although there were several macho youngsters who “wanted the jab” on Flu Day!

We have a small supply of vaccine left, so if you are eligible and haven’t been immunised, MAKE AN APPOINTMENT! If you are already seeing one of the clinical team, they will be happy to do your flu jab at that same time – no need for a second appointment.
Caring for an aging population

Southern seaside towns have a reputation for attracting retirees, and have an older than average population as a result. Clearly there must be some sense in this decision, as the average life expectancy in Dorset and Hampshire is 83, compared to 78 in towns and cities in the Midlands.

Sadly, an extended life expectancy is not without a down side. Some patients are in very robust health, but others face a number of health challenges, such as cancer, chronic disease and dementia. The practice team are pleased that the government has recognised the importance of caring for vulnerable patients, and that it will be increasing its investment in this specific area of health service care from 2014. We also welcome the recognition of the importance of continuity of care, with older people being allocated to a named GP. As well as being on the “list” of a named GP, we think it’s important that you are able to see and speak to that GP for routine healthcare matters.

Here are some more snippets of information that may be pertinent to you.

The Dementia Challenge

Another subject relevant to us here in Bournemouth. The National Dementia Strategy looks at creating dementia-friendly communities, improving research and most importantly improving health and care. Last month it was the subject of the G8 summit in London, attended by world leaders including ministers, researchers, charities and people living with the condition. St Albans MC was recently visited by a GP Fellow in Dementia, who educated both our clinical & administrative staff on the importance of diagnosis, the impact this may have on those affected and their families, and the day-to-day difficulties which may manifest as simply as requiring more time with or support from the reception staff due to reduced processing skills within the brain.

www.dementiaweb.org.uk has an extensive range of services available for patients and carers, specific to the Bournemouth area.

Hearing problems?

If you think you may have hearing loss, you can call Action on Hearing Loss on 0844 800 3838. You can take an initial hearing test on the phone. Whilst this is no substitute for a full hearing test, it can give an indication of whether you need to see the GP.

Keep safe – simple tips

- keep a cordless phone or mobile on you at all times
- make sure rugs and mats lie flat and are slip resistant
- keep floors clear of things you might trip over
- ask Social Services or your GP if you would benefit from mobility aids
- check your smoke alarm – you can get this checked for free by the Fire Brigade; they will even fit a free alarm for you if needed. Request a Home Safety Check by calling 0800 038 2323.

**Orthopaedics update by Dr Barrett**

I went to an educational event recently by a team of local Orthopaedic Consultants which was a most informative evening. Covering an area of the country with one of the largest older people populations, Poole Hospital, our local Trauma Unit, was second only to Belfast Regional Trauma Unit (for the whole of Northern Ireland) in the country for number of fractured hips repaired, totalling more than 1000 last year alone. Simple falls prevention measures include environmental (removing clutter, providing lighting, installing grab bars), moderate exercise (particularly for balance and coordination), maintaining a healthy weight, calcium in the diet, and reduction in alcohol & smoking for bone health.

Do you want to improve the health of your hips and other joints? A new exercise programme for managing arthritic hip pain is now up & running, set up by Mr Rob Middleton, local Orthopaedic Surgeon. For those of you aged 45 – 74 years, ask us about a referral to CHAIN (Cycling Against Hip Pain) which promotes local muscle strengthening, aerobic exercise and education.

Read more at [www.livingwellchoices.co.uk/chain](http://www.livingwellchoices.co.uk/chain)

Other non-surgical recommendations promoted by the consultants included Nordic Walking Poles – which not only improve posture but as they involve the upper body more, calorie use is increased. Keen runners were advised to have two pairs of running trainers – in fact hip pain can be compounded by loss of elasticity in the trainers’ sole which can take up to 24 hours to recover after a long run. A wobble board was recommended for anyone with weak ankles or following a sprain.

**CHOOSE WELL!**

You may have heard Dr Seal’s radio adverts on local radio stations. Here’s a summary of the Choose Well campaign. Choose Well means spending less time waiting for treatment, getting the best treatment for your symptoms and freeing up the emergency department (A&E) to treat those with the most serious illnesses and injuries. Over 25% of patients attending A&E could be treated by another NHS service. Make sure YOU use the right service for your symptoms.

**SELF CARE** – for minor cuts and grazes, colds and hangover. Put together a small first aid box (out of reach of children) so that you have remedies to hand for when you need them.

**NHS 111** – for advice and medical help when it’s not a life-threatening situation. This is also the number to call if you need medical attention that will not wait until the surgery is open.

**PHARMACIST** – advice on treatment and medication for headaches, coughs and colds, upset stomach.
GP SURGERY – we can offer routine care for such ailments as chronic backache, persistent pain, painful cough and earache, either by the GP or Triage Nurse. We can also see and assess sprains, strains and minor injuries, saving you a wait at A&E.

WEEKEND SERVICE - A weekend GP service is provided at the Boscombe and Springbourne Health Centre, Palmerston Road, Boscombe from 8am-8pm Saturdays and Sundays only, for medical needs which cannot wait until the surgery reopens. Appointments are allocated, so please telephone 01202 720174 before attending

Your choices in an emergency

At some point, most people will need to get help because of an accident or a medical emergency. Your options in an emergency include:

Calling 999

Only dial 999 in a critical or life-threatening situation, for example is someone has:

- loss of consciousness
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- persistent, severe chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that can't be stopped

If you or someone else is having a heart attack or stroke, call 999 immediately. Every second counts with these conditions.

Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments

Major A&E departments are open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. A&E departments have access to specialists and specialist investigations. When you go to A&E, a doctor or nurse will assess your condition and decide what action to take. The treatment you receive will depend on your clinical need. Help the NHS to help you! Choose Well!

Xmas Greetings from “Down Under”

Dr Sutherland will be spending his first Christmas in Australia, since he emigrated in January 2013. Apparently the weather is very hot and they are likely to spend Xmas in the pool. He then commented, "hope the presents don’t get too soggy!".

He sends his very best wishes to the staff and patients of St Alban's Medical Centre, and is keeping tabs on us all by email and by checking out our website, www.stalbansmedcentre.gpsurgery.net