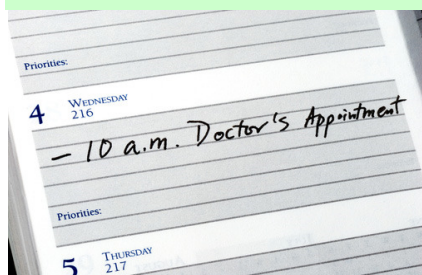




Welcome to our latest Practice newsletter. This edition includes articles on various changes to the childhood and young adult immunisation programme, the findings of a review we have undertaken on the number of patients that do not keep their appointments and what we know about the General Election pledge of seven day opening. We also introduce you to the NHS Health Trainers that are now based in our Practice, and how they can help with lifestyle advice such as diet, exercise and alcohol.

Clinically, our 'focus on' series looks at something that during the summer months can affect us all as we spend more time outside - insect bites and stings. Enjoy the read!

Missed appointments – 27 hours in May



That's right! A recent audit of appointments for May 2015 showed that 163 appointments were booked but not kept during the month. Those 163 appointments equate to 27 hours of doctor and nurse time, which means an additional 7 patients a day could have been seen.

Very often our staff receive comments about the availability of appointments and whilst we recognise that sometimes, for a number of reasons, appointments with some clinicians may have to be booked a little way ahead, the audit we have completed shows that this wait may not be so long if patients that do not wish to keep their appointments remember to cancel them.

We appreciate that some of these missed appointments could very well include misunderstandings between the patient and person booking the appointment; perhaps written down incorrectly or booked for 2 weeks' time instead of 1 week, but even allowing for a couple of these a week, there is still just under 150 appointments that are lost as patients forget them or do not ring to cancel them when they are not needed.

To help us manage this situation and see a reduction in these missed appointments, we would ask that if you do book an appointment (which can now be done now 6 weeks in advance) and you change your mind or the need changes, then please tell us. Cancelling the appointment makes it available for other patients.

National figures suggest that over 12 million GP appointments are missed each year in the UK, costing in excess of £162 million per year.

We have discussed the figures with members of our patient reference group, who have challenged us to see a reduction in missed appointments and we will be running a campaign in Practice during the summer including the offer of text alerts to patients to confirm appointments when they are booked.

Health Trainers in Practice

Are you looking for help losing weight, exercising, quitting smoking or reducing your alcohol intake? If so, NHS South Norfolk Health Trainers can help.

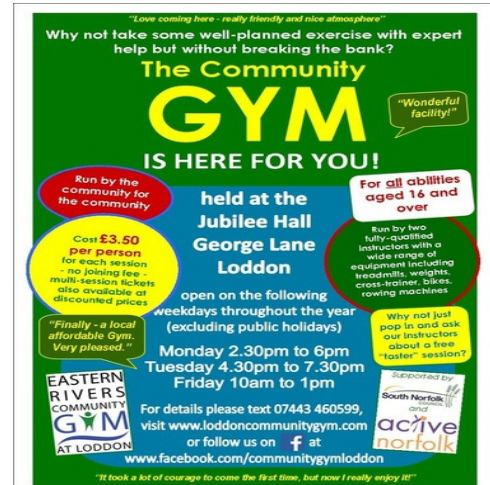
In Practice once a week, this team of specialist advisers can support, motivate and encourage you on a one to one basis to help achieve your health objective in these areas.

Working with you by setting realistic and achievable targets, they will then see you on an agreed basis to review the progress made with the lifestyle changes chosen to improve your health. Referrals can be made by seeing one of our nursing team who will talk to you about your plans and refer you to this new service provided by *My Time Active*.

We are also delighted to once again promote the Community Gym in Loddon. This project run by the community for the community is an ideal way to get or keep fit without having to visit a health club or more formal gym.

Supported by South Norfolk Council and Active Norfolk it operates from the Jubilee Hall in Loddon and costs just £3.50 per session. It is available for all abilities for people over the age of 16.

Visit their website at www.loddoncommunitygym.com for more details.



Meet Carol!

Many of you have already! Carol Vincent joined the nursing team as a phlebotomist at the beginning of July. Carol is specially trained in taking blood samples and joins us from the Phlebotomy team at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

Carol is able to bleed children and adults, so this should prevent those under 12 having to visit the hospital to have their blood sample taken. Carol is also able to take blood from patients who previously have needed, because of their condition, to see a doctor for this.



We welcome Carol to the team.

The notice board

Patients are reminded to telephone the Practice for the results of blood tests. Our telephone lines are busier in the mornings and so please where possible, try and call us in the afternoon.

Ask us to confirm your appointment by Text. To facilitate this let us have your mobile number.

We are still piloting treatment of suspected urine infections through telephone consultations with our nurses. For patients between the ages of 16 and 65 (who are not pregnant), we do not necessarily need a urine sample. A telephone appointment should be requested with one of our nurses.

Seven day opening

By Garry Whiting our Managing Partner



The General Election commitment for GP Practices to be open 7 days a week has, and continues to, create lots of discussion and comment in

both the press and across the coffee lounge here at the Practice. Also, at our recent patient reference group meeting, this was one of the questions asked by a number of representatives.

In all honesty, at this stage, this is still very much an unknown and we have received little information on plans for its introduction or how it may work.

I don't think anyone would disagree that patients who need urgent healthcare over a weekend should have access to clinicians and of course there are already different routes to accessing this, including; the out of hours service, 111, pharmacies, and of course Accident and Emergency Departments when there is a true urgent medical need.

What we do know is that to provide a traditional 7 day GP service with doctors and nurses, support staff and dispensers, there will need to be a large investment in Primary Care. If we are required to open at weekends, then, without such, this would limit the availability of certain services during the week.

As with any political commitment, the devil is in the detail and we wait further announcements by the Government on this.

In the meantime, we already offer extended opening in Poringland with clinics from 7am on Friday mornings, an evening clinic on Wednesdays between 6.30pm and 7.30pm and a 2 hour clinic some Saturday mornings.

Children's and young adult immunisations



There are some changes to the national

immunisation programme from August and September 2015.

From 1st August all young adults aged 18 on 31st August 2015, as well as first time university students up to the age of 25, will be offered Meningitis ACWY vaccine as part of the NHS immunisation programme.

The combined vaccination protects against four different causes of meningitis and septicaemia.

The combined vaccination is also to be added to the routine schools immunisation programme for children in school years 9 and 10 as a direct replacement for the current single Meningitis C vaccination.

Also from September this year a single vaccination against Meningitis B will be added to the vaccination schedule for babies. Meningitis B will be added to the national programme at 2, 4 and 12/13 months and administered with the other vaccinations given at those times.

Meningitis charities are delighted with the addition of the vaccine to the schedule and have said that the move will 'save lives' straight away.

The vaccination will protect against infection by meningococcal group B bacteria which can affect people of any age, but is most common in babies and young children.

The final change is that the final booster for tetanus, diphtheria and polio that we have traditionally given in surgery at 15 years will now be given in schools.

Visit www.nhs.uk for more details.

focus on.....

'Focus on' is our series of newsletter features on specific clinical matters or services and in this edition we explain a little more about treating insect bites and stings.

With the summer here and us all spending more time outside, very often we find ourselves suffering from an insect bite or sting.

Most insect bites and stings cause reactions that are confined to the area of the bite and can usually be treated at home.

If you are stung by a bee, remove the sting and venom sac if it has been left in your skin. Do this by scraping it out with your finger nail. When removing the sting be careful not to spread the venom further under your skin and try not to puncture the venom sac. If a child has been stung, an adult should remove the sting. Wasps and hornets do not usually leave the sting behind.



Most insect bites and stings cause itching and swelling that usually clears up within 48 hours. Minor bites and stings can be treated by washing the affected area with soap and water and placing a cold flannel or cloth over the affected area. You should try not to scratch the area as it could become infected, at which point you should seek medical advice.

If the bite or sting is painful or swollen, you could also wrap an ice pack on it, take some pain relief, use a spray or a cream that prevents itching or swelling or take an antihistamine tablet, which will help reduce the swelling. All of these items are available at a local pharmacy. If swelling is severe or you suffer an allergic reaction then you should seek medical advice from the surgery or via 111 if we are closed.

Sometimes you can develop blisters after being bitten by an insect. If so, do not burst them as the area may become infected. Blisters do not usually cause pain unless they burst and expose the new skin underneath. You could try and cover the blister to prevent it bursting.

If the bite appears infected (it would fill with pus and feel particularly tender), you should also seek medical advice as you may need to be prescribed antibiotics to treat the infection.

Our final message is about being bitten by a tick. You should remove it as soon as possible to reduce the risk of getting a tick-borne infection such as Lyme disease. The tick should be removed quickly and correctly, following this guidance.

- Use a fine pair of tweezers
- Wear gloves or use a tissue to cover your fingers
- Grab the tick as close to the skin as possible
- Gently but firmly pull straight up until all of the ticks mouthparts have been removed
- Wash your hands afterwards and avoid scratching the area affected

You should seek medical attention if you are unable to remove all of the tick or you develop a pink or red rash, a high temperature or other flu like symptoms.