

Newsletter

October 2015

Practice Update

Apologies for missing the June 2015 Newsletter. This has been due to the changes that have been on going in the practice since the end of March 2015.

Dr Lynch and Dr Isaac took their respective 24 hour retirements, which involved being away from the practice for one month each. Both have returned, but on a reduced sessions basis. Dr Chowdhury and Dr Mallik left the practice and we were very happy to recruit Dr David Fiske and Dr Jane Couperthwaite.

The temporary way in which appointments were offered during the above three months, was highly successful and it was, therefore, decided to make this appointment system permanent. Details of the appointment system are included in this Newsletter.

In April 2015, the practice signed up to the Bolton Quality Contract with NHS Bolton CCG which, although involving a lot of planning and more work in setting up, will hopefully help to provide a better service to patients across the whole of Bolton. As part of the Bolton Quality Contract, the practice employed a Pharmacy Technician full time.

Appointments

The practice offers some pre-bookable appointment up to eight weeks ahead. The majority of these pre-bookable appointments are for early mornings, although there are a few for later in the afternoons/evenings.

The majority of our **ROUTINE** appointments are given out "on the day" each working day and patients can either telephone from 8.00 am to make an appointment or book online from 7.00 am.

When all **ROUTINE** appointments have been taken, patients who are unwell and need to be seen will **ALWAYS** be offered a **SAME DAY URGENT** appointment, although a choice of GP may not be offered in these circumstances. Patients should be aware that as the list of urgent appointment grows, there may be a longer waiting time. Patients cannot expect to always be seen on time for these appointments.

If you are in need of a same day urgent appointment, you will be expected to attend the very next same day urgent appointment offered. This may mean taking your child out of school, or coming out of work. The practice cannot facilitate patient's request for specific times.

The practice will **ALWAYS** see children on the same day and patients are advised to inform the receptionist if the appointment they are requesting is for a child.

Patients can also book appointments for telephone consultations instead of attending the surgery.

Please note: we are now open and have surgeries on Wednesday mornings **AND** afternoons.

Non Attendance

From 1st April 2015 – 30th June 2015 we had 364 appointments which were not attended for GPs and 466 appointments not attended for the Practice Nurses. This gives a total for the practice of 830 "did not attend" in a three month period. This number of missed appointments equates to 30 full GP surgery sessions. This situation cannot continue and we would encourage patients to cancel their appointments if they cannot make them. Appointments can be cancelled by telephone from 8.00 am or online 24 hours a day.

Choice of GP

We would like to make patients aware that our GPs do not all work full time every working day. The majority of our GPs work part time and their appointment availability is naturally reduced. We are also a training practice, training new GPs, and some of our GP sessions involve tutorials with the Trainee GPs and patients are not seen during these sessions. Please bear this in mind when the next available appointment for the GP of your choice is not on the day of your choice, or if there is a longer delay before the next available routine appointment.

Telephone Access

We now answer the telephones from 8.00 am each morning. Once more, we would like to point out that there are certain times of the day that staff availability to answer the telephones is limited. This is due to the fact that we have to staff the practice from 7.15 am until 6.30 – 7.00 pm and we have to stretch the admin working times to cover the full day. 8.00 – 8.30 am, lunchtimes and after 5.00 pm are the times when we have reduced staff cover and waiting times may, therefore, be longer. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Information Security

Patient confidentiality and patient data security is, understandably, very important to everyone. We must make sure that medical information is not given to anyone but the patient themselves. Therefore, if you are contacting the practice for any information about yourself, you will be asked some security questions before any information is given.

For online services, if you lose or forget your username or password, you will be required to attend the practice with your ID, in order for us to be able to re-set your password. This cannot be done over the telephone, as we cannot verify your identity in this way.

Alternative Contact Person

If you frequently need to contact the practice on behalf of someone else, you will need to get the patient to complete an Alternative Contact Form in person at the reception desk, to consent and nominate their preferred named alternative contact.

If the patient is unable, for any reason, to do this, please contact the practice.

Toys

From time to time, we get feedback from parents attending for appointments with their children, stating that they would like to have toys or books available to keep their children entertained. From an infection control point of view, which is an important issue for the Care Quality Commission, we are unable to ensure that these sorts of items are kept infection free. We have no plans to have toys or books available for children or magazines available for adults. We would suggest that parents ensure they bring a toy or book from home for their children to play with, whilst waiting to be seen.

Vaccinations

Meningitis

Meningococcal disease is a life-threatening infection. It is a term used to describe two major illnesses – meningitis and septicaemia. These can occur on their own or, more commonly, both together. Most people will make a good recovery but, at worst, meningococcal disease causes very severe illness that can rapidly result in death.

From the 1st August 2015 the practice has been contacting, by letter, patients who are aged 17 and 18 years (school year 13), who attained the age of 18 on 31st August 2015. These patients are the first cohort to be vaccinated against MenW as a priority, using the MenACWY vaccine. This vaccine will also provide protection against meningococcal types A, C and Y.

We would encourage all patients who have received a letter from the practice and not yet booked their appointment to do so as soon as possible. Appointments can be made with the Practice Nurses by ringing 01204 463777 or asking one of the receptionists at our reception desk.

Meningitis Freshers

Patients who are attending university for the first time, are also eligible for the vaccine. If you have queries as whether you are eligible, please do not hesitate to contact the surgery.

Shingles

Shingles isn't like other infectious disease because you don't catch it from someone else. Most of us had chickenpox when we were young, although some of us will not be aware that we've had it. If you did have it, then the virus that caused it can stay in your body for the rest of your life without you knowing it is there. If the virus reactivates, it causes a disease called shingles.

Shingles can be very painful and tends to affect people more commonly as they get older. The older you are, the worse it can be. For some, the pain can last for many years.

There is now a vaccine that helps reduce your risk of getting shingles and reduces the severity of symptoms if you do develop the disease.

The practice has recently sent a letter to all patients who are eligible for the vaccine and we would encourage you to book an appointment to have the vaccine if you have not already done so. An appointment can be made by ringing 01204 463777 and asking to make an appointment with one of our Practice Nurses.

Eligible patients are those born between the following date ranges:-

02/09/1944 – 01/09/1945

02/09/1943 – 01/09/1944

02/09/1942 – 01/09/1943

02/09/1936 – 01/09/1937

02/09/1935 – 01/09/1936

Flu (Influenza) and Pneumonia

For most healthy people, influenza is an unpleasant but usually self-limiting disease. However, children, older people, pregnant women and those with underlying diseases/long term chronic conditions are at particular risk of severe illness if they catch it.

The aim of the seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccination programme is to protect those who are most at risk of serious illness or death should they develop influenza or pneumococcal disease by vaccination.

If you fall into one of the categories above, or if your child is aged 2, 3 or 4 years of age and you have received a letter from the practice for the nasal flu vaccine, please make sure you book your appointment to have your flu and/or pneumonia vaccination. An appointment can be made ringing the practice on 01204 463777.

We are unable to give the flu vaccine to those patients who are otherwise well, until all the "at risk" patients have been vaccinated.

Whooping Cough for Pregnant Ladies

Whooping cough is a serious disease that can lead to pneumonia and permanent brain damage. Many babies with whooping cough will be admitted to hospital and they are at risk of dying from the disease. Deaths from whooping cough are rare in the UK. There is a lot of whooping cough around and babies who are too young to start their vaccinations are at greatest risk.

Expectant mothers can help protect their babies by getting themselves vaccinated against whooping cough from week 28 of their pregnancy.

Act now to protect your baby from whooping cough from birth by ringing the practice on 01204 463777 and booking an appointment with the Practice Nurse for your vaccination.

Pharmacy Delivery Service

Most pharmacies offer an order and delivery service for patients who are on regular medication. Patients who require these services must make their own arrangements with the pharmacy of their choice. Other than in an emergency situation, the Practice cannot make such arrangements on a patient's behalf. Therefore, if a GP has spoken with a patient following telephone triage, it would be the responsibility **of the patient** to contact their chosen pharmacy and arrange for their prescription to be picked up by the pharmacy and delivered to their home, if necessary.

Seven Day Surgeries

We're sure you have all heard of the possibility of practices opening seven days a week. We would like to clarify the position of seven day opening.

If your impression of this is that you will be able to see the GP of your choice, seven days a week at the practice of your choice, this is not necessarily the case. If a GP is on duty for surgeries on a Saturday or Sunday, that GP will not be doing surgeries for two days during the week. Some practices may join together to provide a weekend service at one of their practice premises in rotation, so you may have to travel to an unfamiliar practice to see a GP that you don't know. We would like you to be aware of this when considering your needs.

Online Access Registrations

We're getting quite a few telephone calls from patients who originally registered via our website for online access to enable the ordering of repeat prescriptions and the making of appointments online. At the end of the registration process a reminder was given to patients to bring their ID to the surgery to activate the service fully. Quite a few patients did not do this and the clinical system has now blocked these patients from ordering their prescriptions and from making appointments. This action has been taken for Information Governance purposes to ensure that ID is verified and processes are in place to prepare for patients to have further access to their medical records. Further paperwork, in the form of consents and proof of understanding the implications of the service will be necessary.

We would urge those patients who have not yet brought their ID following initial registration, to do so as soon as possible to make sure that their online services can be reactivated.

21% of our total practice population have registered and use our online services. Many of our patients now make their appointments online at their convenience.

Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

The practice will be closed on the following days:-

Friday 25th December 2015

Saturday 26th December 2015

Sunday 27th December 2015

Monday 28th December 2015

Friday 1st January 2016

Should you require urgent medical attention or advice on the above dates, please ring the NHS Out of Hours Service on 111

The Dunstan Partnership would like to wish all our patients a Very Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Healthy New Year!!