



March/April
2017

Bourn Surgery Newsletter

Bank holiday closures: The Surgery will be closed on Friday 14th and Monday 17th April.

Great Gransden: There will be no Gransden Clinic on Tuesday 4th April.

Why General Practice is facing a crisis

There is a crisis in general practice which will affect every patient in the UK. This is a result of many factors, including underinvestment over many years in the health service, and in general practice in particular. In addition, Government directives, adverse reporting in the media, an increasing older population and those with complex long-term medical conditions, and patients seeing their GP more often per year than ever before, have placed unprecedented demand on the whole NHS.

In 2013 there was 20% greater demand for GP consultations compared to five years earlier; an extra 60 million consultations per year. In part, this is because there are more people in the UK than in 2008. We are all seeing our GP more often per year; the average person consults their GP six times a year. That's twice as often as a decade ago. However, GPs are only funded for two consultations per patient per year. GP funding remained static between 2008-12 while demand increased.

This pressure has resulted in a morale and recruitment crisis in general practice, with fewer doctors deciding to become GPs, and GPs retiring earlier than expected. Six out of ten GPs are considering early retirement. One in seven GPs in the UK are considering leaving the country to work abroad. In recruitment, there was an average 15% drop nationwide in applications for postgraduate GP training last year, calling into question the Government's pledge to increase GP numbers by 5,000 by 2020.

The increase in demand, combined with a decreasing number of GPs, means that waiting times to see a GP have gone up, with 11% of patients in the UK unable to get an appointment with a GP. This shunts the crisis into other parts of the health system; a quarter of people going to A+E are doing so because they cannot get a GP appointment. Between 2008-2013, A+E admissions increased by three million. This is much more expensive for the NHS. A GP appointment costs the NHS £36. The average cost of an A+E attendance is £68, almost double. GPs are inexpensive; we deal with 90% of all patient contacts in the NHS, while receiving only 8% of the NHS budget.

There are no easy solutions to this problem. Options being explored are forcing GP practices to merge into larger organisations, finding alternatives to GPs, or introducing charges into the NHS. However, without the will and funding from Government to tackle these thorny issues, the future of general practice is at stake.

Card Payments in Dispensary

We have had a number of queries about why we are unable to accept card payments in dispensary. We realise this can be inconvenient for some of our patients. Any card payment system incurs a surcharge for us, which would take money away from clinical use in the practice. As we are all aware, funding for general practice is under huge pressure, and as such, services are under pressure. As a practice we would prefer to use all available funds for our clinical services, and have therefore chosen not to have card payment facilities at this time. We apologise for the inconvenience caused.

Those patients who have regular prescriptions could qualify for a pre-payment certificate (PPC), which reduces the cost of regular prescriptions. If you need more than 12 prescribed medicines each year, you could save money with a 12-month PPC which costs £104.00. You can also buy a three-month PPC costing £29.10, which will save you money if you need more than three prescribed medicines in three months. **The charge for a single prescribed medicine will go up to £8.60 on April 1st 2017.**

Car Park

Many thanks for your patience during our recent car park works. The old walnut tree had to be removed as its roots were damaging the drains, and we used the opportunity to expand the car park as much as our boundaries will allow, providing extra parking spaces. Thank you also to our neighbours for their patience and lending of driveways for staff to park upon during the work.

Over The Counter medicines in nurseries and schools

We are aware that there have been multiple occasions when a school or nursery has required a prescription for an over the counter (OTC) medication before agreeing to administer the medication to a child in their care. Non-prescription OTC medications **do not** need a GP prescription in order for the school, nursery or childminder to give it. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (found on the gov.uk website) outlines the policy for administering medicines to children in nurseries and preschools, and indicates that only your written permission is required: "Medicine (both prescription and non-prescription) must only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer."

If you are asked to provide a prescription for an OTC medicine for example, Paracetamol (ie Calpol), Ibuprofen (ie Neurofen), antihistamines or Chloramphenicol (for conjunctivitis), then please direct the school or nursery to this guidance. If you are still asked to provide a GP prescription, please contact Mrs Tracey Wilson, Practice Manager.

Reception

- **Mon-Fri:**
8.30am-1pm, 1.30pm-6pm
- **Appointments:** 01954 719469
- **Emergencies:** 01954 719313

Dispensary

- **Mon-Fri:** 9am-1pm,
3.30pm-6pm

Out of Hours

- **01954 719313 and listen to the automated message.**