



Greensands Medical Practice

NEWSLETTER February–March 2015

Welcome to our latest Newsletter

A&E Attendance

It is estimated that almost half of all A&E attendance could have been treated by a GP, Local Pharmacist or basic First Aid. If a patient attends Hospital this is a costly resource for the NHS, particularly attendance at the Accident and Emergency Department which potentially limits funds for other patients.

We would therefore like to encourage Patients that before going to Accident and Emergency to talk to us first between the hours of 8.00am – 6.30pm as this may prevent an unnecessary Hospital attendance as we can deal with a number of minor illnesses within the practice.

Please contact us before going to A&E to see if we can help.

In the event of an emergency call our emergency line:

Potton Emergency Line: 01767 260229

Gamlingay Emergency Line: 01767 651546

If you have a non urgent enquiry please call our Enquires line and select the appropriate option:

Would you recommend our GP surgery?

The Friends and Family Test

From 1st December 2014, if you visit our GP surgery you will be asked about whether or not you would recommend our surgery to your friends and family, if they need similar treatment or care. You will also be invited to tell us: ***If we could change one thing about your care or treatment to improve your experience, what would it be?***

Your response is anonymous and you will be able to post the postcard in a ballot box in our reception area on your way out of the surgery.

If you are unable to answer the question, a friend or family member is welcome to respond on your behalf.

The information will give our GP practice invaluable feedback on what you think of the care and treatment you have received, which along with existing ways of gathering feedback, will help us to make improvements and improve the experience for our patients.

New Staff

We would like to welcome Nicola Webster to the Practice. She joins us on the 9th February as a Practice Nurse.

Results Line – 01767 260340 (Option 3)

You can find out the results of your blood test by telephoning our results line between 1 – 2pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Flu Vaccinations

You are eligible to receive a free flu jab if you:-

- are 65 years or over
- have chronic respiratory disease (such as asthma, chronic obstructive airways disease or bronchitis)
- have chronic heart disease
- have chronic kidney disease
- have chronic liver disease
- have chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease
- have diabetes
- have problems with your spleen, or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system due to conditions such as HIV or as a result of medication such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- are pregnant
- are living in a long stay residential care home
- are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill
- are a healthcare worker with direct patient contact

If you are in one of these risk groups, it is more likely that you may develop potentially serious complications of flu, such as pneumonia (a lung infection), so it's recommended that you have a flu vaccine every year to protect yourself.

Shingles Vaccination

If you are aged 70, 78 or 79 on the 1st September 2014, you will also be offered a Shingles vaccination, as per the Department of Health recommendations.

For further information please refer to the NHS Choices website – www.nhs.uk.

Specimen drop offs

We have a visit from the Bedford Hospital courier service every lunch time to collect samples for analysis at the Hospital.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could please drop off your samples before 11.00am. Unfortunately, we do not have any way of getting specimens to the Hospital after this time. Please ensure your full name and date of birth are printed clearly on every sample otherwise it may get rejected.

Emergency Out of Hours Telephone Number

Our Emergency "Out of Hours" Telephone Number is

0845 601 0244

SMS Messages



We are able to send text messages to confirm and remind you of your appointments. If you are happy for us to contact you by text please ask a member of the reception team to add your mobile telephone number to your records.

Missed Appointments

Unfortunately we still have a large number of missed appointments, last month alone there were **182 missed appointments** in total, **114** at the Potton Surgery and **68** at the Gamlingay surgery.

Please remember to call and cancel your appointment if you no longer need it so that it can be used for other patients.

We also operate a telephone cancellation service at both surgeries which is available between the hours of 6.30pm and 8.00am as follows:

Potton: 01767 260340 option 4

Gamlingay: 01767 651544 option 4

Appointment Update

We are continuing to review ways of improving our appointment waiting times and are currently trialling a number of initiatives including telephone triage. All requests for on the day or urgent appointments will be put through to speak to a Doctor so they can ascertain the most appropriate course of action for you.

Website & Online Services

We would like to take this opportunity to remind patients about our website

www.greensands.org.uk

The website contains up to date information on the Practice, our Doctors, Prescriptions, our Clinics and much more. It also provides a link to our online service "SystemOnline" which will allow you to book GP appointments and request repeat prescriptions online.

If you would like to register to use the online service please speak to a member of our reception team.

Sphere Sexual Health Clinic

The surgery now runs a full Sphere Sexual Health Clinic for patients and non-patients within the local area. The clinic is run by Dr C Jarvis and offers a variety of services including: sexual health information and advice, various contraception methods, Chlamydia screening, HIV testing and screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. To book an appointment call Potton Surgery on 01767 260340 and select option 5.

A Reminder

Coils and Contraceptive Implants – Dr Jarvis is fully trained to fit coils and contraceptive implants. If you would like to have a coil or implant fitted please speak to a receptionist to make an appointment or call our Potton Surgery on 01767 260340 option 5.

Vasectomy Clinic - Dr von Blumenthal has a vasectomy clinic for patients of Greensands and the surrounding practices in Bedfordshire that hold a contract with the CCG for this service. If you are not a patient of this practice and your practice is unable to refer to us you can still see him for vasectomy counselling and surgery as a private patient. For further information please call our Gamlingay Surgery on 01767 651544 option 2.

Gynaecology Clinic – Mr Mahran, a Consultant Gynaecologist from Bedford Hospital, attends for this clinic once a month at our Potton Surgery. Referrals to the clinic will be made via your GP directly.

We are fortunate to have these additional services which will save our patients from having to travel longer distances to be seen in hospital clinics and pay car parking fees.

Keeping well this winter

Keep Warm:

Keeping warm over the winter months can help prevent colds, flu or more serious health problems. Try and stay warm in your home – both day and night and dress warmly at all times.

Stay Healthy:

There are things you can do that will reduce the risk of illness and protect you against the cold.

Eat Well

Eating regular meals will help you keep your energy levels up during winter.

Stay Active:

Exercise is good for your overall health and it can keep you warm in winter. Even a small amount of exercise can bring health benefits. If possible try to move around at least once an hour.

Recognising the signs of hypothermia:

Hypothermia is caused by getting too cold. Older people, babies and people with certain health conditions are among those more at risk. Shivering can be used as a guide to how severe hypothermia is. If a person can stop shivering on their own the hypothermia is mild. If they can't stop shivering, its moderate to severe. Severe hypothermia needs urgent medical treatment in hospital.

See NHS choices for full details of the symptoms and causes of hypothermia.

Changes to the appointment system

Telephone triage is a useful method of determining urgent and not so urgent cases so that appointments can be allocated according to patient need.

The system works by allowing the GPs to triage all requests for urgent care by telephone.

The Receptionist will answer your call and once it has been clarified that you are requesting an urgent appointment, your call will be put on hold; you will be placed in a queuing system to speak to a GP. You are encouraged to hold on the telephone and the GPs will answer the telephone calls in turn, however, there may be emergency calls which will take priority. Your patience is therefore appreciated, especially during the peak times of the day.

The GP will assess your complaint over the telephone and will either provide advice or book an appointment for you with an appropriate Clinician – you will not be referred back to the Receptionist for this. This process is called **telephone triage**.

Benefits to patients

Speak to their GP sooner

See their GP sooner when appropriate

Save time by avoiding unnecessary appointments

Benefits to GPs

Manage case loads efficiently

Improve utilisation of Nurses and other Health Care Professionals

Hopefully reduce the number of patients who fail to attend their appointments

Our aim is to provide:

- the most appropriate appointment with either a GP, Practice Nurse or Minor Illness Nurse
- more convenient access
- more efficient use of time for our GPs and patients by resolving an enquiry with a single telephone call
- to help ensure routine appointments remain available for patients with chronic complex illnesses

The telephone triage system will operate all day.

Please note that we will still be operating the same system for pre-bookable routine appointments and these can be available up to three months in advance. We continue to encourage patients to register to use our on-line services for booking appointments and requesting repeat prescriptions.

Please advise our Receptionists of your mobile telephone numbers which will enable the Practice to send you a text reminder of your appointments.

We do encourage patients who are requesting a home visit to call before 11.00am if at all possible.

We look forward to offering you an improved service.

Minor Illness Nurses

Our Minor Illness Nurses are available to help with acute problems and illnesses and can prescribe medication where appropriate.

Appointments are available daily for the following:-

- Flu-like symptoms
- Fever
- Headaches
- Coughs and Colds
- Earaches / Sore throats
- Stomach pain
- Back pain (Muscular)
- Hay Fever
- Skin infections (Impetigo)
- Rashes
- Minor Accidents
- Cystitis
- Morning after Pill

Minor Injury Service

We are extremely fortunate that we are able to offer a Minor Injury Service to all of our patients in Potton and Gamlingay Surgeries.

The following list gives guidance on the types of injuries and circumstances that lead to the use of our Minor Injury Service:

1. Lacerations capable of closure by simple techniques (stripping, gluing, suturing)
2. Bruises
3. Minor Dislocations
4. Foreign Bodies
 - a. Non-penetrating superficial eye foreign bodies
 - b. Accidentally introduced foreign bodies external to ears and nose
5. Following recent injury of a severity not amenable to simple domestic first aid
6. Following recent injury where it is suspected stitches/steri-strips may be required
7. Following blows to the head where there has been no loss of consciousness
8. Recent eye injury
9. Partial thickness thermal burns or scalds involving broken skin
 - a. Not over 1 inch diameter
 - b. Not involving the hands, feet, face, neck, genital areas
10. Foreign bodies superficially embedded in tissues
11. Minor trauma to hands, limbs or feet