

# Woodlea House surgery Newsletter

*Welcome to our Winter 2016 issue:*

*Happy New Year*

Following a few recent incidents, we thought it may be helpful to pass on some information to help you understand our processes and procedures in order for the surgery to be run smoothly for both patients and staff.

## Requesting repeat prescriptions

Wherever possible we ask for 2 working days' notice when requesting a repeat prescription, this is because we have a large amount of requests every day and it gives us time to process them safely. The reception staff look at the requests and if the items are due will process the request electronically or on paper and send to the doctor for signing. The receptionists do not make a decision themselves about whether a prescription can be issued or not, they are the middlemen and are doing the administration part of the process to save the doctor's time.

If your prescription request has been put in too early, then the GP may not sign the prescription. In some cases, they will request a patient makes an appointment (either face to face or by phone) to discuss why a request has been made early, this is not to be difficult; it is to ensure that the medication is being used appropriately and safely. If you are asked to make an appointment with the doctor before getting more medication please do not get cross with the reception staff, they are passing on advice from the GP and again have not made that decision themselves!

If you are requesting a medication early, for example, if you are going away, then please give details of this when ordering your medication, this may then save you going through the above process.

## Triage and sudden illness

If you suddenly become unwell and need to see or speak to a doctor urgently we will always endeavour to make this possible. If you notice you feel unwell on waking, please phone the surgery as soon as possible in the morning. Some doctors like to speak to patients before offering advice or treatment and others prefer to consult face to face. When you phone you will be advised as to whether you will be telephoned or you will be offered a face to face consultation with the doctor. Please give the reception staff as much information as possible, they are not asking for details to be nosy, they have been instructed by the doctors to get as much information as possible to pass onto them as this helps them when prioritising cases.

We understand that sudden illness can come on at any time of the day, let us know as early as possible in the day if you are concerned about a sudden illness or deterioration in your condition so that arrangements can be made for you to speak to a doctor or have a face to face consultation.

Please be aware that we need you to be as flexible as possible about being seen, this is because as well as dealing with urgent cases our GPs also have their usual day to day work to carry out and the demand is increasing dramatically all the time. They will always fit in urgent cases as soon as possible, your patience and flexibility is very much appreciated.

If you telephone in the morning asking for attention urgently, please understand you will be offered follow up that morning. If you then inform the staff that you need the urgent follow up later in the day to fit round your plans this probably means it is not urgent and you will be offered the next routine appointment.

## Routine appointments and DNA's

When asking for a routine appointment with a particular doctor please be aware that certain doctors are only available on certain days and that doctors also have holidays and study leave, we will always try and book you in with the doctor of your choice.

Our waiting times for appointments have increased over the past couple of years, at one time you could get an appointment within 48 hours but sadly the average wait is now approximately one week. This has happened for several reasons: -

- Increase in demand; people are consulting with a GP far more often than in previous years
- Increase of work from outside sources; the introduction of the 111 service has seen a dramatic rise in the number of urgent on the day cases and more time in the GP's working day has to be used to deal with this increase in demand.
- DNA's; DNA stands for 'Did not attend', unfortunately we have a big problem with this at our surgery, in October 111 appointments were wasted, this equates to 7 surgeries, if everybody had cancelled their appointment and it was offered to somebody else then the waiting time for a routine appointment would drop dramatically. We understand that anybody can forget the odd appointment but if you can't make it please let us know. We know that the telephone line can be busy but would appreciate your perseverance. Alternatively, you can register for our online access, this enables you to book and cancel appointments on line, you can install the app on your phone or tablet as well and it is very easy to use and saves you time trying to get through to us. All you need to do to register is to ask at reception and you will be given your own unique pin number and password.

The reception staff will always offer you an appointment as soon as possible but they cannot magic one out of thin air, please do not get cross with them about the length of time you have to wait, it is out of their hands, we all feel very frustrated that we cannot offer routine appointments any quicker and have tried very hard to address the DNA issue, help us to improve the service for everyone by cancelling no longer needed appointments.

Please also bear in mind that there are many over the counter remedies that can help you manage self-limiting illnesses. Pharmacists are very highly trained and experts in suggesting treatments you may find beneficial.

**Check out the website for minor ailment remedies and advice via clinical services then, choose the tab on the right for the 'self-help' page.**

## The use of antibiotics

Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial illnesses; antibiotics will not help with a viral illness. Antibiotics are not without side effects and should only be prescribed when absolutely indicated to avoid unpleasant side effects and antibiotic resistance.

If the doctor does not prescribe antibiotics this is because it is not indicated, if you have a bacterial illness you will be given antibiotics. Please trust your GP to do the best for you, they are all highly experienced and have undergone years of training to make such decisions.

Very occasionally a patient can develop a secondary bacterial infection from a virus, if you have seen a doctor and were diagnosed with a virus and your symptoms get worse and you develop a fever please make an urgent appointment to see the GP to be reassessed.

## Complaints

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts we cannot always get things right. We use any complaints received as constructively as possible and ensure the whole team learns from them. If you are unhappy with any of our services then you can download a complaint form from our website ([www.woodleahouse-surgery.co.uk](http://www.woodleahouse-surgery.co.uk)) or ask for a leaflet at reception. This explains how complaints are dealt and also gives what steps to take if you are not happy with our responses. All complaints are taken seriously and we will always try to resolve them in house wherever possible, if you make a complaint then please be assured that this will not compromise the service that we offer to you, we always welcome the opportunity to rectify any errors or misunderstandings amicably. If you want to make a complaint about either Dr Rowland or the practice manager, Keera Rowland, please be assured that the matter will be dealt with by our senior administrator Mrs Heather Hall (a previous practice manager) and/or Dr Helen Gutteridge, this is to make sure there are no conflicts of interest.

## Named GP

All patients have a named GP, this does not mean you have to see that particular GP, you can see whichever GP you want for routine appointments. In the case of an urgent consultation you will have to see whichever doctor is on duty that day.

**We hope that this has been useful. Please remember we are always happy to receive feedback about our services. You can give feedback via the friends and family test on our surgery iPad located in the lobby. We also have a suggestion box which is emptied weekly or why not join our patient participation group which is run virtually so you don't even need to come into the surgery to air your views.**

**Keep an eye on our website and/or like us on Facebook for updates.**

## Gentle reminder:

Please contact your dentist in the first instance for any tooth related problems; the GP will more often than not suggest you contact your dentist for any advice or treatment.