

Spring 2007 Newsletter

Issue 3

March, 2007

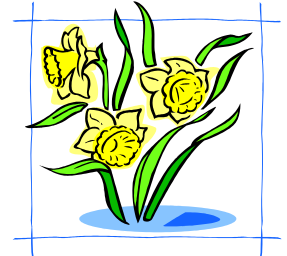
Welcome to the spring edition of our quarterly Newsletter.

If you have any comments concerning our practice, the contents of this newsletter, or ideas for future issues, please let us know.

Tel: 01335 343784

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New Self Check-in Desk

We have recently acquired a self check-in desk so that, if you want, you can let us know when you have arrived without having to go to reception, we hope this will reduce any time you might spend queuing at the reception desk. You will find the desk (with a touch screen) in the reception area, if you are unsure how to use the facility our receptionists will be happy to show you.

Website

Our practice website is due to be up and running by the end of March, the address will be www.ashbournehealthcentre.co.uk. It will provide information about the practice such as, the members of staff, surgery times and services offered. There will also be links to other health related sites.



In addition there will be the option of ordering your repeat prescriptions on-line, but don't worry, those patients who don't have access to the internet or prefer not to use the website will still be able to order prescriptions in the usual way. We hope this will make ordering repeat medicines more convenient for some patients and allow for more efficient running of the dispensary and we do hope you find this facility useful.

Re-accreditation as a training practice

Practices who train new GPs have to be assessed every few years to ensure that they provide the appropriate high standards of care for patients, and teaching for doctors. Following a visit in December by Trent Deanery for the Royal College of General Practitioners we were very pleased to be re-approved as a training practice. This means we will have a registrar (a qualified doctor now training to be a GP) working at our practice for the majority of the time and will continue to have medical students. We really appreciate your support in helping to train our future doctors.



Staff

We would like to thank **Dr S Khusnud** for providing locum cover during December and January.

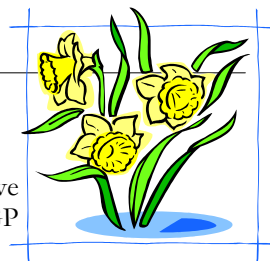
If you are still unsure about the role of **Debbie Finnikin**, our nurse practitioner, then pick-up a copy of her new leaflet (which will also be on the website). This gives information about the service she provides.

Every 3 months the practice is closed for a **staff training** afternoon, during this time medical cover is provided by Derbyshire Health United. The number for this is on the practice leaflet and our answer phone message.

The dates for the next training afternoons are the 13th June, 12th September and 14th November 2007. We will keep you informed of any changes that occur via the next Newsletter, our new website or by notices on the practice door.

Choose and Book

As part of their patient choice initiative, the Government has introduced "Choose and Book". It aims to give patients more choice in deciding which local hospital to attend if you require referral by your GP. Your GP will give you a computer print out detailing the options, with your individual booking number and password, and instructions as to how to book your appointment. You will also be provided with a leaflet explaining the system. If you are unsure or have any queries our secretarial team, Kath Horsley and Gill Melbourne, will be able to help.



Bowel Cancer Screening

The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme in Derbyshire is due to start from March 2007, patients aged between 60 to 69 years of age will be invited to take part and will be sent a faecal occult blood (FOB) test kit every 2 years. This test detects tiny amounts of blood, which you cannot normally see, in your bowel motions.

The aim of the programme is to detect bowel cancer at an early stage before symptoms develop, when treatment is more likely to be effective.

Those eligible will be sent a letter giving information on the screening programme, and the benefits and limitations of the test. About a week later, a FOB testing kit will be sent through the post, allowing patients to send a stool sample to the programme. Those patients with positive tests will be seen by a specialist nurse in the screening clinic to discuss their results and they will usually be offered a colonoscopy – an examination of the bowel with a flexible camera.

As part of Derbyshire County we are fortunate to be one of the first sites in the country offering this service and it is estimated that the programme could reduce the number of bowel cancer deaths in 60 – 69 year olds by 16%. We must stress that the FOB test is only a screening test and a normal result does not guarantee that you do not have or will never have bowel cancer in the future and an abnormal result is not a diagnosis of cancer, but does mean that you will be offered a colonoscopy.

If you have any queries about the programme there is a helpline number to phone, in addition your GP will be able to offer advice.

Childhood Immunisation update

The Department of Health has introduced important changes to the childhood immunisation programme.

Pneumococcal vaccine: Pneumococcal disease can cause serious illnesses such as meningitis, septicaemia (blood poisoning) and pneumonia if it enters the bloodstream. From the 4th September 2006 every child starting its routine immunisations at 2 months of age is offered the pneumococcal vaccine. There has also been a Catch-up programme so that from September 4th 2006, every child aged up to 2 years has been offered the vaccination.

Other changes mean that children will be given two doses of the MenC vaccine, which protects against meningitis, in the first year of life and a booster in the second year. Also there will be a booster dose of the Hib vaccine in the second year of life, which protects against another type of meningitis and serious infection.

Patient Survey

We now have the results of the survey carried out in Nov 2006, we are pleased that our overall score is higher than the national average and that it has continued to improve compared with previous years. The survey consists of questions regarding the GPs, Practice staff and the practice building; it also allows patients to offer comments on how the practice could improve.

Waiting room: Following last years survey we have tried to improve the waiting room by having more notice board space and displaying more information boards, setting up a screen to allow more privacy in the reception area, and obtaining a self check in desk. We appreciate that you are still not happy with the waiting room but we are limited as to what changes can be made until we move to our new premises.

Telephone access: We have more receptionists available to answer the phone during the busy period in the morning, and have installed a self-check in desk which we hope will free up more receptionist time.

Wait time to see the Doctor: Time spent in the waiting room before seeing the GP is still an area of patient concern. We appreciate that your time is important and do not like it when we run late. If this happens we keep patients informed via the electronic call-board. However hard we try it is not always possible to keep to time due to a number of reasons: Firstly you can appreciate that some problems are more complex and require more than 10 minutes to sort out, secondly there may be unforeseen interruptions such as emergency home visits, medical problems that need more than one doctor or nurse to sort and urgent phone-calls including those from hospital doctors. Also some patients think that we are able to help with a list of problems in one 10-minute appointment. Unfortunately this is not usually possible if we are to provide quality care.

In order to help us run to time, to deal with your problems safely, and to be fair all the other patients waiting, we do urge you not to save your problems up for one appointment. If you have a complex issue or several problems, please tell the receptionist that you will need more time and bear in mind that you may be asked to make another appointment so that we have sufficient time for your care.

As a follow-up to the survey results we met with our patient participation group to discuss the issues highlighted by the survey and we are in the process of drawing up a two-year action plan in response to your concerns.

We aim to produce a Newsletter every quarter to keep you informed about your Practice.

We welcome any comments regarding the newsletter or the practice in general, to help us improve the service we provide.