

# Autumn 2008 Newsletter

Issue 8

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We welcome your comments regarding this newsletter or any other aspect of our service. You can make your opinions heard via our Practice Manager – Mrs. Lindsey Stockton – 01335 301241 [lindsey.stockton@nhs.net](mailto:lindsey.stockton@nhs.net)

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## Staff News

As you may be aware, Dr Ian MacLeod has been unable to work at the practice for some weeks following a heart attack; fortunately he has made a good recovery and hopes to return to work mid/late October. Dr MacLeod has been greatly missed by staff and patients alike and we are looking forward to his return.



## Locum GPs

We always appreciate the help of locum GPs to ensure that we continue to offer a reliable service to our patients. You may be familiar with our regular locums including Dr Carrie Sadler, Dr Sylvia Richards and Dr David Baker. Following Dr Macleod's absence, we have also had locum cover provided by Dr Jacob, Dr Krinyak and Dr Klemm. All our locums have been recommended by other practices and we always check carefully on their training and abilities before offering them work in the practice. We would like to thank all our locums for their help and our patients for accepting the changes when we have been short of partners .

## GP Registrars

Dr Helen Maxwell Jones is now 3 months into her 12-month post at our practice; Dr Maxwell Jones is in her final year of training having completed several years hospital training. Dr Nidhi Agrawal will be finishing her 4-month post at the end of November and will be returning to work in hospital for her next post and we wish her the best of luck.

## Opening Times

The surgeries opening hours have now extended from 8.30am – 6pm to 8am till 6.30pm. During these extra half hour opening times there will be a receptionist available to make appointments either at the desk or by phone. The timing of the GP and nurse clinics will remain the same. **For details of our clinic times, ordering repeat prescriptions on-line and lots of other information, please visit our website [www.ashbournehealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.ashbournehealthcentre.co.uk).**



## Extended Hours

Due to the shortage of GP partner cover, we have been unable to provide surgeries outside normal hours. The feedback we were getting regarding these surgeries is very positive and we will endeavour to re-start this service as soon as it is feasible.

## Training Days - Advanced Notice

The Practice closes for six afternoons per year to allow educational updates and to raise ideas/issues to try and improve the service we offer. The surgery will be closed on the following Wednesday afternoons:

- November 12<sup>th</sup> 2008
- January 21<sup>st</sup> 2009
- March 11<sup>th</sup> 2009

During this time Derbyshire Health United will provide urgent cover. The telephone number is 0844 4122239.

## Charity Events

Our Health Care Assistant, Yvonne Taylor, keeps herself healthy and has just completed the Great North Run in 1 hour 45 minutes. She raised £700.00 for Cancer Research and would like to thank all the patients who sponsored her. We are proud of her - Congratulations Yvonne!

On **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October** we will be holding a **coffee morning**, with cake stall and raffle, for Pink Day in aid of breast cancer, which is being organised by Marion and Helen (Jones) from reception and dispensary. **Marion, will be doing a 2 hour sponsored silence from 9.30am to 11.30am**, on a plinth in Reception wearing fancy dress. Please give generously to this very worthy cause, and support Marion, who, as you all know, will find it very difficult to keep quiet for this long!



## Building Update

At last! We have news that our new building, which will be part of the new 'St Oswald's hospital' complex has been given the go ahead. We are very relieved and excited to be moving to more modern and spacious premises. If all goes to plan the new building should be completed by the autumn of 2010. This will allow us to provide a better service for patients and we would like to thank our patients for their tolerance with the old building during the last few years while we have been waiting for this

## Flu - A Reminder!

Flu is a highly infectious illness. The Flu immunization (jab) gives you good protection from flu but only lasts for one year.



You are entitled to a free flu jab if you are considered to be "at risk" (of becoming very ill if you were to catch the flu virus), so if you:

- are aged 65 or over,
- are a resident in a long-term residential care home
- have diabetes,
- have asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- have a serious heart problem
- are having cancer treatment,
- have lowered immunity due to HIV or steroid medication, or
- have a long-term condition, such as kidney or liver disease

You may also be eligible if you're the parent of a child (over the age of six months) with a long-term condition which may get worse if they catch flu, or if you care for an elderly or disabled person.

The Pneumococcal jab is a **one off** vaccine offered to the same "at risk" patients listed above, it protects against a form of pneumonia. If you have not already had this jab you can have it when you attend the flu clinic.'

All patients thought to be at 'high risk' have been/or will be shortly sent an invitation to attend to see one of our practice nurses or Yvonne, our Healthcare Assistant, to receive the jab. Ask your GP or our practice nurse for advice if you are unsure.

## Dispensing Doctors under Threat



New proposals currently under consideration by the Government would change the rules about where patients can get their medicines and threaten an end to dispensing by doctors. Because we are a dispensing practice, patients who live more than one mile away from a chemist can get their medicines from us. If the rules change, these patients may no longer be allowed to get their medicines from the surgery.

The Government are considering four options but all but Option One: 'leave things as they are' would likely see an end to dispensing by doctors in all but the most remote areas of England. We are lobbying the DoH to go with Option One because we believe it should be the patients' choice where they get their medicines and it is particularly important that elderly, disabled and those with transport difficulties are able to get their medicines from the surgery if they wish to.

None of the options will affect the way your medication is prescribed. We will still issue acute and repeat prescriptions for 28 days but if we are no longer allowed to dispense you will have to take the paper prescription to a chemist as we will have no drugs or dispensers at the surgery.

The Government is asking everyone affected, including patients, to tell them what they think. They want to hear about your personal experience of being a patient of a dispensing practice, and what that means to you. If you want to continue to have the choice to receive your medicines from your doctors' surgery, rather than have to go to a pharmacy, please support Option One – keeping things as they are:

By writing to Gillian Farnfield, MPI – Community Pharmacy, Policy, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Skipton House, 80 London Road, SE1 8LH

Or email [PWPCONS@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PWPCONS@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

Or online at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations>

*(The questions which concern Dispensing Doctors and their patients are Questions 20-27)*

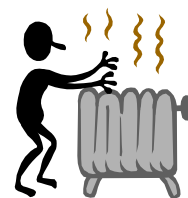
**Please be sure to put your views across in time for the deadline of 20th November 2008 and copy your response to your MP.**

## Winter Fuel Payment

Winter Fuel Payment is a tax-free benefit to help pay for heating during winter.

You are eligible if: you are aged 60 or over; and you normally live in Great Britain. If you're aged 60 or over by 21 September 2008 and getting a State Pension or other benefit (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax benefit or Child Benefit) there's no need to apply – the Winter Fuel Payment should be paid to you automatically.

**For more information call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline 08459 151 515, Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm.**



## Winter is fast approaching!



The Department of health's "warm front" campaign has some tips that may help you to keep warm:

- By setting your heating to the right temperature, you can keep your home warm and lower your bills. During the day set the thermostat to 21°C (70°F), and during the night set it to 18°C (64°F).
- Set your heating to come on just before you get up and switch off after you've gone to bed. If it's very cold, set your heating to come on earlier and turn off later rather than turning the thermostat up.
- If you can't heat all of the rooms you use, heat the living room throughout the day and your bedroom just before you go to bed.
- Remember to close curtains and shut doors to keep heat in the rooms you use most.
- If you're struggling financially to keep your home warm, you could get a grant to make your home more energy efficient, or repair or install a new heating system.
- If you don't qualify for some benefits, you may qualify for others. And even if you've been turned down for benefits in the past, you may find that you now qualify for some means of support.

## Welfare Rights

Paul Mortimer is the name of the Welfare Rights Adviser.

The advice service is free and everything that is discussed is confidential. Interviews are carried out privately in one of the consultation rooms. Paul is employed by Derbyshire County Council to whom you pay a significant amount of Council Tax so he says "come and see him and get your money's worth"!



Continued/...

Paul would like to see you particularly if one or more of the below applies to you, a family member or a friend:

- ❖ Are you wobbly on your feet?
- ❖ Do you have savings of less than £16000?
- ❖ Are you a pensioner owner occupier?
- ❖ What is your children's health like? (Babies from 3 months old can claim welfare benefits for health problems)
- ❖ Are you very anxious or worried?
- ❖ Do you try to ignore underlying serious health problems?

This is by no means a full list of people who maybe able to claim government cash. See Paul and he will be happy to tell you of your entitlement exactly. Paul is very experienced and is happy to help you complete certain complicated welfare benefit forms, deal with complex welfare benefit correspondence, appeal unreasonable decisions, etc.

Rates of benefit can be as high as £113.75 per week. So make an appointment to see Paul, it's free and it could be well worth the time!

You can arrange an appointment to see Paul by asking at the clinic reception window or by phoning 01335 343541. Paul is also happy to do home visits for people who cannot get into the surgery.

## National Dementia Strategy

The Department of Health has unveiled its 'National Dementia Strategy' aimed at helping people with dementia and their carers. It makes recommendations aimed at improving public and professional awareness, early diagnosis and intervention and improving the quality of care for people with dementia.

If you have dementia, or if you are worried about someone you know with dementia, it is wise to consult the GP as soon as possible about any health concerns. Treating even minor complaints can make a considerable difference to a person's well being and their ability to cope.

GPs can offer a range of support, including: general advice on ways of preventing illness and keeping fit and well, treatment of physical conditions that can cause additional confusion and distress, detection and treatment of depression (which is particularly common during the early stages of dementia), referrals for a specialist opinion and referral to other professionals who may be able to help.