

Culcheth Medical Centre - Newsletter – February 2010

CULCHETH MEDICAL CENTRE

Welcome to the latest edition of our Newsletter. The aim of this is to be informative about the Practice and any new health issues that may effect you. So here goes : Thank goodness that the snow and lethal pavement ice has finally melted, so much for global warming!!! We hope that you have all survived intact and not suffered too many cold related accidents to yourselves or your property. It will soon be time to think of planning those summer holidays. Remember that you may need travel vaccinations or malaria tablets. Plan early and come and check it out with our Practice Nurse.

* * * * * **NEW APPOINTMENT SYSTEM** * * * * *

We are pleased to announce that we have launched a new 'open' appointments system!! You can book an appointment with a Dr or nurse for a routine appointment at any available time up to a month in advance. Appointments are also available daily for urgent or emergency problems. Our staff aim to be courteous and helpful and have been trained to ascertain the nature of the problem when making the appointment to ensure you are directed to the most appropriate Dr or nurse and that you are given an adequate time allocation. Please be assured that patient confidentiality and discretion is of the utmost importance to us. At busy times, it may be necessary to ask you to speak to the doctor on the telephone for queries, advice or re-assurance. We hope these changes will provide you, the patient, with a better choice of appointment times and easier access to your preferred GP. Please note: queuing at the surgery at 8.30am will now **not be necessary** to obtain an appointment.

Missed Appointments

The number of patients not attending appointments (DNA's) in the month of January was **85**.

Do I need antibiotics???

At this time of year especially we all get our fair share of coughs, colds, runny noses, sneezes and sore throats. They can make us feel unwell for a week or so, but our own bodies are incredible things and we have our own immune system that generally fights all these off without resorting to antibiotics. This is because the **VAST** majority of these simple infections are caused by **VIRUSES** and antibiotics do not treat these germs, only bacteria. So don't be surprised when you come to see us that we say it's just going to take time and to take simple remedies like paracetamol and warm fluids.

Remember it's better to try and fight it off than take antibiotics, which may cause unwanted side effects like thrush etc. Obviously if you have an underlying chronic illness like COPD, asthma, heart disease, or on chemotherapy etc, you may be more at risk and need antibiotics in case of a bacterial infection.

Patient Questionnaire

In the month of February we will be asking our patients to complete our annual practice questionnaire. We are always looking to improve our service to our patients and we rely on your views. Please help us, to help you and spare a few moments to complete the questionnaire. Do you like our new appointments system? Can you usually see the Dr of your choice? Do you like the availability of our Saturday morning surgery? Please let us know.

Saturday Morning Surgeries

Just to remind you all that we do offer a Saturday morning surgery between 9am and 12 noon. These appointments can be booked in advance, however we do try to give priority to patients that due to work commitments are unable to get into surgery within normal opening hours. Please be aware that this is a routine surgery and does not offer an emergency/walk-in service. Should you need emergency/urgent attention please ring the **GP Out of Hours Service on 01925 650999**

Early Diagnosis Saves Lives!

Have you got any of the following symptoms?

1. A persistent cough that won't go away?
2. A hoarse voice for longer than 6 weeks?
3. Bleeding from the bottom?
4. An unusual lump?
5. A change in bowel habit or weight loss?
6. Shortness of breath or chest pain when you exert yourself?

If you have any of these then do make come and see the Doctor to get it checked out.

Telephone Advice

Please make sure that if you have rang us during the day requesting some advice via the telephone that we have your current **CORRECT** number both land line and mobile. Also increasingly patients are asking us to ring them back for advice, only for us to find their phone switched off or not answered. This is frustrating for all concerned and wastes time. Please be prepared for a call and so help us prevent unnecessary ring backs.

Swine Flu Clinics

We are still able to offer the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine to those patients who have long-term chronic health problems, or are immunocompromised, and children aged 6mths to 5 years. Please call the surgery to make your appointment. Should you need any further information, a leaflet is available from surgery or www.direct.gov.uk/swineflu.

QUESTION : "What's the best thing I can do for my health. Doctor?" - STOP SMOKING !!

Not as difficult as it sounds, here's some advice:

Getting advice from a trained professional, such as a nurse, GP, or smoking counsellor can help you stop smoking. Research has shown that people who seek help from the NHS or other organisations and make use of nicotine replacement products, such as patches or gum, are 4 times more likely to succeed in quitting than people who try to quit without any help.

NHS Stop Smoking services include the **NHS Smoking Helpline (0800 022 4 332)**. Get information about local services, including one-to-one counselling, and stop smoking groups. Details about the services can also be found at the "**Go smokefree**" website. Individual counselling, or group sessions, can be a good way to help you give up smoking. You will receive useful, practical advice, such as tips on beating cravings, choosing the right day to give up, and how to get medication such as Champix on prescription. Joining a group provides you with extra encouragement because you can share your experiences with others who are also trying to give up. **QUIT** is a charity that runs a helpline for people who want to stop smoking (0800 00 22 00)

Further information:

[Health A-Z: quitting smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/smoking-(quitting)) [http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/smoking-\(quitting\)](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/smoking-(quitting))

[Go smokefree](http://www.gosmokefree.co.uk/) <http://www.gosmokefree.co.uk/>

[QUIT](http://www.quit.org.uk/)<http://www.quit.org.uk/>

Risks to your health

Smoking causes about 90% of lung cancers. It also causes cancer in many other parts of the body, such as: mouth, lip, throat, voice box, oesophagus, bladder, kidney, liver, stomach and pancreas. Smoking damages your heart and your blood circulation, increasing the risk of conditions such as: heart attack, angina, stroke, peripheral vascular disease {such as impotence in men and hardening of arteries in the legs}. Smoking can also damage your lungs causing COPD, emphysema and worsen asthma.

Added benefits

Quitting smoking will improve your bank balance and your appearance, as well lowering your risk of serious smoking related diseases such as lung cancer, heart disease and stroke.

If you smoke, you increase your risk of more than 50 serious health conditions. Some may be fatal and others can cause irreversible long-term damage to your health.

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of death and illness in the UK.