

The Culcheth Medical Centre Newsletter March 09



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 affect you. So here goes;

Appointment System

Just to remind you all we have changed our appointment system since October last year. This was designed to make it easier to make an appointment in advance with the Dr or Nurse of your choice so that you don't have to ring on the stroke of 8.30am which we know was very difficult at times. Now around 40 % of all Dr appointments can be booked up to 4weeks in advance. The rest are divided between "book on the day" appointments for acute problems and appointments available from 48hrs before.

Each appointment is for **TEN** minutes and is only for **ONE PERSON** and should be limited to only **ONE** problem at a time. If you have a lot to discuss with the doctor, please ask the receptionist for a double appointment which is 20 minutes.

If you are unlucky to find that when you ring all appointments on the day are taken we do offer some 5minute consultations at the end of the Duty Dr's surgery in the morning and afternoon if you feel you cannot wait for the next day. **HOWEVER** please remember this is only a 5min slot and Dr can only deal with 1 problem and not a whole list of chronic ailments that you have had for years!! Please give as much detail as you can to the receptionist about your problem when booking an appointment so that she can make the correct one for you.

We do hope that you will find the changes work better and make life easier. Remember that we will see you on the same day if your problem is urgent, eg chest pain, shortness of breath abdominal pain etc.

Please don't shoot the messenger!!

Unfortunately there have been a number of incidents of patients being rude to our receptionists both at the desk and on the phone recently. This seems to stem from not being able to get an appointment on the day. Please remember that we can only see a certain number of patients on any one day {but we will always see genuine emergencies on same day}, and once those slots are gone that's it! The receptionist cannot make any more appointments, but will advise you on the next available one and will endeavour to make sure that your problem is sorted out. So please be gentle with our staff as they are always on your side and work very hard to ensure you get quality care.

Telephone Advice

If you want advice on a health problem or medication or need to talk to the doctor or nurse, the receptionist will take your details and pass it on to us. We will ring you back as soon as we can but it may be after surgery so as not delay appointments. The receptionist will not put non-urgent calls through to either doctor or nurse during surgeries as these interruptions are distracting for us and patients.

Surgery Web Site

Last week all the doctors and Helen our practice manager trooped off to have our photos taken professionally ready to be uploaded {whatever that means!} to our website. News shirts and dresses were the order of the day, however I still refuse to wear a tie!! Amongst other things this newsletter will be available on-line, Dr Ghosh is beavering away to get the site ready so should be soon now.

Health Checks

It's that time of year again when we are chasing you up to attend for your annual review so that we can meet our targets. If contacted by us or the Practice Nurse to attend for your annual review, please book in so that we can complete your health review for this year and review your medications.

Missed Appointments Please remember to let us know if you cannot attend or don't need your appointment so that we can allocate it to someone else.

Health Topics-----Alcohol Awareness “Know Your Limits”

Men should drink no more than 21 units of alcohol per week {and no more than 4 units in any one day}.

Women should drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week {and no more than 3 units in any one day}.

Pregnant women the advice from the Department of Health is that pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant should not drink at all.

What is a unit of alcohol?

One unit of alcohol is about equal to:

Half a pint of ordinary strength beer or lager {3-4% alcohol by volume abv}, or

A small pub measure {25ml} of spirits {40% abv}, or

A standard pub measure {50ml} of sherry or port {20% abv}.

There is however one and a half units of alcohol in:

A small glass {125ml} of ordinary strength wine {12% abv}, or

A standard pub measure {35ml} of spirits {40% abv}.

But remember, many wines beers ciders and continental lagers are much stronger in alcohol content. A more accurate way of calculating units is as follows. The percentage alcohol by volume {% abv} of a drink equals the number of units in one litre of that drink .Eg;

A strong beer at 6% abv has six units in one litre. If you drink half a litre {500ml}, just under a pint- then you have had 3 units.

The more you drink regularly above these limits, the greater the risk of health problems such as: liver disease {cirrhosis}; stomach and pancreatic disorders; depression; anxiety; high blood pressure; heart muscle disease; damage to nervous tissue; serious accidents; some cancers and weight gain {alcoholic drinks contain a lot of calories}.

Isn't alcohol good for you?

For men over 40 and women past the menopause, it is thought that a small amount of alcohol {1 or 2 units per day} helps to protect against heart disease and stroke.

See the Doctor or practice nurse if you are drinking above the recommended limits and are finding it difficult to cut down.