



Spring/Easter2007Edition

Eastham Group Practice News

A Warm Welcome



Welcome to our inaugural seasonal newsletter. It is our intention to publish 4 a year in Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn and our aim is to keep you in touch with what's going on in your Practice.

As this is the first edition I thought I'd take this opportunity to reflect on some of the changes we have introduced in recent times, as part of our on-going efforts, to continually improve the service we provide.

- ✓ **Increased number of appointments** we now offer more appointments at the beginning of the week
- ✓ **Introduction of telephone appointments.** We now offer more opportunities for patients to have their consultation, where appropriate, with either a GP or a Nurse, over the phone
- ✓ **Practice Pharmacist.** We now offer the opportunity for patients to have their annual medication review with our Practice Pharmacist
- ✓ **Self help leaflets.** We now have a range of self help leaflets available
- ✓ **Patients Forum.** This has been established to enable us to listen even more to the views of our patients
- ✓ **Increased Choice.** At the point of referral to a hospital specialist patients are now made aware of the choices on offer
- ✓ **Did Not Attend(DNAs)** - We have now developed a communication process aimed at minimising the "cost" for fellow patients of patients who do not attend already booked appointments

Dr Steve Williams

We have been listening

Firstly a big **THANK YOU** to the over 300 patients who took the time to fill-out a patient's questionnaire. As you know all forms are processed anonymously by an independent company and our intention is to use the results to develop a patient led action plan for the coming 12 months.

In summary the headline results are that patients are very happy with the care they receive from clinicians in this Practice, but they see access to those services as providing a potential opportunity for improvement.

The number one source of patient frustration being our phone system.

Well we have listened and as a result we have the following 3 key objectives for 2007

- ✓ **A new phone system.** During 2007 we will be investing and upgrading our phone system
- ✓ **A Practice website.** We will be developing this to aid patient access and promote greater self help awareness.
- ✓ **Appointment Mix.** We will be reviewing our mix of "Book on the day" and pre-book appointments to see if we can match more closely our supply to the needs of our patients

As you can see we are committed to service improvement so if at any time you have any ideas you want to share with us then please do.

Appointments

Winter is our busiest time of the year with a lot of pressure on appointments generated by coughs and colds. Our expectation is that as we enter the Spring and the bright nights and hopefully better weather this pressure will lessen.

Some helpful reminders.....

Thinking about your holiday - Make sure you know and have all the vaccinations you need, maybe we can help

Hayfever - Have you got your medication ready? Under the "Care in the Chemist" scheme if you don't pay for your prescriptions this can now be dispensed free of charge at any participating Pharmacy (scheme being reviewed end of June) with no need for a GP appointment. If you do pay for your prescriptions and know your regular medication it may well be cheaper to buy this over the counter rather than via a prescription - again no need for a GP appointment.

Repeat Prescriptions - if you are on regular medication/prescriptions please try not to leave requesting repeats until the last minute, as this can put needless pressure on yourself and our Practice systems

Annual Medication Reviews - As you know these will take place around your birthday. Please don't let this come as a surprise. This can be booked in advance or possibly conducted over the phone both of which may help minimise the pressure on yourself and on practice systems

Training Afternoons - During 2007 Wirral Primary Health Care Trust(PCT), our local NHS, are providing training opportunities for GPs and other members of the practice team. These will necessitate us closing the Practice approximately one afternoon every other month. with cover, during these times, being provided by the Out Of Hours Service The objective of these sessions is to improve the performance of all attendees and therefore the service we provide. So our hope is that the occasional closed Wednesday or Thursday afternoon does not cause too much inconvenience and we will always try to give as much notice as we can

We know we can do better.....

We intend to give our patients the finest service possible, and that means always trying to do better. You can help us by telling us when we please you and also when we don't. If we can change things for the better we will.

We will listen to your suggestions.

If you want to formalise any complaint please ask to speak to the Practice Manager who will then ensure it is fully recorded and investigated.

Some Helpful Numbers

Eastham Group Practice (EGP) Main Switchboard - Open week days from 8.30-6.00 Tel 0151-327-1391

EGP Results Line - Open daily from 12-3.00
Tel- 0151-327-9700

Wirral Out Of Hours Service - Daily 6.30pm-8.00am and at weekends and over public holidays 0151-678-8496

NHS Direct 0845 46 47
(www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

Wirral Walk-in Centre at Arrowe Park staffed by experienced nurses for information, advice or treatment for minor illness and injury

On behalf of all Partners and the Practice team we hope have a healthy and happy spring and Easter time

The Practice Team

Food for thought.....

"Take care of your body as it is the only place you have to live" - Jim Rohn

Correcting Some Misinformation About General Practice

Following some recent media coverage we thought patients may find it useful to be aware of the following facts:

- ✓ There are approximately 36,000 GPs in the UK
- ✓ It takes 6 years to train as a Doctor and a further 3 years to train to become a GP
- ✓ The average practice in the UK has about 6,000 registered patients and about 3 full time GPs.
- ✓ GPs are paid less than 20p per patient per day to provide all the day to day care that is required.
- ✓ GPs refer about 10% of patients to hospital specialists-this means 90% of all health needs of the country's population is managed entirely in General Practice
- ✓ General Practice in the NHS, in a recent Government survey, was shown to be the most popular of all public services