

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Do I need to see a Doctor?

Most people calling the surgery ask to make an appointment with a Doctor. Whilst the Doctor can usually deal with most problems, sometimes it is more appropriate to see a Nurse. Every morning and afternoon we have a Triage Clinic which is primarily Nurse run and supervised by a Doctor. These Nurses are highly trained and able to deal with most common problems e.g., coughs, sore throats, cystitis, earache, feverish children etc. We hope you will be patient with our receptionists if they ask you the nature of your problem. Sometimes instead of waiting to see the Doctor, the receptionists can fit you in the same day in the Triage Clinics. This leaves the Doctors appointments free for more complicated cases.

Will a telephone call to my Doctor or Nurse do?

Each Doctor typically offers 40 appointments a day and 6 of these are phone call appointments. If you need to book a phone call appointment with your Doctor please call reception. They will give you a time to ring back. Usually the Doctor will not be able to take your call immediately and you will be kept on hold until the Doctor becomes available.

Our Nurses are also able to take telephone calls for routine queries.

What is the procedure for requesting a home visit?

The Doctors at the practice are facing an increasing demand for home visits as the population of older housebound patients increases in Market Harborough. We are grateful for your continued efforts to attend the surgery in person when it is at all possible. A home visit usually takes 30 to 40 minutes. A Doctor would normally see 3 to 4 patients in the same time at the surgery. If you require a home visit, please call as early as possible in the day, preferably before 10am to allow Doctors to plan their day. It is now common policy to call patients prior to visiting to allow the Doctor to assess the problem. Increasingly appropriately trained Nurses are visiting patients in their homes.

What can I do if I have a query about my prescription?

Our Prescriptions Clerk may be able to assist should you have an issue or query with your prescription. Any prescription requests must be done in person with the Prescriptions Clerk, who will pass the request onto your Doctor. Patients who have regular prescriptions may wish for these to be sent to a town chemist for collection - please arrange this at reception.

Can I enquire about a relative's test results on their behalf?

The reception team obeys strict confidentiality rules and will not divulge patient information to third parties without prior consent. This includes test results, information regarding appointment details and attendance.

HAVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER?

If you have any interesting articles or comments for possible inclusion in our newsletter please send them to:

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Market Harborough Medical Centre Patient News

Spring 2007

PRACTICE UPDATE

The year 2006 was one of significant developments and achievements at the Medical Centre.



We were really proud of **Dr Tom Blake** for gaining a Distinction in the Cardiff Diploma of Dermatology.

Dr Hamant Mistry was honoured by his Leicestershire peers by being elected to Fellowship of the Royal College of General Practitioners, giving us two Fellows in the practice. We were all delighted that our Registrar **Dr Rahul Tosar** was awarded a Merit in his Membership examination for the RCGP. Two more Nurses have gained their prescribing qualification, giving us a total of four Nurse Prescribers in the Medical Centre. Four GP Partners have gained "GP with Special Interest" status; **Dr Paul Bennett** in Trauma and Orthopaedics, **Dr Hugh Delargy** in Rheumatology, **Dr Tom Blake** in Dermatology and **Dr Mark Yates** in Ophthalmology. Also **Dr Healey** has a special interest in Diabetes.

The "Triage Clinics" have gone from strength to strength as our Nurses have gained experience in acute care, so that our ability to provide rapid consultations for urgent problems has improved significantly.

We were delighted to welcome **Mandy Gamble**, our first Community Matron, to the practice. Her role is to use her expertise to improve the quality of home care for those suffering chronic illness in order to reduce the need for patients to be admitted to hospital so often.



So what about plans for 2007?

Well, one of the problems that we have really had to struggle with is "Advanced Access". This government directive to ensure that every patient can be offered an appointment within 48 hours makes clinical sense, in that it ensures that there is no delay in seeing and diagnosing possibly dangerous conditions. However, the greater emphasis on immediate access has meant that those patients who need to plan their lives well ahead, particularly those with busy work lives, have found it increasingly difficult to get an appointment on a particular date. In order to amend this deficiency we have been training our Nurses to take on all the Chronic Disease Management. This means that the annual routine reviews for diabetes, asthma, coronary heart disease, chronic respiratory disease or mental health problems, will be done in the Nurse lead Chronic Disease Clinic and the Doctors will only be involved if a major problem is encountered. By relieving the Doctors of this routine care, they should have

far more appointments available for booking in advance, and we believe accessibility will improve considerably.

In addition, **Dr Healey** and **Dr Hugh Delargy** are planning to extend the scope of their diabetic clinics to include new insulin dependent patients. Meanwhile we are delighted to report that some of our enterprising receptionists have taken it upon themselves to start learning sign language for the deaf.

We have now fully instituted the government's "Choose and Book" system whereby anyone being referred for secondary care (with the exceptions of a few specialties), is offered the choice of at least four hospitals where they can be seen. This may be done by your Doctor going on line during your consultation and entering your choices, or alternatively our specialist receptionists will make the arrangements following your consultation.

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Your Questions Answered

ATTENTION PEOPLE LIVING IN GREAT BOWDEN AND LUBENHAM

For many years patients living in villages around Market Harborough have been able to get their prescription medicines from the dispensary inside the surgery. This service has now been extended to include Lubenham and Great Bowden. This means if you are prescribed some antibiotics you have the option of picking them up from the dispensary on the way out. This saves a trip into town. Some people get their repeat prescriptions from the dispensary but you are not obliged to do this. However, if you register for this service it simply increases your options. If you are interested mention this to your Doctor or Nurse when you next see them.

One of the areas with which we are required to engage, is the current budgetary restrictions being strictly enforced by the Government. The LCR Primary Care Trust are duty bound to ensure that the practices in the county do not overspend and a large deficit needs to be repaid by the end of the financial year. This means that all the patients within a practice share the resources allocated to that practice and we need to be certain that there is enough to go around.

Fortunately, we as a practice have already managed to implement many cost efficiencies and are providing patient care within our "fair share budget". So, even through the coming stringencies we will be able to ensure that the high quality medical care required is always available to all our patients for approved NHS conditions. However, in order to do this, we will need to use the most cost efficient medicines and treatments consistent with high quality. As the price of treatments varies, as well as data concerning

drugs, we may have to change the brands or variety of medications from time to time to other equivalent products.

Meanwhile, I am working on the "Locality and Strategy Committee" and providing clinical governance lead for the locality and **Dr Hamant Mistry** is working on the "Primary Care Trust Executive Committee" to improve our "Practice Based Commissioning". This is about finding alternative ways of providing medical care more conveniently for you and more cost effectively for the practice population as a whole, to ensure that resources always go around.

The next couple of years are going to be difficult throughout the entire NHS, but we have a great team working in the organisation and commissioning in the practice and we are confident that we will be able to provide a standard of care that is second to none.

Dr Nicholas Leach, Partner

NURSE RUN CLINICS

Many patients are looked after by our highly trained Nurses in a variety of clinics e.g. our asthma Nurses, heart Nurse and diabetic Nurses. Many of our Nurses have undergone special training and are now able to prescribe medicines in the same way as Doctors. We now have Nurses who look after patients who have suffered a stroke, patients with mental health problems and patients who have kidney problems and those with high blood pressure. If you suffer with one of these problems you may be invited to see one of these Nurses.



BLOOD TESTING FACILITIES AT LEICESTER, KETTERING AND CORBY

There are open access blood clinics during week days at:

- Leicester General Hospital from **8.30am to 4.30pm.**
- Kettering General Hospital from **8.30am to 5pm.**
- Corby Diagnostic Centre from **8.30am to 12.30pm and from 1pm to 4pm.**

Just turn up with your form and they will take your blood.

CONTRACEPTIVE NURSE

The practice is very lucky to have a Nurse highly qualified in matters of contraception. The contraception Nurse is able to deal with renewals of pill prescriptions and also to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of contraception, including coil fittings and contraceptive injections. Please ask at reception to make an appointment.

PEOPLE WHO TAKE INSULIN FOR DIABETES

We have 750 people in our practice area who have diabetes. Most of these people receive their diabetic care here in the practice. Traditionally people who use insulin have been cared for in hospital out-patients, but we are currently in the process of asking hospital diabetic specialists to discharge people with stable diabetes back to the care of their GP. If you are interested in this please speak to your GP.

When you require your sharps bin emptying please call **01858 438104.**

ANNUAL PRESCRIPTION REVIEW

All patients who have any prescribed medicines on repeat prescription need to have an annual prescription review. The date of the annual prescription review is found on the bottom of your repeat prescription. People who have a repeat prescription for simple problems like antihistamines for hay fever or skin creams for eczema often only need to book a phone call with their Doctor. For more complex problems a face to face consultation is needed. For many people this review can be done with a suitably trained Nurse. Over the last few years the practice has been moving people's prescription review dates to birth months in an attempt to distribute workload throughout the year. The practice is also starting to attach letters to people's repeat prescription reminding them to call to make an appointment. Some people need blood and even urine tests prior to their annual prescription review appointment and the receptionists will organise this when you call for your appointment.

CONJUNCTIVITIS

We see a lot of people with conjunctivitis. Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of a transparent membrane that covers and protects the front of the eye and back of the eyelids. This inflammation usually starts as part of a cold or can occur if dust etc., has blown into your eye or occasionally it can be part of an allergy, like hay fever. The typical symptoms of conjunctivitis are an irritable red eye with a watery or sticky discharge. Doctors and Nurses working in General Practice have commonly treated these infections using antibiotic eye drops, but recent studies have shown that these drops have very little benefit and most people simply get better on their own. This includes cases in children with sticky eyes.

For thousands of years the human body has protected itself against infections without the need for antibiotics. The tears that our eyes produce not only wash away infections, but also contain special chemicals that fight off infections. If you think you have symptoms of conjunctivitis then washing your eyes using water, 4 times a day or more frequently if needed, is often all that is required. Most cases of conjunctivitis start to get better after 3 days and can occasionally take 7 days to fully clear. If your eyes are not responding to cleaning or you have concerns then we recommend you make an appointment in the Triage Clinic. We would expect patients to attend the same day if they had a very red eye, or if they had any of the following symptoms: loss of vision, pain when looking at strong light, swelling around the eye, or a painful eye especially associated with a headache.

TOOTHACHE

Unfortunately the availability of NHS dentistry in Market Harborough has fallen. Many patients seek help at the Medical Centre. Regrettably GPs have been informed that they are not qualified to assess and treat people with dental problems and our lack of training in dental medicine may lead to mistakes and subsequent harm to the patient. If you have toothache it is important that you contact your Dentist and that you do not come to the Medical Centre. All Dentists whether NHS or private are contracted to provide an emergency service for their registered patients and they should not tell you to come to the Medical Centre. If you do not have a Dentist we suggest that you contact NHS Direct on **0845 4647** or the local NHS emergency dental line on **0116 295 7699**. Many patients go to a local A & E department for treatment of dental problems.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT AND ORDER A REPEAT PRESCRIPTION USING THE INTERNET

You can now make an appointment and order a repeat prescription using the internet. To register for this service please ask at reception.

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT

The Doctors are well aware how difficult it can be to get an appointment and we regularly discuss problems to try and improve the situation. We agree that the process of having to call back is not satisfactory and we are increasing the number of pre-bookable appointments that each Doctor offers.

CANCELLATIONS

Regrettably we are still getting up to 250 missed appointments per month! Please telephone to either re-arrange or cancel an appointment if the time or date is inconvenient. Whenever you fail to cancel an appointment, this gets marked in your records.

COTTAGE HOSPITAL MINOR INJURIES UNIT

We wish to advertise that the Cottage Hospital has a Minor Injuries Unit. This unit has Nurses who have been specially trained to deal with minor injuries. It is open every day from 8am to 11pm. After this time please attend Ward 3 at St Luke's Hospital.

The practice has identified that lots of our patients are going to Kettering and Leicester A & E Departments and facing long waits to deal with minor injuries that could have been dealt with quickly and efficiently at the Cottage Hospital. If you are unsure if your problem could be dealt with by the minor injuries unit why not ring first for advice on 01858 438178 / 438195. It could save you a long wait at a casualty department. If patients do not use our local unit, it is likely to come under threat of closure.