

CANADA ROAD, WALMER, KENT CT14 7EQ



Balmoral Surgery Newsletter

**Winter
2012**



**Merry
Christmas**

Balmoral Surgery would like to wish all of our patients a Merry Christmas and a Happy New

Seeking Health Advice

NHS Direct: 0845 4647 NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk

NHS direct can be used for health advice and reassurance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you have a specific health query that does not require you to speak to your own Doctor you can ring NHS Direct for advice.

Patients can use the NHS Choices website for general health queries.

Action Plan from the Annual Practice Survey

The practice are require to conduct a patient satisfaction survey every year. This survey was done in July and the results of the survey will be available on the practice website soon.

The overall response from this year's survey was extremely good with some very positive comments. The practice is required to create an action plan as a result of the patient questionnaires. One of the weakest areas identified from the results of the survey was access to the surgery services. The surgery needs to work with the resources that it currently has and after discussion with the patient forum group, the following action plan has been agreed;

- **Promote online appointments more to reduce the pressure on the 'phones for appointments.**
- **Improve the reliability of online appointments so that more patients use the service**
- **Improve access to the surgery by looking into not closing the surgery at lunchtimes. Patients will be able to telephone the practice between 1-2pm, if the plan is workable, as well as coming into the surgery during this time.**
- **Move one of the receptionists off the reception desk and out to medical records to take all of the telephone calls, and leave one receptionist on the desk to just deal with patients at the desk.**

The practice is currently in the process of implementing the action plan and at the next patient forum meeting, progress will be feed back to the group.

Patient Forum Group

If patients wish to have a say about the services provided by Balmoral Surgery and decisions being made by the local commissioning group, they are invited to attend our patient forum group. Patient forum groups have a very important role to play in the future of the NHS, and we welcome new members to the group. The group meets three times a year, if you are interested in joining this group please contact Becky.

Our next meeting will be held at the surgery on **12th February 2013 at 6pm.**

If you would like to look at minutes from our previous meeting, please visit our website (www.balmoralsurgery.com) and follow the link to the patient forum page.

Online Appointments



Patients can now make their appointments on-line. Please enquire at reception in the first instance to register for this service. After registration you can make your appointment by going to www.myvisiononline.co.uk.

Patients can now access the same appointments online, that are available via the telephone.

In general, appointments to see a Doctor are 10 minute slots. If you think you have more than one thing to discuss or that you will need longer than 10 minutes for your consultation, please tell the receptionist when you are booking the appointment. You may sometimes be asked to make another appointment at a later date to come back and discuss anything that can't be covered at your initial consultation.

Electronic Prescribing

The practice has recently started using electronic prescribing in the practice. The Electronic Prescription Service enables prescribers - such as GPs and practice nurses - to send prescriptions electronically to a dispenser (such as a pharmacy) of the patient's choice. This makes the prescribing and dispensing process more efficient and convenient for patients and staff.

What does this mean for you?

- If you collect your repeat prescriptions from your GP you will not have to visit your GP practice to pick up your paper prescription. Instead, your GP will send it electronically to the place you choose, saving you time.
- You will have more choice about where to get your medicines from because they can be collected from a pharmacy near to where you live, work or shop.
- You may not have to wait as long at the pharmacy as there will be time for your repeat prescriptions to be ready before you arrive.

Is this service right for you?

Yes, if you have a stable condition and you:

- don't want to go to your GP practice every time to collect your repeat prescription.
- collect your medicines from the same place most of the time or use a prescription collection service now.

If you wish to use this service, please speak to one of our receptionists to nominate a pharmacy of your choice.

More information is available at the practice or at www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk

Ordering Prescriptions online

Patients can order prescriptions online at www.balmoralsurgery.com. Please note that the turnaround time for prescriptions is 48 hours (72 hours if requested on a Friday or over a weekend)

Please ensure that you order your medication in good time.

Vitamin D

Did you know that Vitamin D deficiency is quite common????

For this reason it is advised that all children under 5 (unless bottle fed) and all pregnant women take a supplement.

Please talk to your health visitor or midwife for more information.

It is also advisable for most people over 50 to take a supplement to prevent osteoporosis and health food shops , as well as NHS Choices can advise patients on this.

New Waiting Room Blood Pressure Monitor!!!!

The practice now has a blood pressure monitor in the waiting room which patients can use to check their own blood pressure.

The machine will produce a print out with the reading, and this reading should be given to one of the receptionists so that your record can be updated.

“Patients can now check their blood pressure in the waiting room”

Weight Management

The practice has a weight management clinic , which is held on Monday afternoons. Patients can self refer to the group, or be referred by their doctor. Since the last weekly meeting the total amount of weight lost by the group is 4.6kg and since the group was introduced 58kg has been lost. This is an average of approximately 5.3kg, per patient in the group.

Please speak to a receptionist if you would like to attend this group.

Staff Changes

Since August we have had two registrars working in the practice, Dr Taj Ansari and Dr Maria Khan. They have now left the practice, but will be returning in August 2013 for one year.

Text Message Reminders

We are now using a text messaging reminder system to remind patients that they have an appointment booked.

We would be grateful if all patients could provide us with an up-to-date mobile number.

Cancellation Line

We now have a mobile number that patients can text if they need to cancel their appointment. Please include in the message, your name, date of birth and the date and time of your appointment.

The number is 07513225850.

Infection Control

The Infection Control lead within the practice is Michelle Halpin (Nursing Team Leader). The practice has strict protocol and procedures in place to ensure that infection control takes place. If you have any concerns about infection control within the practice, please speak ask to speak to Michelle.

We would like to remind patients that they have an individual responsibility to ensure that they use the antiseptic hand gel that we have in the entrance to the practice, when they enter and when they leave. Also please ensure that you do not drop any tissues on the floor, please take them home with you.

Medication

What should I do if my medication does not have a patient information leaflet included?

To ensure that patients receive information regarding their prescribed medication, all medicines must be supplied with a patient information leaflet. This will provide you with information about how to take your medication and any side effects that may occur. If your prescribed medication does not include an information leaflet please ask the Pharmacist to supply one.

What should I do If I think I am experiencing a side effect due to my medication?

If you think you are experiencing a symptom that is related to your medication then you should discuss it with your GP. They will be able to advise whether the symptom is related to the medicine and whether there are alternative medicines that you can try. **It is really important that you don't just stop taking your medication.**

NHS Screening

NHS Screening services such as bowel cancer screening, aortic aneurysm screening and breast cancer screening are targeted by the government at patients in certain age groups. For patients in age groups below those targeted, the chance of the disease is low, and therefore NHS screening is unavailable. Patients who are over the ages that are called automatically, can access the services but patients will need to ask for this. This is not a practice decision. To find out more ring NHS direct or look at the NHS Choices website.

Commissioning News

The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which Balmoral Surgery is part of, consists of practices from Deal, Dover, Folkestone and Shepway and is called South Kent Coast. The CCG is not a PCT. The CCG is a clinician led organisation and the majority of the board members are clinicians. The CCG aims to have more links with local patients and local practices with a “bottom led” approach, asking patients what they would like to see in their local area. Dr Chee Mah (GP Partner at Balmoral Surgery) is a board member of the CCG and explains that the CCG will be a statutory organisation with statutory duties, and will be accountable for their spending of tax payer’s money. Therefore they will not be able to change everything at once, but they aim to involve local people as much as possible.

Dr Mah explains that some of the challenges the CCG face include meaningful engagement, how to do as many things as possible in a tight financial situation and ensuring that learning and development occurs. In addition Dr Mah acknowledged that the CCG is new, and therefore there are likely to be mistakes.

At Balmoral Surgery’s recent patient forum meeting, one of the members of the group asked Dr Mah about the CCG’s plans for Deal Hospital. Dr Mah discussed this with the group and explained that different parts of the Hospital are managed by different trusts. The minor injuries unit and Elizabeth Ward are managed by the Community Trust, and there are no plans to close either of these aspects of the Hospital. The outpatient clinics are managed by East Kent Hospitals Trust (EKHT). The Department of Health are trying to make services more cost effective, and at the moment, EKHT run outpatient services from too many local sites, and they are required to withdraw services from some of the local sites. It is not clear for definite from which sites outpatient services are being withdrawn, but it is likely that Deal Hospital may be one of them. However Dr Mah explained to the group that if this does occur, the CCG will look at commissioning services at the hospital by an alternative provider, but in order for this to occur they firstly need to evaluate the local demand for the services. He informed the group that at the moment, some of the outpatient clinics are running with only three patients per session, and this is therefore a poor use of the service. Dr Mah added that there are no plans to remove the x-ray and phlebotomy service from Deal Hospital as these are vital services for the minor injuries unit to run effectively.