

# TOTTON HEALTH CENTRE Dr Darch and Partners NEWSLETTER Autumn 2007

**Tel: 023 8086 5051**

A year on, and with positive feedback about the previous two issues, we will continue our endeavour to keep you updated on changes within the practice and local health care system which may be of interest to you. In addition, we will include information on medical issues that have been in the news and update you on recent developments which we feel are relevant and important to you as patients. Don't forget though, we remain open and receptive to any constructive ideas or comments that you have about the practice and the way we deliver our medical services.

## Dr Darch and Partners

At the end of June we said farewell to our senior partner, Dr Terry Wood, who had been at the practice for 37 years. Many of you wrote of your fond memories of Dr Wood and told us of events over the years that had touched you and your families. It was clear from all the messages received that Terry had left a lasting memory of a kind, caring and patient general practitioner who worked hard and diligently during his many years at the practice.

Dr Wood wrote a thank you note to his patients, a copy of which is shown later in the newsletter.

We are fortunate to have Dr Malcolm Darch to take up the mantle of 'senior partner'. Malcolm has been with the practice since 1980 and is a worthy replacement for Dr. Wood.

Many of you will also have met Dr David Booth, who has been appointed to replace Dr Wood. David has been working hard to catch up with all his new patients and learn how the practice works! We are very pleased to welcome him to Totton Health Centre.

With so many staff within our primary care team, we are putting together a collage of photos to help you identify us all. This will very shortly be displayed in the waiting room. Please take a moment to look at the pictures. We will keep it up to date as staff retire/ leave and join us.

# Patients have their say

The Department of Health recently undertook a national random survey to check on patients' satisfaction with their GP practice and, in particular, to see if access (getting appointments) was indeed as difficult as reported in the negative press coverage during the past year.

We are pleased the results showed that our patients were satisfied with the different methods of accessing their doctor:

- 83% of responding patients were satisfied with phone access
- 94% were able to obtain an appointment within 48hrs
- 83% were able to book an appointment with a GP of their choice.

Disappointingly, although a similar result to other practices, only 57% of our patients reported being able to book an appointment more than 2 days in advance.

Part of the reason for this result may have been because many patients were unaware that they could book an appointment up to two weeks in advance. Clearly, we have failed to advertise this fact sufficiently. Be assured that we are continually assessing our patients' ability to access a health care professional and hope that your general satisfaction with our service remains high.

We are currently 'trailing' different options to offer a wider choice to patients making appointments. Whilst these options are tried, it is difficult to keep everyone abreast of the changes – so we apologise in advance if this is sometimes confusing or frustrating. Please don't take out your frustrations on the reception team. Rest assured that they - together with all other members of the practice team - are trying to accommodate our patients' needs and give everyone fair and appropriate access to a healthcare professional.

## Practice Nursing Team

Julie, our practice nursing sister, manages a very experienced team of nurses at the surgery. The team are able to offer a wide range of services including the management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma and coronary heart disease, wound care, travel advice, cervical smears, immunisations, weight management *and from the middle of October, you will be offered a nurse appointment if attending the surgery for certain minor illnesses*. It is also possible for the nurses to phone you at a convenient time to offer advice on travel immunisations, contraception and some minor illnesses. Please use their services – they are an invaluable resource to the health care team.

# Flu Clinics

**Saturday, 6th and Saturday, 13th October  
between 8.30 a.m. and 12 noon  
Be Smart ... Book Now !!!!**

Two Saturday morning flu immunisation clinics have been arranged for the 6th and 13th October between 8.30 and 12.00 noon. Patients will be able to book appointments from the middle of September.

Anyone under 16yrs requiring a flu jab will need to book on a week day, not on a Saturday clinic. Any patient who needs both a flu and pneumovax immunisation will also need to be seen during the week.

Remember flu jabs are recommended for:-

- Anyone who is 65yrs or over
- Anyone who is in a risk group e.g. requiring regular inhaled steroids for asthma, has suffered from a heart attack or stroke, those who are diabetic, have chronic renal disease, multiple sclerosis and degenerative conditions of the central nervous system, or are on immunosuppressive drugs. If you are uncertain, please ask either your doctor or the practice nurse.

Remember vaccination is the most effective way of preventing illness from influenza. Book now .....

## Blood tests - Phlebotomist returns .....

We are delighted to welcome back our phlebotomist, Jo, who has returned from maternity leave and is working 3 mornings per week.

However, with the increasing demand for blood tests to monitor chronic illness as well as investigating more acute illnesses, demand has outstripped our in-house supply of phlebotomy appointments.

Consequently we have to limit these appointments with Jo to those patients that need anticoagulation monitoring i.e. taking warfarin and those that have particular health/age related mobility difficulties getting to other places – i.e. Lymington Hospital and Southampton General Hospital. We appreciate this can cause inconvenience to some patients. However, we feel we are providing the service for those that are in most need.

Many patients probably do not realize it is now unusual for a practice to even offer the service of an in-house phlebotomist. It is, therefore, important we rationalize her services as best we can. Please believe she is rarely idle!

If you have a particular query relating to this issue, please discuss it with your doctor or nurse. We do try to be as flexible as we are able.

## Cervical Smear Recalls

Ladies – please be aware that the way you are called for your cervical smear has recently changed. The call letter, rather than coming from the surgery, comes directly from a central database in Winchester. Women are sent a letter about a month or so before the smear test is due. A second letter is sent if the patient does not respond.

This may explain how a patient can receive a call letter when they have recently been into the surgery for a smear; Winchester will not have a record of that visit until the result comes in.

If you are called and do not want to attend for a smear, please speak to the practice nurse as specific forms need to be completed and sent to Winchester to avoid ongoing recall letters being sent. Thank you.

## Diabetes Spotlight

At Totton Health Centre we take diabetes seriously!

...so we thought you might like to know a bit more about the way in which we care for our diabetic patients.

In August 2007 we had 412 registered patients with diabetes. That's about 3.6% of our patients. That may not sound a lot, but good diabetic care is crucial to avoid long-term health problems with heart, circulation, kidney and eye problems.

Diabetes care involves the whole practice team. From the moment your diagnosis is made, systems are in place to ensure that you and your diabetes are managed correctly.

### **Diabetic Annual Reviews**

Each diabetic patient should be reviewed at least annually to help control their diabetes and prevent complications. Our experienced practice nursing team support and educate those managed on diet alone, on tablets or on insulin. If required, further support can be gained from more specialist teams based at the Fenwick and Royal South Hants (Diabetic Liaison Service) hospitals.

Please respond to your recall letter asking you to come for your review - our aim is to support and help you manage your diabetes to avoid long term problems.

### **Diabetic Retinal Eye Screening**

Retinal screening is recommended as an annual check. A mobile screening van comes to the surgery. The screening process looks at changes affecting the back of the eye of a diabetic patient. If any problems are detected during screening it can lead to further treatment at Southampton Eye Unit to help prevent loss of vision and blindness.

### **Identifying those patients with diabetes**

Some people become acutely unwell at the onset of their diabetes with symptoms of extreme exhaustion, weight loss, thirst and passing urine frequently. This can occur at any age and usually requires insulin therapy.

More commonly people develop diabetes later in life and their clinical symptoms may present over months - again thirst, weight loss and passing urine frequently may be the only signs but other signs e.g. changes in the eye noted by an optician, recurrent skin infections, arterial disease resulting in a heart attack or erectile dysfunction, can also give us a clue that diabetes is an underlying cause.

Those who have a close family relative with diabetes are more likely to develop diabetes as are those women who have developed diabetes whilst pregnant. Obesity and lack of physical exercise make progression to diabetes more likely.

Screening initially involves a urine test and, if necessary, blood tests to confirm the diagnosis.

## **Patient Registration Details**

Please remember it is essential we have the correct details of your address and telephone number. If you ask for an emergency or urgent home visit, we could be going to the wrong house. Results of recent blood tests or recommendations that a hospital consultant has made, may be difficult to relay if we do not have your current phone number.

Please let the reception team know if you have moved house, changed your telephone number or have a mobile telephone contact number. Alternatively, you may prefer to complete a 'Change of Details' sheet (which can be printed from our website – [www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk)) and send it to the Patient Admin Team. Thank you.

## Charity begins at home

We were delighted to support two members of the practice team – Yvonne and Claire - who took part in the 'Race for Life' this year – as they have done for 3 years in a row! They raised a worthy £389 for Cancer Research UK and completed the 5km in 45mins –despite one of the team being on steroids for a flare up of her asthma and having to battle through the many other women of all ages who raced to raise funds.



Rumour has it that Yvonne and Claire will be leading a Practice Team in 2008 – so watch this space for more familiar faces!!

For their achievements this year – congratulations and well done!

# Dr Wood's Thank You Letter

I would like to express my thanks to all the patients who sent me individual gifts and written messages to mark my retirement from the practice. I have been overwhelmed by your generosity.

May I also say a very big thank you to all those patients who donated money for a retirement gift.

Margaret and I received travel vouchers and we are now very much looking forward to what we are sure will be a wonderful ten day holiday in Florence and Pisa.

I shall miss the practice and my patients. However, I will be able to look back on my time at Totton Health Centre with nothing but affection.

With my best wishes,  
Terry Wood

## Surgery opening times

Surgery Opening Hours Mon – Friday 8.30 - 6pm  
(Except Mon lunchtime 1 - 2pm when we are closed for staff training)

Emergency on call Doctor available from 8am - 6.30pm

Home visit requests – please phone before 12 noon

Blood or other test results – please phone between 10 - 12.30 p.m.

**Prescription Requests require 48hrs to be processed (excluding weekends and bank/public holidays)**

The surgery telephone number is 023 8086 5051 .

Remember Monday mornings are the busiest time – please avoid routine calls during this period.

We do try and accommodate your requests for advice, appointments and visits.

We have a very committed team of doctors, nurses, reception, IT support, secretarial and administrative staff. We are trying to provide you with a full range of medical services and hope that this holistic approach to providing you with medical care provides a good service to you and your families.

# NOTES

## **NEWS FLASH!**

**Don't forget to keep checking our website.  
Information about the practice is continually  
updated.**

**[www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk)**



