

Dr S J Godfrey & Partners
at
TOTTON HEALTH CENTRE
Newsletter Autumn 2009

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Mrs I S Pilgrim (Business Partner)

Associate Doctor: Dr H Everitt

Since our last newsletter in the Spring, Dr. Godfrey has taken up the mantle of senior partner at the Health Centre and we have welcomed Dr. Andy Powell to the partnership. The health news has been dominated by the emergence of 'swine flu' – with the World Health Organisation declaring pandemic status in June indicating that this strain of flu has been found in several different countries around the world. We are taking the opportunity to use space within this newsletter to give you as much information as we can about swine flu and its management.

In our bi-annual newsletter we will give you important information about the practice and endeavour to keep you updated on the services we offer. Increasingly your feedback is being sought about our service, sometimes in the form of government questionnaires, other times via feedback forms from the practice. The services we provide will be shaped by your responses to these questions – so please spend a couple of minutes filling in these forms and returning them. Your response to government questionnaires will affect the resources we have to deliver care to you and your family in the forthcoming years. Positive feedback can be channelled into providing better services!

www.tottonhealthcentre.co.uk

Tel: 023 80 865051

Swine Flu



Swine flu is a viral illness which, for most people, is a “self limiting” mild or moderate illness. That means it will get better by itself. It is very definitely not caught by eating pork!

The diagnosis of swine flu can be made by taking a careful history from an individual. Most of the diagnoses are being made with a telephone consultation or by a web based tool through the National Pandemic Flu Line.

The symptoms are similar to those of regular flu and can include a high fever, lethargy, coughing, runny nose, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea and lack of appetite.

Antiviral drugs are available to treat swine flu and reduce the length and severity of their symptoms. These are available from selected chemists on production of a ‘flu voucher’ issued by the National Flu Line or by your GP. They are most effective if started within 48hrs of the onset of the illness.

Swine flu is very contagious i.e. passes from person to person quite easily. If you have symptoms that you think are suggestive of flu, then the advice is to remain at home and contact the National Flu Line. If it is decided you need a course of antiviral treatment, you will be asked to contact a ‘flu friend’ who can then go to the nominated chemist to collect the prescription for you.

People in the same household are not given antiviral treatment as well. If they are not showing symptoms themselves, they can go out and work normally. People who have been told that they have swine flu are requested to stay in their homes for a week. This is to try and limit the spread of the virus.

As with any other illness, if patients are off work because of swine flu, they do not need a medical certificate for the first 7 days. If an employer insists on a certificate, a note can be collected from the surgery that is completed by the patient themselves – you do not need to see your GP for this note.

What can you do to help yourself? Viral illnesses require simple measures - rest, adequate fluid intake and paracetamol or ibuprofen to help reduce a fever and muscle aches. Anyone with symptoms that are not responding to these measures ought to seek further advice from their surgery.

So far, the workload in general practice has been quite considerable – in addition to other day to day problems, we have had to deal with numerous queries, visit people with suspected problems and issue prescriptions of antiviral tablets as felt clinically appropriate. It is possible that the current outbreak will reach a peak, lessen and return with a vengeance in the autumn. We are trying to anticipate any problems that we may encounter, but autumn and winter are often a busy time of year for us anyway. Please bear with us during these very busy times. We are trying to keep everyone informed and up to date.

National Pandemic Flu Helpline

0800 1513 100 or 0800 1513 200

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu



FLU IMMUNISATION

Vaccination against the annual strains of flu is the most effective way of preventing illness from seasonal flu. This is not, though, an immunization against swine flu. It is given each year in October/November and lasts for the duration of the winter. It is given to the elderly population (over 65yrs old) and those with other health problems – this includes patients with asthma, heart disease, strokes, chronic renal disease and diabetic patients.

Details of the annual flu clinics will be posted in September in the surgery and on our website. The first Flu Clinic will be held on Saturday 3rd October, patients will be able to book appointments from mid September.

A vaccine particularly protecting against swine flu is being developed and it's anticipated it may be ready to be given in September or October. There are few details available to us at present, but it's anticipated it will be a vaccine that needs two injections with a 3 week interval between them. It's important to note that this will be given as well as the seasonal flu immunization. The groups of people that will be recommended for the vaccine may be different to those who have the seasonal flu vaccine e.g. younger children who are more at risk of swine flu. However, information on this has yet to be finalized and issued to us.

As soon as more information becomes available, we will immediately make it available in the surgery and on our practice website.



Flu Hygiene

- Use clean tissues to cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Bin the tissues after sneezing
- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol hand rub to minimize virus spread
- Minimize the contact you have with others if you are unwell with flu

Sick certification



Sick certificates are not legally required for periods less than 1 week.

If such certificates are required, then a fee of £18 for a private certificate is payable. Employers are welcome to pay this for you!

A "Fitness to Return to Work" certificate is also not necessary. It creates extra and unnecessary administration in the surgery. Employers know this and again should be asked by you to pay the £18 fee if they insist on it.

Longer Surgery Hours

DON'T FORGET - we offer a selection of [late evening](#) and [Saturday morning](#) surgeries.

It is hoped that the wider range of appointment times – which are pre-bookable **TWO WEEKS** in advance - will make our service more accessible for certain groups of patients, particularly those who find coming to the surgery during the working week more difficult.

Better services

Saturday mornings

Late surgeries every week on Monday and Tuesday evenings for pre booked appointments

CURRENT SURGERY OPENING TIMES

Monday – Friday 8.30 am – 6 pm

(Except Monday lunchtime 1 pm - 2 pm when we are closed for staff training)

[Emergency on call Doctor](#)

available from 8 am - 6.30 pm

[Home visit requests](#)

please phone before 12 noon

[Blood or other test results](#)

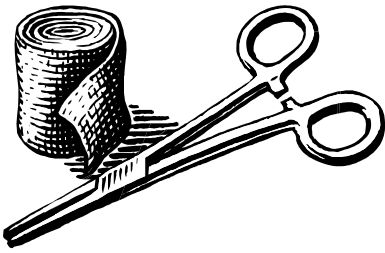
please phone between 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

[Repeat Prescriptions](#)

require 48hours to be processed. We do not accept prescription requests over the telephone unless the patient is infirm or elderly

PLEASE NOTE: **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OCCURRING OUTSIDE OUR STANDARD WORKING HOURS CONTINUE TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE OUT OF HOURS SERVICE ON TELEPHONE NUMBER**

0844 811 3060



Home First Aid Kit

Many conditions are self limiting and will get better on their own.

It is often useful though to have a basic first aid kit at home, so that you can manage illnesses or accidents before requesting additional help. But - what is useful? Here are, we hope, some helpful suggestions:

- ✚ Paracetamol tablets – help to relieve headaches, muscle pains and fever
- ✚ Ibuprofen tablets – anti inflammatory tablets as pain killers
- ✚ Calpol or neurofen syrup should be standard preparations in households with children.
- ✚ A thermometer
- ✚ Antihistamine tablets and/or cream
- ✚ Antiseptic lotion for cleaning wounds and grazes
- ✚ Calamine lotion for soothing itchy skin
- ✚ Plasters or a simple dressing pack for cuts and grazes
- ✚ Tape for securing dressings and cotton wool
- ✚ Small pair of scissors
- ✚ Disposable gloves

Your local chemist will be able to advise you on other remedies that may be of benefit and don't forget - the practice nurses run a daily clinic to help manage patients with relatively minor illnesses. These are normally booked following a Patient Telephone Conversation with a GP.

If in doubt, ask for TELEPHONE TRIAGE – it may save you time!



Health Centre Tips

To help you access the service you require more efficiently and make the practice run more smoothly, there are often small items of information that are useful for you to know :-

- **Obtain Test results from the surgery between 9.30 to 12.30 daily**

Blood tests generally take 3 to 5 days to be analyzed.

X-ray results often take over 2 weeks to be reported back to the surgery. Other hospital tests such as MRI or CT scans organised by the hospital, are often sent separately to clinic letters and can take several weeks to get to the GP.

Please ring between 9.30 a.m. and 12.30 pm each day for test results. If a doctor or nurse needs to speak to you directly, the receptionist will let you know.

- **Getting through to the practice on the telephone**
- **Avoid Monday mornings if possible!!**

Monday mornings are by far our busiest time. Please do not telephone for a routine appointment on Monday mornings; telephone later in the day or, if you can, on another morning.

PLEASE DO NOT USE A 'RING BACK' FACILITY – our practice phone system does not recognise this and so will not work – you will only get irritated when we don't ring you back!

- **Travelling abroad?**

Book a telephone appointment with the travel nurse as soon as you know you are travelling, to check whether immunisations are needed or if travel advice is required.

- **Repeat Prescriptions**

Please will patients who are on more than one regular medication try to request all the drugs they need at the same time. If the medicines are 'out of step' with each other, please let your usual doctor know; they can easily sort this problem out for you.

- **Blood Tests**

The demand for blood tests is increasing and, unfortunately, our phlebotomist, Jackie, cannot do them all in the surgery. We try to keep her appointments for the elderly and those that have difficulty travelling. Blood tests can be done at Lymington Hospital or Southampton General Hospital – details are on your blood test forms.

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Race For Life

A Great Day A Great Cause



Dr Godfrey & Partners “Race for Life” team

(left to right ...Terri, Iris, Anne, Yvonne, Claire, Jo, Marianne and Julie)

A fun day was had by all the team and it's hoped they will raise between £400 and £500 for Breast Cancer. A bucket is on the reception desk at the Health Centre – donations are still welcome!

Patients views and comments?

Ideas

Comments

Brainwaves

Compliments

If you have any constructive comments that may help us improve our service – please let us know by either writing to us or completing one of the “Comments” Slips provided in the surgery.

We will be receptive to all your comments and suggestions.

They will help us shape our services in the future.

Thank you

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