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THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS JANUARY 2008

Hello once again, we wish you all well for the New Year and hope that you had as good a festive season as possible. At the practice we would like to thank all of you who kindly sent cards or gave presents to the practice. We are very grateful for your generosity and it also helps keep a smile on our faces. We certainly do value the positive comments that are given to us.

STAFF NEWS

Amongst the permanent staff there have been no new faces and no-one has left recently which has helped the stability of the practice no end. Our GP Registrars are usually with us for six months at a time and we have had the benefit of the presence of Dr Anna Gillham since August and those of you who have seen her have been very positive about her capabilities. She leaves us for the next part of her vocational training in February although more importantly we wish her well with the new baby when he/she arrives and trust that all will be happiness and joy. In her place starting in February we have Dr Anna Kirkham who will be in her first six months of general practice training although she has already done some hospital jobs and comes to us as a highly regarded doctor.

We are affiliated to the Sheffield Medical School and look after medical students from there and at present we have two students Katrina Hydon and Fay Meakin who joined us on the 9th January for seven weeks and we hope to be able to educate them in the ways of general practice.

On the horizon, we are in the process of going through advertising as we are increasing our nursing staff numbers. We are looking for a Nurse Prescriber who will be an addition to the nursing staff and will provide much needed help from the clinical front. More will be explained at a later date.

SURVEYS

We are forever being surveyed as part of government targets etc and our next in house target in February will be for us to sit down as a practice and discuss survey results. There is however as you will no doubt have read in the press the annual government survey on general practices coming your way which seeks to find your views about your local general practice. As well as the government survey asking you about your recent experiences with the practice there are surveys on how we refer patients through Choose & Book. When we refer a patient to what we call secondary care i.e. the hospital, we give you a choice of hospitals which you may attend etc. Please remember that we have done this when you are responding to a survey request. Choose & Book is a system when it works where we can do a direct referral on the computer screen whilst you are attending the appointment with the doctor. When it works it is an excellent facility but unfortunately can be frustrating when we get into the system and it doesn't work. One of these days it will work perfectly but when who knows.

SUGGESTION BOX

We are keen to hear your suggestions about the running of the practice and would be happy for you to use the suggestion box which is sited under the television screen next to the information leaflets. We would quite like people to make suggestions on a regular basis rather than wait for the annual practice survey to happen. Unfortunately some of the problems regarding the building are outside our control. We do regularly ask the PCT for things but our requests regularly seem to be forgotten/lost (if anyone from the PCT is reading this, please note). Having said that communication is all important so please feel free to make comments.

PRACTICE WEBSITE

The website is now definitely going to happen and is in the process of being prepared. We will provide more information obviously when the website goes live. It will provide detailed information about the practice, will be regularly kept up to date and will include on-line repeat prescription ordering. We look forward to letting you know sooner rather than later.

APPOINTMENTS

Whilst there is always pressure on appointments for both doctors and nurses it continues to be a nuisance when people do not attend their appointment and cannot be bothered to contact the practice to say they are not attending the appointment. In December 68 doctor's appointments were unattended and 80 nurse appointments were unattended. It is obviously extremely important that any appointment that you are unable to attend be cancelled with the practice. The practice does continue to expand with its number of patients and as already said we are about to increase clinical staff numbers but we know from experience that appointments will always be filled. We do feel justified in asking people who frequently do not attend appointments to leave the practice. Let us hope we do not have to resort to that reality too often.

WINTER AILMENTS

You will have noted in the media the problems encountered with the Norovirus causing sickness and diarrhoea, treatment for this type of problem is to rest and to take small amounts of fluid frequently so that urine output is maintained. This type of virus is usually what we call self-limiting i.e. nature will sort it out, rather than medicines. Similarly, seasonal coughs and colds are best treated with Paracetamol, steam inhalations and advice from your Pharmacist. Pharmacists are very skilled at giving simple health advice and health information, do not be afraid to use their expertise. It however goes without saying that if symptoms are prolonged, lasting more than a few days then we at the practice will be able to give advice and treatment as necessary. Our nurses in the Minor Illness Clinics are now very experienced at dealing with these types of problems. Generally the doctor's roles in recent times has changed to be dealing with more complicated problems taking on more work handed down to us from what in the past would have been the types of problems seen in hospital outpatients. It's an ever changing world!!

And finally, remember during the winter days of January and February that Spring is not too far away by which time I hope my beloved Doncaster Rovers will be top of the table!

Keep smiling,

DR K B SYKES