

THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS DECEMBER 2009

At a time of great excitement, happiness and joy for many but also a time of sadness and loneliness for others, as a practice we wish you all well for a happy Christmas. As a New Year and indeed decade dawns we all tend to make resolutions usually related to being fitter and dieting to take those excess pounds away. More about that later.

STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to say we have two new staff members one for reception and one mainly for administration. Liz Crawford recently moved here from Scotland and she used to work in out-patients at a hospital in Dunfermline. Danielle Badman in her previous work was an auditor and has been an air hostess. I will write more about them in a later newsletter but we welcome them to the team hoping that they enjoy their training with us so that they can provide as good as possible a service for you our patients.

The doctors remain the same team as when I last wrote, it is just that we are three months older and hopefully three months wiser – you can be the judge of that!

CHRISTMAS OPENING

As I am sure you will have all realised Christmas Day is on a Friday this year which means we will be shut from 6.00 pm Thursday 24th of December until 8.00 am on Tuesday 29th of December. For medical emergencies ring 761172 for the Out-of-Hours Service which will be in full action. It should be remembered that the Doncaster 8 am to 8 pm Health Centre is open over Christmas as well. This can be accessed by phoning 01302 645544. Both the Out-of-Hours Service and the 8 to 8 Centre are staffed by fully qualified GPs but please remember this service should be used in emergencies only.

I should add that we will be closed on New Year's Day the 1st January 2010 as well as the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of January, reopening at 8.00 am on Monday 4th January 2010. I should also add that pharmacy services do continue at many sites across the town over Christmas and that pharmacists are a very valuable source of health advice and can treat many health problems accordingly.

SWINE FLU VACCINATIONS

We are and have been for several weeks now giving vaccinations to people for both the seasonal flu and swine flu. The current targets are for people aged 6 months and older, ie children and adults who have the standard chronic diseases which make them vulnerable to infections. These include chronic lung, heart, kidney and neurological diseases as well as diabetes and people who have what we call immunosuppression such as treatment for cancers etc. Also currently pregnant ladies should be vaccinated. Our staff have given up very many hours in contacting people to have the swine flu vaccination but if you feel that you are one of the patients who should be having the swine flu vaccination, then please contact the surgery. It was very unfortunate that our allocation of swine flu vaccines appeared after we had done two main sessions of ordinary flu vaccinations. All the doctors have been vaccinated against swine flu. We have noticed reluctance of patients to have the vaccine but the World Health Organisation figures show that the side-effects are no different to the seasonal flu vaccine, although a reasonable number of patients have had sore arms. I strongly believe that a sore arm is a small price to pay against an illness which can easily be life threatening or even fatal for an unfortunate few.

COMMUNICATIONS/PHONE NUMBERS

One thing that has come to light in trying to contact so many people is the fact that our data for people's phone numbers is very much out of date. It would be very helpful if you could let us know if your phone number has changed in recent times and if you think we may have the wrong phone number for you, then please give us an update. It is always important to notify us about any change of address and included in that should be your contact phone number, so please don't hesitate to let us know. We do have forms regarding this at reception but for instance if you are requesting a repeat prescription, you could let us have your up to date phone number when using that service either by answer phone, personally or via the internet.

WORK SYSTEMS

As I am sure you are all well aware, we do a lot of administration work behind the scenes as well as seeing patients for consultations. This is the way of the world as our systems have to be in place for your health and safety. Obviously the clinical staff have to keep up to date with medical innovations and I myself have recently been on a two day course in London at what is called British Medical Journal Master Class to update GPs on current and new innovations. Similarly, Dr. Hassan recently went to Manchester and all the doctors attend courses from time to time.

We recently had our annual "inspection" by the PCT which is a thorough examination of both our clinical and administration processes. This always provides us with suggestions on how things can be done better and is all designed to help us look after you the patient so that we can give you the best advice possible regarding your health. More recently we have been selected as a practice to look at ways of improving bringing services to our patient populations in the community rather than for ever referring problems to the hospital. This all takes time and takes up doctors' time but we are, in these times when both money and resources are less available, still hoping to improve the services for you our patients. Over the next few months we hope to be able to explain more about initiatives that will be of benefit to us all and I promise to keep you posted.

HEALTHY WEIGHT SOLUTION

Earlier I muttered about New Year resolutions. We have leaflets available on how to access services for solving weight problems. It is set up by the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Doncaster Infirmary and looks at patients with a body mass index of 25 or more. Please discuss this with your doctor or your nurse at the practice or ask at reception for the appropriate healthy weight solutions leaflet. There is a free phone number 0800 9176264 which will provide more information. Whilst health professionals can refer, patients can refer themselves as well with the appropriate form.

SUGGESTION BOX

If you feel you can help us with advice/comments or suggestions for improvements within the practice, then please please make use of our suggestion box or indeed write us a letter and hand it in.

FINALLY

I think the football season has turned the corner with three Rovers victories in a row and a reasonably fit squad. My Christmas will be spent searching for another two wins down in Coventry and at home to Leicester. It is a great life if you don't weaken!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

DR K B SYKES