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NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS

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Imagine your correspondent sat enjoying Saturday afternoon's sunshine in his back garden thinking of his patients always. Yes that's me dictating another saga for hopefully your interest. The sun is blazing so I have got the factor 20 out which is a far cry from the cooking oil I used to use back in 1978. Yesterday evening's barbeque was tremendous and we all survived it. Yes, it's health and safety again, don't forget your sun tan lotion and don't forget to cook your barbeques properly..... it's that time of year and hopefully it may last for three or four months. However don't use too much water on the back garden because I am reliably informed by my exercise-keen eldest son that the reservoirs up around Ladybower are half empty. I bet there is a hosepipe ban before long not that my hosepipe is working this year. Since March a few things have happened.

STAFF

We are delighted to welcome our new Secretary, Sharon Bell who assures me she has enjoyed her first few weeks with us and her bright morning smile doesn't seem to wear off during the day. She comes to us having worked in the Police Force and also as a personal assistant to the chairman of one of the trusts in Grimbsy. We wish her a warm welcome and hope that she has a long and happy career with us.

Welcome back to Dr Anna Kirkman who likes working here so much that she has come back for a second stint. Ouch! I have just stubbed my toe, which is another health and safety issue, when you are walking around dictating a letter in the garden wear something on your feet and look where you are walking. As I was saying welcome back to Anna, she is back from maternity leave. She is still learning the GP trade but I can vouch for the fact she is an excellent doctor and wherever she settles in general practice she will provide wonderful service to her patients. Unfortunately we only have her until August when she moves to Stainforth to work with my namesake but not relative Dr Rachel Sykes.

We have a further two medical students working with us at the present time, Alex Brown and Duy Nguyen who are with us to learn all about general practice, its traditions and its future.

Bev Cunningham who was District Nurse and is now one of our Practice Nurses wishes to thank all those who expressed their gratitude for her work while she was in the district for their cards and kind comments.

DNA (1) = DID NOT ATTEND

Life is full of financial cutbacks at the moment and as a practice we are under pressure to reduce our hospital referrals if at all possible. I was very interested to read that Doncaster & Bassetlaw Hospital Trust had 40,000 patient slots wasted last year and the average cost to the Trust of a wasted appointment is £55. It is therefore incredibly important that you let the hospital service know if you are unable to attend. We are however well aware that patients do cancel appointments and that cancellation gets lost in the hospital system, we usually send out letters if we are aware somebody has not attended, if you do get one of those letters please let us know if you have cancelled the appointment rather than just missed it. The hospital has now started texting people regarding appointment reminders for gynaecology outpatients and they call it a call-reminder service. I was surprised the average cost was so low at £55 considering the hospital charges at least £125 for a new appointment and £65 for a follow-up appointment.

DNA (2)

DNA in the vernacular stands for did not attend, we issue a warning letter if there have been two did not attends by a patient in recent times. I had two DNA's on Friday morning, to be honest it's a pain in the neck and a waste of my time. We now have a dedicated text number for you to text if you are unable to make an appointment and cannot contact the surgery by phone. This is particularly important for those attending on a Wednesday evening and Saturday morning but can be used by anyone, please do not use this phone number for any other reason but just to cancel an appointment, we will not be able to reply to a text or speak to you in person. The text number is 07521665649, obviously we need your name in the text and if possible information as to your address and time and day of appointment. Thank you for your cooperation with this.

Again for communication we really do need to have your mobile phone number and consent to use that mobile phone number for ease of contact. Many people have already given us permission to do this and we will only need to do this if we need to contact you. We would not use it for any other reason.

MINOR ILLNESSES

Both our Practice Nurses and local pharmacists can give good advice and will actually treat minor illnesses for you. There is even a new initiative called the Pharmacy Minor Ailments Clinic which in our area involves the Weldricks pharmacy on Sandringham Road, Thorne Road and The Parade on Church Street in Armthorpe. This latest initiative involves the Pharmacist giving consultations about a host of "minor" illnesses such as acne, acute low back pain, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, ear wax, hayfever, head lice, heartburn, impetigo, mouth ulcers, scabies, sore throat, sweat rashes, threadworm etc. Certainly this is an avenue of help that you can use and I understand that you don't need an appointment to do so however the service may depend on whether the usual Pharmacist is there on the day.

Prescriptions: sorry to hammer on about this but there is a lot of waste medication. Please only tick the boxes on your repeat prescription that you actually want that particular month, this especially applies to painkillers, creams etc. If you are no longer taking your medication then please let us know.

RACE FOR LIFE

Four members of our reception and office staff, Paula, Pauline, Lorraine and Caroline are taking part in this major fund-raising event on June 27th, all proceeds raised go to Cancer Research which is obviously a subject close to everyone's heart and if you feel you wish to sponsor them then please say hello at reception, I am sure they would very much appreciate your help.

As some of you may know I am involved in the Rotary organisation which has a motto of service above self, our club Doncaster St Georges is involved in two major events both on the same weekend which I think will be fun to attend or have a look at or even take part in, proceeds always go to local charities. On Saturday July 24th there is dragon boat racing at Lakeside and on the following day at the School for the Deaf on Town Moor entrance we have our classic car show, keep an eye out for the publicity or let me know if you want more information.

Finally the baby bluetits are trilling in the nesting box and diligent parents are feeding them well, the resident magpie has finally shut up and I am going to settle down to prepare some in-house education for the next week. Who says we never work at weekends?

Cheerio for now

DR K B SYKES

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