

THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2011

Hi everybody, I am sitting here composing this Newsletter listening to the drone of industrial grass mowers and am aware that we are seeing more of you with hayfever. So, summer must be just about here.

So what has been happening here at the practice?

STAFF CHANGES

Dr Love did retire from the partnership on 31st March, but he has not disappeared completely. He is working with us for 3 sessions a week, purely doing clinical work and I must say accordingly he appears much refreshed and is enjoying his semi-retirement status. As a result Dr Sykes' name is at the top of the name board as Senior Partner.

Dr Davinder Singh, who has been with us for the last year as a GP Registrar has successfully completed all his exams and he is joining a practice in Sheffield which is closer to his home and family. He leaves us at the end of July and we thank him for all his hard work, enthusiasm and skill and hope that he will enjoy his future position as a fully fledged GP. We will be taking on a new GP Registrar at the start of August.

EXTENDED HOURS SERVICE

Many of you will know that in the last couple of years we have been able to provide late evening opening on a Wednesday evening and a surgery service on alternate Saturday mornings. Unfortunately the funding for what we call extended hours has been markedly reduced and so our main focus is on late evenings on Wednesdays. There will no longer be Saturday morning surgeries available. We will be increasing the number of doctors available on a Wednesday evening and do aim to use these appointments for people who cannot get in during the daytime. These changes will be made at the start of July and will be reviewed at the financial year end in conjunction with Doncaster Health at the end of March 2012.

YOUR MEDICINES

We are under increasing pressure both nationally and locally to reduce our prescribing costs. We are fully aware that we must not compromise the quality of the medications that are prescribed. We do however have to search for the most cost effective medications available for each individual condition. Whilst we have been working on this over the last few years we will still be, from time to time, looking at individual areas of prescribing, such as medications in pain relief, dyspepsia, depression etc etc. We find many examples where a medication for the same illness may cost £20 but there is just as good a medication available that costs £2. I know full well that if I am shopping in a supermarket that the £2 option will be purchased rather than £20, as long as it is as good as the dearer option.

One of the ways in which you can all help is by ensuring that you order only the medications that you need, so please ensure when you are requesting repeat prescriptions that you tick only the boxes that are relevant to that particular month. Once the medication is handed out by the Pharmacist it cannot be reused because of legal rulings. If you think there are items on your repeat prescription that you no longer need then please let us know so we can cross them off. Every bit will help in reducing expenditure.

HEALTH SUGGESTIONS

It is summertime and people like to relax in the sunshine, go away on holidays and enjoy barbeques if the weather is ever good enough etc etc. At the risk of being seen as a little bit of a killjoy and also teaching grandma how to suck eggs, as the old phrase used to go, may I make the following suggestions:-

- In the sun, wear a decent hat which shades your face, we have an increasing number of people being referred for sun damaged skin as well as skin cancers. Use a high factor sunscreen and try not to spend too long out in the sun without these types of protection.
- Salads - I am sure most of you will be aware of the E.coli outbreak in Germany, although it hasn't been decided where the problem lies. It is common sense to ensure that all salad material is washed before use and of course that individuals maintain strict hygiene by ensuring their own hands are washed. This way cross contamination can be reduced.
- Barbeques - please ensure that the meats are cooked properly without necessarily being burnt to a cinder. We do get outbreaks of food poisoning in the summer.
- Holidays abroad - enjoy them, they are usually great fun but please do make sure you have adequate insurance. We regularly see people who have either had to cancel a trip abroad or been taken ill overseas where their insurance company has refused to pay out because the insurance company says they have not been given the full health details of that particular person.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE NHS

Doncaster has its health consortium up and running. Of course, the Prime Minister has announced changes to the original plans and we await to see what will happen there. We are having to do a lot of behind the scenes work which involves meetings, research etc etc. We are told we must reduce our number of referrals into the secondary care and we have been given a raft of conditions which we can no longer refer without prior permission from Doncaster Health. These are mainly cosmetic based but do include conditions in ear, nose and throat, varicose vein surgery and other treatments where there is no proof that those treatments actually work. We as a practice are asked to discuss our referral rates to the hospital and this may mean in the future that when you have seen an individual doctor, that doctor may say that the potential referral will have to be discussed by the partners in the practice before it takes place. We will of course monitor how things go on in this area and assure you all that where it is clinically felt absolutely necessary, then referrals will still take place.

Finally, on a personal basis, my health has not been on top form recently and thank you to those of you who have expressed concern for my wellbeing. My general outlook is very good, and I would just say that having sampled various departments at Doncaster Royal Infirmary over the recent years I really do think that we are very lucky in the facilities that we have available in Doncaster, and long may that continue.

All the best for the summer.

DR K B SYKES