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# THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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## NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS FEBRUARY 2009

Hi folks.....

When I last wrote a newsletter in November we were about to enter the dim recesses of winter. Hopefully we have now weathered the snows and with the days ever lighter we can look forward to the spring. Although Christmas was a long time ago many thanks to those who sent cards and best wishes to us here at the practice and a very belated happy new year to you all.

Life is an adventure as my eldest son is finding out on his holiday in the Antarctic. His ship ran aground due to high winds in a desolate bay but the Argentine, Spanish and Chilean navies all combined together with the holiday company to safeguard the situation and transferred everyone safely to another ship. The reaction to this within the family and our friends was somewhat interesting in that it divided into broadly the men thinking this was likely to add to the adventure and the women far more concerned about the passenger's wellbeing. Perhaps this is the way of life with our thought processes. However the combination of people coming to the rescue shows that teamwork is essential. Here at the practice we pride ourselves here on teamwork through thick and thin, we are all endeavouring to make the "patient experience" as good as it can be. We recently discussed the results of the autumn 2008 patient survey and generally speaking the results were good but as always there is room for improvement. We must be doing something right as our numbers of patients continue to rise and this provides its own challenges. There is a suggestions box in the waiting room and we would like that to be used all the year round so if you do have comments about the practice please use the suggestion box or indeed write in to us with your thoughts.

### **MEDICAL STAFF**

February is a time of change of staff in the hospital and the GP world. Dr Craig Gordon has completed his GP training with us and applied for three jobs, got them all and has chosen an excellent practice in the Nuneaton area. He has been an absolute credit to himself and to the practice and interestingly he is joining a practice where the senior partner Dr Roger Gadsby was in the same year as myself at Birmingham University Medical School. We are sure Craig will do excellently and wish him well for the future.

Dr Aqsa Saeed has joined us for a six month spell in her GP training and has been with us for a couple of weeks now and has already enthused the practice with her bright and bubbly personality. We look forward to enjoying her company for the next six months and hope you the patients find her an excellent doctor.

### **BABY CLINIC DOCTOR**

Dr Kerry Strachan has now given up her work with Doncaster PCT which was becoming all time-consuming. This has freed her time up to give an extra session here at the practice. She has recently taken over the running of the Thursday afternoon baby clinic from the doctor point of view. This has given Dr Sykes a well earned rest after 28 years involved in that particular clinic. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time "playing" with the babies, doing their early assessments. Some of you of course were babies and are now parents with your own children during that 28 year timespan. I felt however it was time to concentrate what energies I have got left into other areas and so Dr Strachan has kindly taken over the clinic.

## **PRESCRIPTIONS**

1. Dr Love who is in charge of our IT is very keen that as many patients as possible use the internet system for repeat prescriptions. It is quite simple to do but you would need to come to reception and ask for a password for the sake of security, at the same time bringing some form of identification such as a passport, driving licence with photograph or utility bill. Many people have commented how simple it is to use the system but you will still need to allow two working days for your repeat prescriptions to be authorised and ready.
2. Please, please, please continue to allow two full working days for your repeat prescriptions. This is necessary even if you ring up on the answer machine at midnight on a Saturday because the process for us won't start until the Monday. Also please would you ensure that you are organised to order your prescriptions slightly in advance. There are increasing numbers of people asking for prescriptions to be done urgently when a little bit of thought could have saved the angst of expecting an urgent prescription. As duty doctor on busy days we are getting fed-up with demands for urgent prescriptions because people have run out of items - inexplicably or otherwise!!

## **TRAVELLING**

Thoughts if the credit crunch allows, may be turning towards holidays. When you are booking your holiday it is always wise to check whether you need any travel vaccines or malaria prevention medication. Generally speaking in mainland Europe such as Italy, Germany, Spain, France there is no need for any particular vaccinations. Your holiday company usually gives advice "but" we do have travel questionnaires and feel free to make an appointment with our nursing staff at the practice to discuss your travel arrangements as to whether you need any precautionary vaccinations. Occasionally we have people returning from overseas with malaria which can be a fatal illness and we have also known problems with typhoid.

Travel insurance, again when booking your holiday arrangements overseas it is essential that you take out travel insurance. We had a couple of incidents in the last year or so where unfortunately patients have not given full medical details to their travel company and when they have been taken ill abroad they have then had to pay for the return journey and ambulance flight and also the hospital care in the country they have been to because the insurance company has refused to pay out due to lack of medical details. However we have had one person recently who has been covered by his insurance which certainly made a big difference to his wallet.

## **INVESTIGATIONS**

When you have blood tests taken obviously you want to know your results. Generally speaking, if there was any abnormality that we wish to discuss with you we would contact you or make arrangements for follow-up. However if you do want to know that your results are normal please allow five working days or one whole week if you include weekends, before you ring for your results. While some results come back down our computer lab link almost straightaway i.e. within one to two days, other tests take longer. Reception staff may give you the all clear with normal results but then another result might come back a bit later which requires attention, so please give the full week before contacting us about your results.

Finally, general fitness..... again now that winter is coming to a close we would urge you to not only follow a healthy diet but also to ensure that you get exercise. Simple walks of two or three miles may sound hard work to start with but once you have done it a few times becomes very straight forward. Swimming at present from what I understand has free entry for the over 60's and under 16 if you contact the council for passes. I have heard these advertised on Trax FM but also in the council newspaper which gets delivered to us. Another good exercise is cycling but in general just ensuring that you get a good brisk walk every day will stand you in good stead regarding your health in years to come. You don't have to be a footballer to become fit and I must say in general the Rovers have been pretty fit in recent weeks even though the gaffer says we were a yard short of pace against Swansea on Saturday.

**Cheers for now**

**DR K B SYKES**