

THE SANDRINGHAM SENTINEL

December 2014

Welcome to the latest Sandringham Practice newsletter! Bringing you all the relevant news about what is happening at the surgery.



Welcome back!

This month will see the return of Dr Auckloo having completed her maternity leave. It has been lovely having Dr Sykes and Dr Mazai covering her sessions but it will be great to have Dr Auckloo back on board!

Have we got your correct details on record?



PLEASE ensure we have your up to date contact details. Many of you will be aware that we are increasingly using text message as a means of communication, and as a reminder service for appointments. It will only work though if we have your correct number!

On-line booking...

Online booking is now up and running and over the next few months we will be looking to increase the number of appointments available to be booked this way. This is a fantastic, easy way of avoiding having to phone or queue for an appointment BUT you will need to register first (please ask for further details).



Prescriptions

Please remember that it takes 48 hrs from dropping a request for medications in, to the script being printed and signed. This also applies for requests for medications not on repeat.



Remember there are several really easy ways to order your repeat prescription: in person, by post, on line, by telephone, and via repeat dispensing (please ask your local pharmacist for more details).

Have an appointment? USE IT!! DON'T WASTE IT!

PLEASE remember to attend your appointment, and if you are unable to attend please be kind enough to cancel it rather than just not turn up. Did you know a shocking **167 patients failed to attend their appointments in November alone?** Access is one of the biggest grumbles about most GP surgeries. Just think if those 167 appointments had been made available to other people? Appointments are precious and shouldn't be wasted and if you can't make it, cancelling enables someone else to make use of that slot (by phone, text or by our text reminder system). The practice has a policy of asking patients to leave the list if they fail to attend appointments on 3 occasions in a 6 month period.



Sick notes...

It is not always necessary to be *seen* by a doctor if you feel a sick note is required or a further note needed. If you know your note is due to run out soon, please don't wait until the very last day of the note, but contact the surgery a few days beforehand. This way, you can be booked into a telephone appointment slot with a doctor for discussion and a note can be issued if deemed appropriate.

Friends and Family Test...

You may have seen signs around the surgery asking you to complete a very quick survey called the Friends and Family Test. This is a new but ongoing NHS measure of patient satisfaction that has been introduced to all general practice surgeries since the 1st December, having previously been in place in A and E other hospital departments since last year. It consists of a simple question, asking whether patients would recommend the surgery on the basis of their experience of the services used. It helps to highlight good and poor practice to help us improve the quality of care we provide. Forms are available from reception, clinical rooms and from the website and can be completed anonymously and returned to the box in reception.



The Friends & Family Test

Flu season is here...



We are now well into flu season but it's not too late to get your flu vaccine! Our Saturday flu surgeries proved to be a great success and many eligible patients have now been vaccinated for this year. There are still quite a few patients outstanding. **REMEMBER!** You are eligible for a flu vaccine if you fall into one of the following categories:

- 1) You are over 65
- 2) You are pregnant
- 3) You suffer from chronic lung disease (i.e. asthma or COPD), heart or kidney or liver disease
- 4) You suffer from certain neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease
- 5) You suffer with diabetes
- 6) You have problems with your spleen - eg splenectomy or sickle cell disease
- 7) You have a weakened immune system
- 8) You are resident in a long stay care facility
- 9) You are a carer

If you are eligible and do not wish to have your vaccine, please contact the surgery and let us know.

Please note all children aged 2, 3 and 4 on September 1st 2014 are eligible for the flu vaccine. This is delivered by a single nasal spray up each nostril, i.e. NO NEEDLE!

Patient Participation Group...

We will be meeting on Monday 15th December. Richard Langthorp will be contact existing members of the group but we are ALWAYS looking for new members so we can get a true cross section of our patient population. We are particularly looking for young people, those with families and those whose first language is not English. If you are interested in attending, please contact Richard Langthorp. We would love to see you!

Electronic Prescription Service:

Unfortunately, due to matters beyond our control, the roll out of this exciting service has been delayed until February. You can still be nominating your chosen pharmacy in the meantime. Please ask at reception or your local pharmacist for more details. More details on this service will be in the next newsletter.



Christmas and New Year Opening Times:

We will be **open as normal** with the following exceptions:

Thursday 25th December: Closed

Friday 26th December: Closed

Thursday 1st January: Closed

Please note: If you need medical attention during these times, please ring the surgery telephone number and you will be connected through to the Out of Hours Service on 01302 761172.

With the festive season upon us, are you unit aware?

While many of our patients may like to enjoy a tippie at this time of year, it's important not to drink excessively and know your limits.

Current NHS guidance suggests:

Men should not regularly drink more than **3-4 units** of alcohol/day

Women should not regularly drink more than **2-3 units** a day

If you've had a heavy drinking session, avoid alcohol for 48 hours

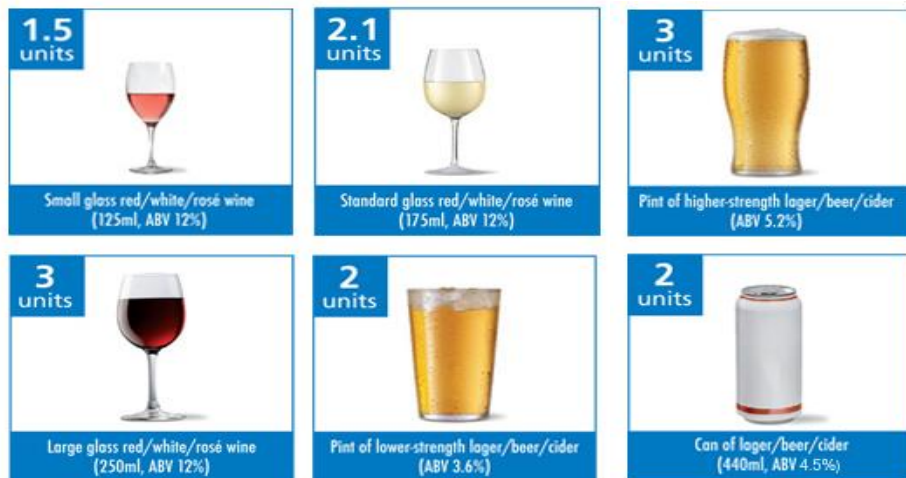
"Regularly" means drinking this amount every day or most days of the week.

So what exactly is a unit?

Units are a simple way of expressing the quantity of pure alcohol in a drink. One unit equals 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol, which is around the amount of alcohol the average adult can process in an hour.

A unit is often less than you think...

Below is a simple guide to the number of units found in most alcoholic drinks:



*Gin, rum, vodka, whisky, tequila, sambuca. Large (35ml) single measures of spirits are 1.4 units.



Suggestions?

If there is something that you feel we can change, or if there is something you would like to see here in the newsletter, LET US KNOW!!! There is a suggestion box in the waiting room. Pop your suggestion in! It can be anonymous if you prefer. If there is something you think we can do better, we would sooner hear about it from you, rather than to let it fester away unaddressed. We want to provide the best service possible and can only do that if we get feedback from you!

Don't forget the website...

www.thesandringhampractice.co.uk

...for everything you need to know about everything we have to offer!

... And while we're talking about websites, the internet can be a minefield when it comes to finding reliable information especially when it comes to matters of health, however here are a some useful, reliable and trustworthy sources of information that are worth having a look at:

www.nhs.uk NHS Choices website offering information from the National Health Service on conditions, treatments, local services and healthy living.

www.patient.co.uk A sound, reputable resource providing information on a wide range of conditions in understandable language.

www.treatyourselfbetter.co.uk A website providing vital information and advice regarding self-treatment of cold and flu symptoms

Until next time, stay healthy and enjoy the festive season! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Dr Vicary