

Selsey Medical Practice Newsletter

The latest news and information from your local surgery

Autumn 2019

Welcome to our Autumn edition! We have news of recent events and some great information for self-help and improving the service we offer. If you have suggestions for future topics, we welcome your comments.



Repeat Prescription wastage

We hope you will forgive us for a little moan on our front page! When we visit patients at home we are often confronted by large stocks of unused medication which has been accumulated through the repeat prescription route.

Unwanted medication can be returned for disposal but it cannot be re-dispensed so each unused item represents waste, and a considerable cost to the NHS. Sometimes these are “PRN” items, which means they are to be taken as and when required (these might include some creams, inhalers or painkillers). Other items may have been prescribed for a condition that is no longer a problem.



Some of our patients also tell us that unrequested items seem to arrive with their repeat medication and they feel powerless to stop it. The Pharmacists and our GPs are working together to stop this terrible waste. Please let us and the Pharmacist know if this is happening to you, or if you no longer require a particular item, so that your repeat prescription can be adjusted accordingly. Your annual medication review is an excellent opportunity to do this (see page 2).

Training Practice news

We are very proud to be a training practice for GPs. You may have noticed that some of our surgeries are run by younger (!) doctors or you may have been asked to allow another doctor to observe your consultation with a GP or practice nurse. Currently Dr Lacey and Dr Parrish are our GP trainers but when Dr Lacey retires (see back page) we hope that Dr Ford, who is also a qualified trainer, will take on that role. Trainee doctors may attend the practice at various stages of their training career. They are all qualified doctors and will have worked in hospital departments prior to joining us and they are fully supervised during their work in the practice. The experience and the tutorials and teaching sessions are valuable and many trainees will eventually become GPs themselves.



Training brings benefits to the Practice as well; there are more appointments available to patients, the trainees often have excellent knowledge of up-to-date secondary care treatment, and once they have qualified, we have also been very lucky to retain some talented staff to join our own team; including Dr Claros, Dr Sewrey and Dr Roopra, who all trained with us.

Some of you will remember Dr Nazar Ahmed who recently left us - we are pleased to inform you that he has just passed his final GP exams.

Our current trainee is Dr Katie Conway and Dr Rachel Collville will be joining us in December.

We hope you will continue to support us in this important and rewarding aspect of our work.

Patient Participation Group



We are very grateful for the continuing support of the Patient Group. Several of the topics in our newsletter have been suggested by members and they also organised our excellent evening talk (next page).

The Group is hoping to expand its membership numbers so, if you fancy joining them, please speak to Reception at the surgery. They meet about 5 times a year so it's certainly not an onerous task!

Friends of Selsey Medical Centre



We have a very active Friends of Selsey Medical Centre organisation who seek to enhance our facilities by providing extra equipment which is above and beyond that provided by the NHS.

Recently we have benefited from oxygen SATS monitors, ECG rhythm pads and the blood pressure/BMI machine in the waiting room. We are very grateful for all the Friends do for us and our Patients.

Online Access and Passwords

Services Available

GP online services allow you to access a range of services via your computer, mobile or tablet. Once you have signed up, you will be able to:

- book or cancel appointments online
- renew or order repeat prescriptions online
- view parts of your GP record, including information about medication, allergies, vaccinations, previous illnesses and test results



You can still contact the practice by phone or in person, this is just another option, which other patients have found is more convenient and saves them time. More information including "how to" leaflets and videos of patients and why they are using GP online services are available at www.nhs.uk/gponlineservices

How to sign-up

For more information, please contact reception or next time you visit the surgery, bring with you a piece of photo ID (passport, driving licence) and something with your address on like a bank statement but not a gas or electric bill. If you don't have these, please talk to us and we will help you sign-up.

Lost your password?

You can change your password in Reception if you come in with some identification (as above).

Medication review

The Medication that you order from your list of repeats must be reviewed by a GP or another clinician at least once a year. This may be done opportunistically during a normal GP appointment (so please mention it if your doctor doesn't) but if this is not the case a medication review appointment needs to be made by you before the review date expires. This review date can be found on the right side of your computer generated prescription. If your prescriptions are managed electronically this printout should be given to you with your bag of medication when it is dispensed.

We are trying to align your medication review date and any annual long-term condition review appointments with the month of your birth, which we hope will be easier to remember. Most medication reviews can be done over the phone. You can contact the surgery to make an appointment or use the online service.

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Some medications require measurements and blood tests. If you are unsure, please ask if you need to book any of these when you phone to make your appointment. For all people on blood pressure medication - please have to hand an average of recent measurements from your home blood pressure machine or use the waiting room machine in advance of your appointment.

Patient group Evening Talk

Upper Gastrointestinal Conditions



25 people attended an incredibly informative evening on Thursday 25th September given by upper gastrointestinal surgeon Mr Will Hawkins, who is a consultant at St. Richards Hospital.

They learnt about reflux and ways that this can be managed, including the options for surgery for the most severe cases, not responding to medication. Mr Hawkins carries out operations regularly to try to help alleviate the symptoms of reflux. He went on to inform the audience about the different types of hiatus hernia he sees, and what can be done to rectify them. The presentation was followed by a very useful, interactive Q&A session. Mr Hawkins gave some salient advice (summarised below) relating to self-management of GORD - Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease.

Lifestyle Changes to help treat GORD



If you were unable to attend and wish to find out what you missed we have uploaded Mr Hawkins' PowerPoint presentation to the practice website; follow the link under "Events" on our main page. Here you can find information and links to previous talks as well.

We love putting on these evening talks, they are really very educational and we would encourage you to come along to our next one – This will be in March. We have yet to firm up the arrangements but patients feeding back through the Patient Group have asked us to consider include: Pain management, Cardiology and Colonoscopy.

Look out for details of the next event - published early next year.

If you are interested in the events and activities organised by the Patient Group or the Friends of Selsey Medical Centre, there is a notice board just inside the entrance to the building. You can also ask at reception for details.



Mental Health Special

Dr Gowan's Tips for a Healthy Mind



Many of us experience difficult times and finding ways to achieve good mental health in our busy lives is sometimes challenging.

Dr Gowan has collated some excellent advice and produced this guide for patients. These sensible tips can help all of us to become more healthy.

Top
Tips!

Tip 1

Prioritise sleep: 7/8 hours is ideal for most people. Try and keep a regular bedtime. Try not to drink caffeine after 12pm, don't exercise too close to your sleep time and avoid digital devices for 2 hours before bedtime. If you are suffering from depression and anxiety, this can impact on your sleep and lack of sleep can drag down your mood. If you are suffering with insomnia read the patient information article at www.patient.co.uk on insomnia. Also consider getting the [Sleepio app](#).

Tip 2

Prioritise your diet: Eating a diet rich in fruit, vegetables, healthy grains (for example Oats, whole rye, buckwheat, Quinoa, millet, spelt, bulgur and barley) and not too much refined carbohydrates, saturated fats, red meat or processed foods is beneficial for your general health. A recent study showed that a Mediterranean diet can improve mood. No one is sure of the exact mechanism but it may be that eating the those healthy food gives your body more of the substrate to produce serotonin which is needed to make you happy. Read www.patient.co.uk on Mediterranean diet for more information. Drinking more than the recommended amount of alcohol is harmful to your health in many ways but can also depress the mood. You should aim to drink less than 14 units a week and ideally give your body a few days off every week.

Tip 3

Prioritise your health: Exercise has many benefits to both your physical and mental wellbeing. It can help with mood as it produces endorphins which increase a sense of well-being and happiness. Even if you have never exercised before in your life you can do something. Start with something that you think you can do at least 5 days a week for at least a few minutes, for example an exercise DVD or a brisk walk. If you can, then build it up so you are doing 20-30 minutes a day most days of the week. Remember you need to do something you can afford to do and will keep at. There are lots of video's on line or apps for work outs including those for just 4 minute workouts. When you have progressed a bit further look at Jillian Michaels or Joe Wicks for examples of 15-30 minute workouts or Google "[best fitness video's free for getting in shape](#)". Spending time in nature has been found to help with low mood, so if you can combine your regular physical activity with this, you may find doing this even more beneficial. If you can't go out, try searching on line for "[10 minute workouts nhs](#)" or "[Sitting Exercises nhs](#)".

Tip 4

If you are feeling less resilient than normal avoid sad films, news feeds with negative messages or bad news or images. Especially late at night when the images can impact on your sleep.



Tip 5

If you are feeling less resilient avoid social media. Remove Facebook, Instagram etc from your phone/tablets. Most people only post the positive things that are going on in their lives and it can be hard not to feel resentful or compare. This can lead to a downward spiral. Only compare yourself to you yesterday not others today. If you can't let go of your social media, consider temporarily hiding friends from your feed that make you feel bad about yourself.

Tip 6

Read positive books and listen to positive podcasts. The 'My sounds' app has thousands of podcasts on things such as mindfulness, happiness etc.

Tip 7

Consider writing a gratitude journal: This is a diary of things for which one is grateful. No matter how difficult and defeating life can sometimes feel, there is always something to feel grateful for. This focuses your attention on the positive things in your life. Keep it by your bed and get used to the practice of writing down 3-5 items each night for which you are grateful, even if they are as simple as someone holding open the door for you. The journal can also include your thoughts experiences and observations. This can give you a new perspective on what is important to you and what you truly appreciate in your life. By noting what you are grateful for, you can gain clarity on what you want to have more of in your life, and what you can do without. Your gratitude diary is for your eyes only, so you can write anything you feel, without worrying about judgment from others. On days when you feel low, you can read through your gratitude journal to readjust your attitude and remember all the good things in your life.

Tip 8

Mindfulness - is a way of giving your full attention to the present moment. It has been shown to be beneficial in depression and anxiety. You can get books on it, there are apps on it, podcasts on it. Consider using this as a technique to improve your resilience. Apps and websites such as the [Calm](#), [Headspace](#), [Finding Peace in a Frantic World](#), and guided meditations from Tara Brach may be helpful.

Tip 9

Beat Procrastination: When you are feeling less resilient or depressed it can be hard to concentrate and get going with things. It is important to set deadlines and manage your time well. Each task you successfully complete will help you boost your confidence but be realistic about your goals and make sure they are achievable.

Tip 10

Face your fears: Don't avoid the things you find difficult. When people feel low or anxious, they sometimes avoid talking to other people. Some people can lose their confidence in going out, driving or travelling. If this starts to happen, facing up to these situations will help them become easier.

Tip 11

Do something for you every day: It's easy to use all your time on the things you need to do but remember that it's very important to make some space in the day to do things that give you enjoyment (such as cuddling your pet, listening to your favourite music, taking a bath, going for a walk on the beach). Even if you just spend a short time each day doing these things. You may want to join a group in an activity you enjoy or start a new hobby to learn something new.

Tip 12

Consider giving: Giving has been shown to help make people feel good about yourself. Volunteering, or just offering to help someone out, can make you feel better about yourself and less alone.



Further help

If you are feeling really low or anxious and feel you need more help to get better, perhaps medication or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, please do look at our website:

www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk and go to Depression and Anxiety page in the Mental Health section for links to more information or make an appointment with your GP.

Asking the right questions



Getting the best from your GP and Practice

If you are feeling unwell or anxious you might worry that you won't get the best from your appointment with the GP. Here is some good advice to consider before you come, and during your consultation, to help us to help you.

1. There is often at least one GP who has a particular interest or specialism in your condition. If it is not clear from the practice information, ask receptionists or other patients about who to see.
2. Receptionists may ask about your problem to help you access the best treatment. Help them if you can but don't forget it's ok to ask for privacy or to say that you'd rather not if you feel uncomfortable doing so.
3. Ask about on-line booking and how to register for this. It may take the stress out of booking an appointment and there are other useful on-line services as well.
4. Booking a telephone appointment may also be available on request if you don't want to come in.
5. Before the appointment, think about what you want to say and maybe talk it through with a friend or supporter. This could help you to be as clear as possible about what you want from the consultation.
6. Consider bringing a friend or supporter to the appointment. Remember to introduce them and explain how they are related to you.
7. As there are no magazines in waiting rooms now, try taking a 'prop' like a newspaper or book to reduce anxiety while waiting.
8. Take a short bullet point list of your issues and what you are hoping for; share the list with the GP early in the consultation. You can read it out or hand it to them.
9. Most GPs would like to spend longer with patients but because of the system sometimes they can't do this. If there are lots of things you want to talk about, the GP may need to help you with the most important ones and get you to come back to another appointment to cover everything properly. We do sometimes offer double appointments.
10. If, after agreeing on a test or referral, you are waiting a long time to receive the result or an appointment, don't be afraid to go back to the practice to enquire (or telephone us).
11. If you have been diagnosed with a long-term problem, the practice may invite you by phone or letter to a nurse or GP appointment for an annual check-up. The list of conditions eligible for one of these reviews includes:- bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, other psychoses, diabetes, asthma, COPD, epilepsy, heart failure, dementia. These reviews are a great opportunity to develop links with the practice nurse and to discuss problems when you are not so unwell.
12. You could find out what's available to help you to improve your general health. Stop smoking clinics are available. Chichester Wellbeing Service can also be accessed where there are groups for fitness and weight management www.chichester.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk
13. Hopefully supportive relationships with a GP and practice staff can develop over time so that you can work together to improve your health but if the doctor patient relationship is not working positively for you, it may be helpful to try another GP.
14. It's always good to try to resolve issues and the practice manager may be able to help if you have any problems or suggestions.



World Menopause Day

The menopause is a condition that the majority of women experience as part of the natural ageing process. Friday 18 October, was World Menopause Day, which is observed around the globe to raise awareness of the impact menopause can have on women's everyday lives. This information from the NHS and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (first published on the Independent website) explains what you need to know about the condition:

What is the menopause and what causes it?

The menopause is a natural process that occurs when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to conceive naturally. The process takes place when a woman's body goes through a change in hormone levels. During a woman's fertile years, her ability to produce an egg each month is associated with the release of three reproductive hormones (oestradiol, oestrone and oestriol), that are referred to collectively as oestrogen. As women get older, their store of eggs in the ovary decreases and their ability to conceive diminishes. At this time, less oestrogen is produced, causing the body to behave differently.

Menopause can also occur following various medical treatments, including an oophorectomy (the surgical removal of one or both of the ovaries), chemotherapy, radiotherapy and breast cancer treatments.

At what age do women experience the menopause?

The menopause usually occurs among women aged between 45 and 55, with the average age for menopause in the UK being 51.

If a woman under the age of 40 experiences the menopause, this is known as premature menopause, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) states that premature menopause occurs among approximately one in every 100 women. There is no clear cause why some women may experience premature menopause.

What are the symptoms?

While symptoms of the menopause may be exhibited over the course of several months, a woman is said to have experienced the menopause when she has not had a period for 12 months. While not all women who go through the menopause will experience the same symptoms, common symptoms of the process include:

- Hot flushes
- Insomnia
- Vaginal dryness
- Reduced sex drive
- Low mood
- Anxiety
- Night sweats
- Discomfort during sex
- Difficulty concentrating
- Problems with memory

Prior to experiencing the menopause, women may experience an earlier stage called perimenopause.

Those going through the perimenopause may experience similar symptoms to those listed above for up to four or five years.

Menopausal symptoms can last for around four years after a woman has her last period, although some experience symptoms for even longer.

Management

If a woman who is experiencing the menopause is suffering from severe symptoms, then a GP may recommend they undergo hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

HRT can replace oestrogen in the form of tablets, skin patches, gels and implants, which may help to relieve symptoms.

Those going through the menopause may also receive treatment in the form of cognitive behavioural therapy. They may use vaginal oestrogen creams, lubricants or moisturisers if they are experiencing vaginal dryness.

GPs may also recommend patients follow a healthy lifestyle to relieve menopausal symptoms, such as by eating a balanced diet and exercising regularly, if they do not already.

If a woman's menopausal symptoms do not improve, then their GP may refer them to a menopausal specialist for further guidance.

For more information about the menopause and organisations you can contact for information and support, visit the RCOG website

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/menopause---a-life-stage>

Antibiotic Guardianship

Without effective antibiotics many common bacterial infections and routine treatments will become increasingly dangerous as all rely on access to antibiotics that are effective. If antibiotics are not used properly, the different types of bacteria they are designed to destroy, adapt and become resistant. This is a fascinating example of evolution in action but, worryingly, it means we will have fewer and fewer options available to treat infections so we need to act responsibly now or we will start to see more untreatable strains.

To slow resistance we need to cut the unnecessary use of antibiotics. The public, students, educators, farmers, the veterinary and medical communities and professional organisations are all encouraged to become Antibiotic Guardians - looking after this precious health resource.



Most respiratory tract infections (coughs, colds and chest infections) are caused by viruses which are not treatable with antibiotics. They can be distressing for you or your loved one and it may be tempting to insist that your GP prescribes antibiotics. All GPs are doing their best to care for their patients and weigh up the real need for some illnesses to be treated with antibiotics while recommending self care in other situations. While it can feel disappointing if your GP doesn't appear to be "giving you something", their training and experience is helping them to decide the best course of action and this isn't always prescription medication.

If you make an appointment for a respiratory tract infection your GP or nurse may offer self-care advice, for example recommending waiting a few days as most viral infections will be self limiting. In some cases, they may offer a delayed or backup prescription for antibiotics with clear advice about when you should take this to the pharmacy.

Dr Lacey Retirement

After 29 years of dedicated service to the Practice, Patients and Selsey Community, Dr Michael Lacey will be retiring at the end of November.

Mike has been our Senior Partner for several years and he has witnessed many changes during his stewardship of the practice; including a change of premises, becoming a training practice and the merger with Seal Medical Group. Mike qualified in 1980 at St Mary's Hospital, London and as well as his GP duties he also carries out minor operations. He is an accredited GP trainer, a GP appraiser and a specialist in dermatology, holding local clinics for Sussex Community Dermatology Service. He is a keen supporter of the Lifeboat in Selsey and is an Honorary Medical Officer to the RNLI.



Although he is stepping down from his regular work in the practice, Mike anticipates continuing his dermatology and appraising work and is planning to do GP locums. We hope you will join us in thanking him for his hard work and support and wish him a long, fulfilling and enjoyable retirement.

