

Selsey Medical Practice Newsletter

The latest news and information
from your local surgery

Summer 2020

Covid 19 Special Edition

This edition of the newsletter, like many aspects of our normal lives, is dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, but although, sadly, many of us have experienced hardship, illness or loss during this challenging time in our lives, we have also witnessed many examples of positivity, resourcefulness and human kindness.

We are highlighting as many of these as we can in these articles.

We hope you are able to enjoy the summer weather, that you keep safe and well, and that we continue to work together to care for our wonderful community here in Selsey.



Thank You to all of our patients for your Support

On behalf of all the doctors, medical practitioners, reception and administrative staff, we would like to say a big thank you to all of our patients for your support during recent weeks.

As well as receiving lots of really positive feedback and messages, we have enjoyed some delicious cakes and treats, kindly donated by local businesses and individuals, and some beautiful drawings and paintings which we are displaying around the building (some examples on page 5). All of your kindness goes a long way to helping us keep our morale up, and seeing all the signs and rainbows on display around Selsey and hearing the Thursday applause is very moving and most appreciated.

Obviously we have had to adapt the way we have traditionally offered our service - minimising face to face contact where possible, maintaining safe distancing, wearing PPE, isolating some patients and carrying out remote or "drive through" consultations where possible, for example.

All of this has only been possible with your cooperation and understanding and we have been really impressed with your response. We have done our best to communicate any updates to the service through our website, and via texting and emails (please sign up for texting and email communications if you haven't already done so), but even if you have experienced unexpected changes or inconveniences you have all been very understanding.



Your great response (including using self-care resources and reducing the number of appointments requested) and the changes to the way we practise have helped us to provide additional support to our many care home residents and also to reduce the pressure on local hospitals so they are able to concentrate their resources in critical care. We think that we have collectively made a real difference.

As lockdown measures gradually relax, we will try to build on the lessons we have learnt and use our experiences to develop and improve our service so that we all benefit from the sacrifices we have made in the future.

Changes to the Surgery Building

We have made numerous changes to the fabric of the building and if you have visited recently, there are also some changes to the way you access the reception area.

If you have been invited to an appointment you will now find the entrance door is closed when you arrive. We have installed a new buzzer and camera system (to the right of the door); you can press the button and speak to the receptionist when you arrive. They will tell you what to do next and can trigger the door to open for you, if you need to come inside. If you are dropping off a repeat prescription request or a letter and don't need to come inside, there is a post box next to the door which is regularly emptied during the day.



The new buzzer and prescription post box



Inside the building, we have now replaced all carpets in reception with vinyl flooring, so that all clinical areas can be deep cleaned if necessary. This work was partly funded by Friends of Selsey Medical Centre. There are “sneeze” screens for reception staff and we kindly ask you not to lean around these when you speak.

Your doctor or nurse is likely to meet you and escort you to a room when you come for your appointment, so please maintain safe distancing if there is a queue outside.

We have segregated parts of the building to create zones for specific purposes, so you may find yourself visiting a different room to the usual one. All these measures are so we can keep you separated from other patients and minimize any exposure to infection.

As the lockdown measures and social distancing rules are eased, it is likely that we will need to maintain many of these measures because we think the threat of Covid infection will be with us for quite a while. Indeed, we think there have been some positive lessons learnt during this time and we will integrate this good practice into our future care.



The new sneeze screens in reception

Supporting our Local Care Homes



Did you know that we look after over 200 people in care homes here in Selsey? Due to the additional vulnerability of people in a care home setting, and the specialist care that many of them require, they need additional support at this time. Our GP's have responded by participating in a voluntary scheme to provide telephone support to nursing and care homes in Selsey at the weekends. We are one of only 2 GP practices in the Chichester area who are taking part in this initiative.

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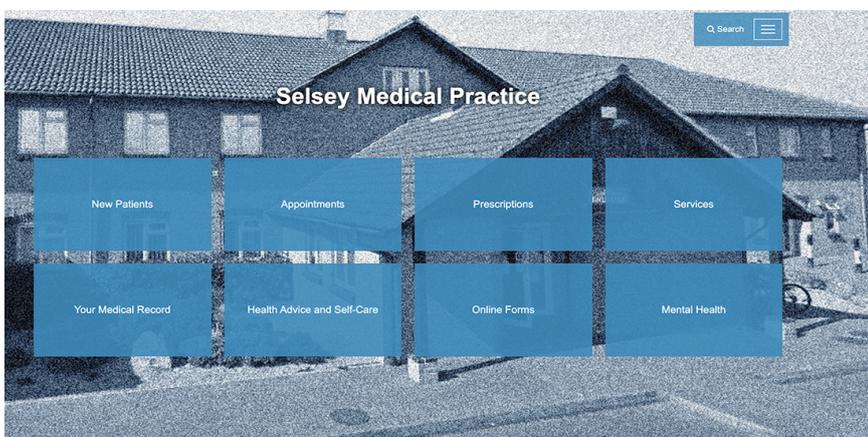
During the weekend each home receive daily calls from the GP, when they can discuss residents that they may be concerned about. The GP is also on call for more serious cases and if a resident requires an intervention, they will coordinate prescriptions, admission to hospital or a visit from an out-of-hours doctor, as appropriate.

New IT Systems

One response to the coronavirus has been an accelerated adoption of new IT systems. Many of these focus on communications and web-based consultation. Telephone triage is taking place every day, and now we have a big team of reception staff and clinicians involved in directing you to the appropriate care every time you call.

The doctors really love our new “AccuRx Chain” SMS system. This is an easy-to-use messaging service that allows practice staff to instantly send text messages to patients from within their electronic notes. It can be used to send advice, notify a patient of results, remind them to book appointments, follow up after a consultation, and much more. Every message is also automatically copied into your medical record.

We have been able to send normal text messages for a while now, but one additional advantage of this new system is that you can now reply to us, and send a photo from your smartphone if you wish, which is saved directly to your record.



Our new look website has links to all of our services

The outbreak of the virus coincided with the launch of our new-look website (we think it was unrelated!). If you have visited the site recently (www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk) you will see links to many of our new services along with new self-help information. We are aiming to move as many of our services and resources as possible onto the website, to improve access to information, become more efficient, and reduce our environmental impact.

Electronic repeat dispensing has also taken off - using this system, your doctor can issue an electronic version of your prescription directly to a pharmacy of your choice. The pharmacist can then prepare the medication so all you have to do is arrange for it to be collected, with no need to visit the surgery.

Our GPs now have access to laptops with special NHS security hardware, allowing them to log in and work remotely when required. A number of our staff have had to self-isolate and this has enabled them to carry on working when they feel well enough.

Who's Zooming Who?

There have been a huge number of communications and updates from NHS England and our local CCG in recent weeks. Because many of our staff have been isolating or work part time, we have been holding daily Zoom meetings between staff in the surgery and those at home, to discuss these and other pressing matters.

We have found these meetings so valuable, we intend to build them into our normal routine in the future.



Staff in the meeting room keeping their distance whilst Zooming!

Finally, we have relocated our administrative staff around the building as part of our distancing measures. A downside is that it is sometimes difficult to find each other in such a large building over two floors. A set of walkie talkies has helped us to keep in touch and pass messages!

Contact your doctor online and get help by the end of the next working day or sooner

GET STARTED



eConsult can be accessed through our website

New System - eConsult

Many of you will have already tried our new online system called eConsult, which is available to all patients who are registered at the practice. This is a fantastic new way to seek help or advice and consult our doctors. There is a wealth of up to date self-care advice so you can find out how to manage a wide range of common conditions yourself. You can also request medical or administrative help by completing a questionnaire.

Once you have entered your name and date of birth, you are guided through a series of questions which elicit, firstly, whether you have a condition requiring an emergency response or not. If you require medical or administrative support your information is collated and forwarded to the practice where a doctor or member of the admin team will respond by the end of the next working day.

Typical administrative requests include requests for prescriptions, letters, results of tests, x-rays and scans.

Advantages

Some advantages of eConsult have become apparent straight away to those who have used it:

- You can provide all your information in your own time without feeling anxious or hurried.
- The system prompts you to answer specific questions which identify or eliminate any possible serious conditions.
- The system presents all your information to the doctor in a structured and orderly way so that when they speak to you, they already know all the relevant facts.
- For certain conditions you can upload a photo.
- All of your information is automatically recorded in your record for future reference.
- You may not need to visit the surgery at all to get what you need.



We think that eConsult is going to become the “go to” route for seeking support, advice and care in the future and we hope that you find it a positive addition to the service we offer. There is a link to eConsult on the main page of our website (www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk).



PPE and Scrubs

One change you may see if you require a face to face consultation is the attire worn by our front line staff. Our doctors routinely wear comfortable and hygienic scrubs which were very kindly sewn for them. They have a couple of pairs each (with washing bags too) and we think they look very professional! We have also been given some fantastic face visors which were made using 3D printers. These were not available through our normal suppliers so we were delighted to receive them.

We have also made up packs of PPE equipment for nurses and doctors making home visits and the rigorous donning and doffing, cleaning routines and procedures associated with face to face appointments are now beginning to feel like normal practice - although even simple tasks now take a long time.

It probably feels a bit alarming to be confronted by a fully gowned, masked and gloved doctor or nurse, but we are sure everyone understands the need for us to take every precaution to maintain your good health and that of the staff involved.

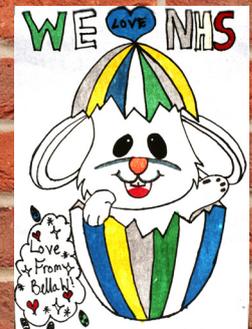


Paintings and drawings



We have been really touched by the wonderful drawings and paintings that have been presented to us during recent weeks. There are some beautiful drawings from local children and we have been displaying these all around the building to brighten up our day and remind us how supportive (and creative!) you are. We also have some talented local artists and when you visit reception and our waiting areas you will be able to see their thought-provoking paintings on permanent display.

By way of thanks, we have reproduced just a few here for you to enjoy.



Medication Reviews

All patients on repeat prescriptions need to have their medication reviewed regularly. The purpose of the review is to check that you are still taking the most appropriate medication for your condition and that your condition is being effectively controlled. It is also a good opportunity to adjust your prescription if required, removing unnecessary items or making changes if you aren't getting on well with the current medicine.



You can find out when you are due for a review by checking the printed prescription sheet that is attached to your medication when you collect it from the pharmacist.

If you are overdue for your medication review you may be contacted by the pharmacy or the surgery, but we hope that you will take responsibility for keeping up to date by calling us before then.

Before your Medication Review

Before your review can be done the doctor requires you to do the following:

- Fill in and submit a "Medication Review Questionnaire" on the Selsey Medical Practice website. Alternatively, you can email or send in a completed electronic/paper version (paper versions can be requested from reception). The practice email address is cwscg.selsey-selsey@nhs.net
- If you are asked to book a blood test as part of your medication review please do so through reception.
- Using the information from the completed questionnaire and any blood test results, the doctor may feel it is safe to do the medication review without you. You can tick the relevant box on the Medication Review Questionnaire if you are happy with this.
- If you do need to discuss your medication please make a telephone appointment, it can be booked at the same time as booking the blood test but please make sure that the appointment is at least four days after the test, so that the results and completed questionnaire are available to the doctor.

We are gradually trying to align these reviews so that they happen during the month of your birthday, which should be easier to remember.

Please contact the surgery (Call reception on **01243 608201**) if you notice that your review is due or if you receive a reminder from our Medicines Management Team.

Please note that without regular monitoring we may consider it unsafe to continue to prescribe your medication.

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Complete your Questionnaire Online

Selsey Medical Practice Home Opening Hours Online Services Our Staff News Contact Us Patient Group

1 Organise your Blood Tests

When you call us, you may be asked to book a routine blood test. The results from this will form part of your review.

Your medication review appointment can be booked at the same time as booking your test but please make sure that this is at least four days after the test, so the results are available to the doctor.

Using the information from the completed questionnaire and any blood test results the doctor may feel it is safe to do the medication review without you. You can tick the relevant box on the Medication Review Questionnaire to indicate that you are happy with this, and you may therefore not need to book an appointment at this time.

2 Complete a Pre-Medication Review Form

We would also like you to complete and return a "Pre-Medication Review Form" before your review.

Remember to tick the relevant box on the Medication Review Questionnaire if you are happy for the doctor to complete the review without speaking to you (they will only do this if they deem it safe to do so).

Click this link to complete the form and submit it electronically. Alternatively, you can collect a paper version from reception. If you have been sent a reminder letter, you should find one enclosed.

The Questionnaire can be accessed through our website, where you can also find out more information:

<https://www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk/medication-review-2>
or follow the link at the bottom of the main web page

Video Consultations

This is an aspect of general practice that we have been considering for a while, but when we were forced to close our doors at the beginning of the shutdown, we had to move fast to implement a system. All of our GP consulting room computers now have webcams and many of you may have already experienced a video consultation through your smartphone. The doctors are now just as often seen with headsets and microphones as they are with stethoscopes and thermometers!



There are, of course, situations when a “face to face” consultation is essential, but patients and doctors both seem to enjoy the personal touch and better interaction provided by a video consultation over a traditional phone call.

Care homes, who are rightly concerned about reducing visitors, have appreciated the out-of-hours weekend cover we are currently providing and the ability to facilitate video consultations between us and their residents is really helping all concerned.



Self Care making a difference

One very positive way in which our patients have really helped us manage demand, has been the increase in the use of self-care services. In the past we have occasionally treated patients for minor conditions which could be managed by themselves, perhaps with some simple advice or an over-the-counter remedy.

Because many are now avoiding coming into the surgery when possible, and using other sources of advice, we have been more available for patients with serious conditions.

We have listed below, a number of useful resources that we encourage you try before resorting to making an appointment for a minor problem.

If we can all work together to make the best use of our valuable NHS resources - even after the threat of Covid-19 has diminished, we will be more able to maintain an excellent service in the future

Recommended Self-Care Resources

- Practice Website www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk
(links to all of our services and to other agencies)
- eConsult <https://selseymedicalpractice.webgp.com> (link on our website)
(Our new on-line system - see page 4)
- NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/>
(NHS online advice - with A-Z of health and medicines)
- Patient UK <https://patient.info/>
(advice on a wide range of conditions with easy search feature)
- Healthshare Oxfordshire <https://healthshareoxfordshire.org.uk/>
(excellent self-help advice for joint pains and problems)
- Selsey Care Shop <https://www.selseycommunityforum.uk/Care-Shop>
(Our brilliant local service for access to community support groups)



Lastly - Please don't forget that your local Pharmacist can give advice for a wide range of common conditions and provide over-the-counter medications and products.

The Positive benefits of losing “lockdown weight”

Many of us have been overdoing the snacking during the lockdown. Boredom, anxiety and easy access to food all contribute to our tendency to overeat, and an increasing number of us are overweight or even obese.

It is well established that there are significant health benefits from even losing 3-5kg of weight. A recent “DiRECT” study found that a 10-15kg reduction can result in remission of type 2 diabetes and weight loss has been shown to reduce heart disease, stroke, sleep apnoea, aches and pains, and some types of cancer.

Highlighting the negative threats isn't always the best psychological approach to making desirable changes, so we thought we would share some purely positive benefits associated with cutting down on the amount we eat. Hopefully, if we concentrate on these, we can all do it together!



The number one way to lose weight is to eat less. You might decide to cut out some types of food, stop snacking, reduce portion sizes or skip a few meals; it doesn't matter too much, as long as you can keep it up. Booze is a big source of calories, so try cutting down, maybe have a dry week and sensible amount at the weekends? It's easier as well if you don't feel you are on your own - team up with a friend or family member and encourage and support each other. Exercise helps, and although it's tough to begin with, you will find it easier and even enjoyable if you take it gently and stick with it, but you can still lose weight without exercising.

Practical help and advice on staying healthy can still be accessed through Chichester District Council and telephone appointments with the Wellbeing Team are still available. Contact them on 01243 521041 or visit their website www.chichester.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk

Thank you to all our wonderful staff.



Finally, the Partners would like to thank all of the wonderful staff who have worked so hard on the front line to keep our practice running during these difficult times. As well as our dedicated doctors, nurses and healthcare team who provide excellent clinical care, there are managers, administrators and secretaries who deal with hundreds of documents, phone calls and tasks every day.

Many of them have been working remotely from home and everyone has had to adapt their normal working practices. Some have volunteered to cover extra sessions and even worked during bank holidays.

Everyone working at the practice has been supportive during these challenging times and we hope to come through this even stronger than we were before.

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