

Selsey Medical Practice Newsletter

The latest news and information
from your local surgery

Summer 2021



What a year! You may have noticed that this is only the second newsletter this year, which is just one small side effect of this huge pandemic. Our lives have been affected in so many ways, but the administrative and clinical teams at the Practice have been working throughout to maintain care for our community here in Selsey (page 2). Support has been great from staff and patients. Our annual patient survey takes place in June (page 2) so please let us know how we are doing and how we can improve.

We are all excited about the positive response from the COVID vaccination centre (pages 4,5) and there now seems to be light at the end of this tunnel. Let's all hope that, within a few more months, all of our lives will return to normal. We have had to modify the way we work and our patients have had to adapt to changes with the appointments system and access to the building. This issue includes details about some of these changes. We are so grateful for everyone's support in this and for the many kind comments we have received. **Thank you!**

Seeking Healthcare

Changes made during the pandemic have increased the number of ways you can access healthcare from the surgery. There are four main ways to seek healthcare advice from your GP practice;

- Visit our website (www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk) and complete a confidential e-Consult form to request advice or treatment. You will receive a response as soon as possible, usually within two working days. **Online forms should not be used for very urgent medical problems.**
- Call the surgery on **01243 608201**, to arrange an appointment. You will usually be assessed by a clinician on the telephone first, with face-to-face care arranged if clinically needed. If you have a preference about how to access care you can discuss it with us.
- For urgent issues or out of hours, you can also phone the NHS on 111 or go online to seek NHS advice by using their website; www.111.nhs.uk
- Download the NHS App (on our website home page) to order repeat prescriptions and get health advice.

Diabetes Special - Find out about this increasingly common disease- pages 6-7



Patient Group - Annual Patient Survey

This year our annual Patient Survey runs for the whole month of June, providing an opportunity for consulting closely with the local community, identifying what YOU particularly value about our Practice and also where more thought might be given to improvements which could be made to enhance services further.

You'll find our volunteers outside the Practice at key times handing out flyers giving the link to this year's Survey so that you can complete it on-line. If you already subscribe to the Practice newsletter and other communications then you will be sent a link to the Survey.

Additionally, for those who don't have access to the internet, there will be paper copies available for you to complete and return at both the Care Shop in the High Street and at Selsey Library in School Lane. Completed forms can be returned to these same two venues or deposited in the white box outside the Practice.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to complete our Survey so that the Selsey Patient Group and Selsey Medical Practice have a clear view of what our joint discussions should focus on this coming year. It is only through your honest and constructive feedback that both organisations can work together to bring change and improvement where possible.

Bob Arnold, Chair, Selsey Patient Group

If you would like to join the group or find out more about their role, you can visit their page on our website www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk/patient-group



During the pandemic many businesses and services were forced to close but Selsey Medical Practice, just like all other GP practices, has remained open. Of course, we have provided face-to-face consultations wherever it is safe and prudent to do so, but through hard work and a lot of staff initiative and by the fast roll-out of new technology, we have been able to maintain a comprehensive service to our patients by utilising other effective and safe ways as well.

In order to meet the medical needs of the community we serve, all possible measures have been taken to ensure that patients get the best service during this pandemic, whilst protecting them and our staff from harm. As well as running a full diary of patient appointments and dealing with letters, referrals and prescriptions, the admin staff have also been making COVID vaccination bookings and many clinical and admin team members have been supporting the vaccination centre during their time off. If anything, the practice is busier than ever.

A recent BMA article reports that the false narrative in the media, that general practice is not open to patients is 'extremely damaging' at a time when practice managers, GPs and their teams are 'reaching breaking point'. GP committee chair Dr Richard Vautrey made the comments in response to the latest GP data, which shows 14.7 million appointments were delivered by GPs in March – 4.8 million more than in February and higher than for March 2020 (12.8 million) and March 2019 (13.6 million). Dr Vautrey said the figures, (published 29 April), 'categorically' prove wrong the accusations that GPs are not seeing patients and instead underline the 'intense workload pressures' staff are facing. This increase in appointments is certainly the case in Selsey.

Each GP and nurse has a full list of patients every day; some patients are initially contacted by phone (having perhaps completed an e-Consult form, or being given an appointment). Once the clinician has taken a history, they will either recommend treatment, ask for more information (perhaps offering a video consultation), or they may ask the patient to attend the surgery for an examination or for tests. The goal is to limit face-to-face contact (for obvious reasons), but should it be necessary, patients are still seen in the building (in a COVID-safe way).

There have unfortunately been a few ill-informed and unkind comments on social media, and because of the limited number of visitors and the outdoor queuing system at the medical centre, it may look a bit deserted or quiet at times. We can assure you that we have a full and very busy team of clinicians and admin staff working flat-out inside though, and they do get upset when they read what some people have said.

We want to assure our patients that although we have been working slightly differently, we have never been closed and we continue to remain open for business for patients who need us

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If you have any feedback that you think could help us to do better, we welcome your suggestions and also respond promptly to any complaints. There are links on our website for contacting us, or you can write to us at the practice.

Spotlight on - The Menopause

Dr Gowan is our lead GP for the menopause. Despite being something all women will experience, the menopause and peri-menopause are not understood by everyone.

Davina McCall has recently been getting media coverage following her new Channel 4 documentary “Sex, Myths and the menopause” (12th May 2021, available on All4). Fellow GP’s have reported that they have noted an increase in Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) consultations as a result, so I decided that perhaps it was worth a watch! As the menopause lead for the surgery, none of the facts or subjects discussed were a surprise to me apart from the fact that only 1 in 10 women take HRT. I knew that relatively few people take HRT but didn’t realise the number was so low. I think that sadly, embarrassment or the shame of the menopause, the fear of side effects, or inducing cancer through treatment, or other misinformation play their part. Women tend to battle on “as the symptoms aren’t too bad”, and it is almost a badge of honour to some that they got through the menopause without HRT.



The other thing that made me sad was that the documentary implied that many GP’s are clueless when seeing women who are going through the menopause. I know that all of our GP’s at Selsey Medical Practice are very happy to discuss the menopause/HRT or even alternatives to HRT, if HRT is not appropriate. I hope anyone needing our help can feel confident of the care they receive and the advice we give. The main problem we encounter is the long-standing issue of supply problems of HRT (especially the patches!) Sadly, that is still out of our control.

So, a few facts:

- The **peri-menopause** is the first stage of the menopause and can last months or for more than a decade. It occurs during the lead up to menopause, which is the cessation of fertility and periods around the average age of 51.
- The peri-menopause usually starts during your mid 40s but 1 in 100 people will experience a premature menopause before the age of 40.
- During the peri-menopause hormones can fluctuate wildly. There are a multitude of symptoms one can attribute to the peri-menopause...to name but a few: Feeling hot and hot flushes, night sweats, body odour changes, anxiety and or depression, irritability or mood swings, sleep changes, problems with memory and concentration, brain fog, dizziness, fatigue, breast tenderness, formication (the feeling of bugs crawling on your arms and legs) and itchy skin, increase in allergies, hair changes (thinning on the head and increase in hair elsewhere), headaches, incontinence, palpitations, loss of libido, pins and needles, aching joints, vaginal dryness, weakened fingernails and weight gain.
- There are things a GP can suggest to help alleviate symptoms (lifestyle advice) as well as medications.

Please do come and seek some support and help if you feel your symptoms may be due to the peri-menopause or the menopause and let’s see if Selsey Medical Practice can have more than 1 in 10 women taking HRT!

Dr A Gowan

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. If you would like to find out more, or would like to join or make a contribution please visit their page on our website; www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk/friends-of-selsey-medical-centre Membership is down again this year. If you have not renewed your membership please do so. We have emailed renewal notices out where we had an email address. Can you check your spam folder if you have not received a renewal request from us.

If you are not a member please consider joining, it’s £4.00 per person per year. All monies raised are used in suppling equipment that improves the patient experience when visiting the surgery.

David Webber, Friends of Selsey Medical Centre



Selsey Vaccination Centre



On the 15th of January the first dose of Pfizer vaccine was administered at the Selsey Centre. This marked the beginning of a 5 month concerted effort to vaccinate the most vulnerable members of our community.

When it became clear, back in November 2020 that a nationwide vaccination programme was being devised and we heard news of the first vaccines being approved, the GPs at Selsey Medical Practice joined others from the ChAMP practices in the Chichester area to come up with a plan to serve our local population.

It was looking like the only site proposed for our patients would be in Brighton, which clearly represented some real challenges. At the time there was no possibility of running a central site from a large building like Westgate, so it was decided to run two local sites; Selsey and Tangmere. The Selsey Centre was quickly identified as a great place to run clinics for patients on the peninsula and from the very beginning, the staff at the centre were fantastically accommodating.

Setting up the Centre

A team of volunteers assembled all the pods and arranged the furniture, and a wireless network and computers were installed by NHS technicians. A huge number of supplies arrived along with a special fridge and a freezer for the vaccine. Full resuscitation facilities needed to be provided so lots of equipment was kindly loaned from the practice and individual doctors. Behind the scenes, our clinical and admin teams had to undergo intensive training and many recently-retired clinicians were recruited to bolster the numbers who could vaccinate. A call went out to ask for volunteer marshalls and there were so many that we had to eventually restrict



the list! An online duty rota was set up and even now, we find all the shifts being taken up within a few minutes - such is the dedication and enthusiasm of our wonderful marshalls, administrators and clinicians!

Booking everyone in!

Bookings were always going to be a challenge, as we were not able to access the national service, but a resourceful group from our local support service rose to the challenge and despite some initial problems, their bookings system has meant that we have been able to reach all of our vulnerable patients including the very elderly and those who are housebound or residents of care homes. Every session has been full and we have never wasted a single dose - testament to the organisational skills of the site managers and bookings team!



Reaching our most vulnerable patients



Early in the programme, small teams of roving doctors and nurses visited the care homes and housebound patients throughout the Chichester area. Care home staff and other frontline NHS workers were also vaccinated. We would have liked to vaccinate other groups who were working hard to keep our schools and local services running, but strict rules and accountability meant that we have had to adhere to the numbered cohorts described by the Government. By the time we have completed our work at the centre, we will have given both doses of vaccine to all of our population in groups 1-9, and quite a few others. In total over 33,500 doses of vaccine will have been given in Selsey!

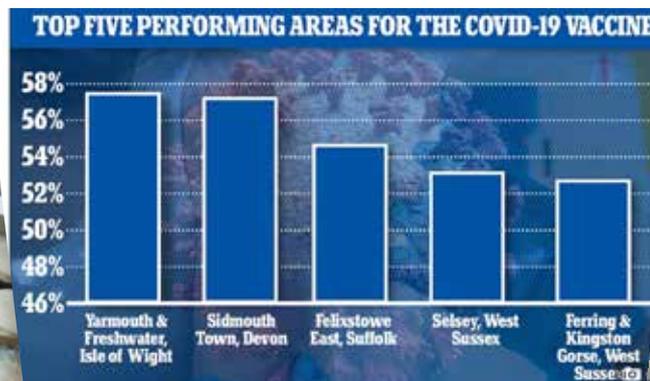
For those who struggled with transport, there was a brilliant response from the community; drivers came forward and local organisations provided minibuses and the organisers coordinated an amazing collection service. Throughout the whole time, the care, ingenuity and resourcefulness of the Selsey community has shone through, and made the whole service run smoothly and effectively.

There has also been a steady supply of home-made cakes and other treats kindly given by grateful patients, to keep the team fuelled up and in good spirits.



In the early (and cold!) days, there were a few queues but nobody had to wait for long and because everyone at the centre has identified improvements and evolved the way we work, we can now vaccinate over 800 people in one day with no waiting! At one point we found ourselves on the online front pages of a couple of national papers because Selsey was 4th in the country for the number of people vaccinated! We have never forgotten our earliest intentions though - to vaccinate as many as possible, safely, and with care and kindness.

All the feedback so far suggests that we have managed to do just that.



...a few memories of the amazing response!



The centre in Selsey will close in early June. Many of the younger age groups have already been vaccinated at one of the national sites and the Westgate Centre is now offering a closer venue than was available when we set up. We feel very proud of what has been achieved. The pandemic is still with us but we are seeing the positive effects of the first wave of vaccinations, and many aspects of life are returning to normal. We hope everyone we were unable to vaccinate gets their dose soon and that we can all begin to enjoy a more normal life once again.

Focus on Diabetes

In Selsey we have a lot of patients with Type 2 diabetes (far more than the national average). In the Practice we are working hard to support our patients in understanding and managing this condition themselves, and where possible, avoiding drugs and putting their diabetes into remission. We have created a diabetes advice page on our website (www.selseymedicalpractice.co.uk/diabetes-advice), which has a lot of information and links to excellent support and information, and we encourage anyone concerned to visit it.

Diabetes is a condition that occurs when your blood glucose (sugar) is too high. Blood glucose comes from breaking down the food you eat, it is your main cellular energy source and acts as fuel for all the processes needed for life. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps glucose get into your cells. If your body cannot make enough Insulin (people with Type 1 diabetes and some with Type 2), or your body cannot use the Insulin effectively (Type 2), your blood glucose will be too high.

Type 2 Diabetes mostly affects people from mid life onwards and is more common than Type 1 Diabetes. If Diabetes is not reversed or managed properly, blood glucose levels remain high and long term serious complications can occur, including:

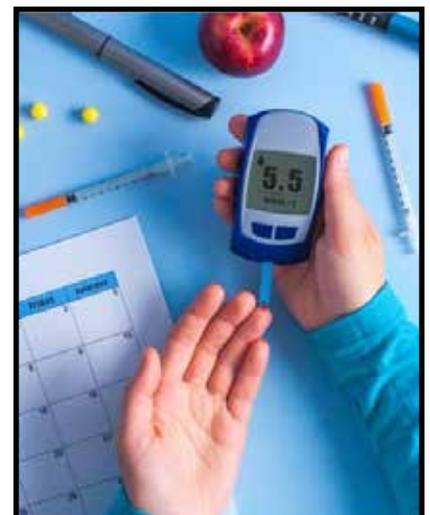
- Nerve damage (neuropathy)
- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- Kidney damage (diabetic nephropathy) or kidney failure
- Damage to the blood vessels of the retina (diabetic retinopathy), potentially leading to blindness
- Clouding of the lens of your eye (cataract)
- Feet problems caused by damaged nerves or poor blood flow that can lead to serious skin infections, ulcerations, and in some severe cases, amputation
- Erectile dysfunction
- Bone and joint problems
- Teeth and gum infections

Type 1 Diabetes Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that causes the insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas to be destroyed, preventing the body from being able to produce insulin. Without treatment blood glucose levels would rise to dangerously high levels.

Type 1 diabetes used to be called juvenile onset diabetes, however, whilst it is commonly diagnosed in children, the condition can develop at any age so this term is no longer used.

Regular blood glucose monitoring and insulin injection are required to manage Type 1 diabetes as the body has lost the ability to produce its own insulin; insulin is injected or can be delivered by other means such as by infusion with an insulin pump.

Most patients with Type 1 diabetes are managed by a hospital specialist, whereas Type 2 diabetes is usually managed in GP surgeries. For this reason we are concentrating on Type 2 in this article.



People with type 1 diabetes commonly need to measure their blood sugar levels and administer insulin accordingly

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disorder that results in the body:

- Being ineffective at using the insulin it has produced (also known as insulin resistance) and/or
- Being unable to produce enough insulin

This leads to high levels of blood glucose which, over time, can damage the organs of the body.

Type 2 diabetes can be treated by a number of different methods, ranging from lifestyle adjustments to tablet medication and injections, through to bariatric (weight loss) surgery for some people.

Lifestyle changes are advised for everyone with Type 2 diabetes; your nurse may recommend medication alongside lifestyle changes if your blood glucose levels can not be brought down by diet and weight loss alone.

The likelihood of developing Type 2 diabetes is strongly influenced by genetics. For example, research shows that; if either parent has Type 2 diabetes, the risk of inheritance of Type 2 diabetes is 15%, and if both parents have Type 2 diabetes, the risk of inheritance is 75%. You are also more at risk if you are of South Asian or African-Caribbean descent. You can't change your genes but there are a number of factors which can increase the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes if you are susceptible. These include:

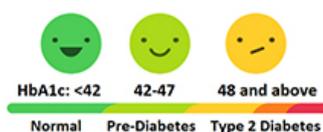
- Being overweight or obese
- Having a waist size of 31.5 inches or more (women) or more than 37 inches (men)
- Eating an unhealthy diet
- Physical inactivity

Remission

It may be possible to put your type 2 diabetes into remission. This is when your blood sugar levels are below the diabetes range and you don't need to take diabetes medication anymore. This could be life-changing. **Type 2 diabetes is mainly put into remission by weight loss.**

Remission is more likely if you lose weight as soon as possible after your diabetes diagnosis. However, we do know of people who have put their diabetes into remission 25 years after diagnosis. If you have obesity, your diabetes is more likely to go into remission if you lose a substantial amount of weight – 15kg (or 2 stone 5lbs) – as quickly and safely as possible following diagnosis.

It's important to know that not everyone who loses this much weight will be able to put their diabetes into remission. But losing 15kg comes with a lot of health benefits, even if it doesn't lead to remission. Research shows that getting support to lose just 5% of your body weight can have huge benefits for your health. Losing extra weight can lead to: fewer medications, better blood sugar levels and a lower risk of complications.



An HbA1c Blood Test is a measurement of the amount of sugar, irreversibly stuck to a part of each red blood cell (the haemoglobin molecule). People with Type 2 diabetes that are able to get their HbA1c below 42 mmol/mol (6%) without taking diabetes medication are said to have put their diabetes into remission.

Treatment

Type 2 diabetes which is not being controlled alone by lifestyle changes can be treated by a number of drugs. If you require medication, the first drug to be tried is usually metformin. The dose will gradually be increased over several weeks to minimize the risk of side effects. If metformin is contraindicated, not tolerated, or not enough to control your blood sugars you may be offered various combinations of other drugs, often in pairs or even three at a time. It is also important that we monitor and treat other risk factors such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. In a lot of patients these are treated as actively as the blood sugars.

Eventually it may become necessary to inject insulin or other hormones, but healthy eating and activity remain important at every stage.

Science continues to discover more about the role of genetics, metabolic health, hormones and nutrition in weight loss. The good news is, that from wherever you start, there will be an area of your life that you can change, which will improve your physical health,



Chichester Wellbeing offers support for individuals looking to make lifestyle changes and improvements to their health and wellbeing - You can contact them by calling **01243 521041** or email; **info@chichesterwellbeing.org.uk**
You can find out details of the services they offer by visiting their website **www.chichester.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk** There is a brief outline of some of their support below.

Emotional Wellbeing - Trained advisors available for 1:1 support by telephone (in-person once restrictions on face-to-face lifted).

Adult Weight Management - Small group courses led by a trained nutritionist lasting 12 weeks (September start date). Individual 1:1 support available outside of course dates or for those who prefer individual support. Support is offered for adults with a BMI of 25-40.

Alcohol Reduction Service - Specialist alcohol advisor working 1:1 with non-dependent 'risky' drinkers for 6-8 sessions.

Smoking Cessation - Trained advisors are available to offer 12 weeks of support and nicotine reduction.

Physical Activity - Variety of offerings for adults including: effective walking, beginner's running, outdoor gym and more at locations around the district.

Falls Prevention - 24 week course led by a Postural Stability Instructor. For those who have had a fall or are at risk of falling.

Men's Health - Pilot project planned for September 2021. 8 week programme focussed on a variety of aspects of men's health including nutrition, physical activity and emotional wellbeing.

Prediabetes - Group Workshop and optional 1:1 support for those that need it.

Home Energy - Home Energy Advisor for those on low income and at risk of fuel poverty (those who have to choose whether to heat or eat)

Family Wellbeing - Delivered by family wellbeing advisors, aimed at families with children above a healthy weight.

Cook and Eat - Access to video library for individuals and families with limited or no cookery

HeartSmart Walks - Programme of walks ranging from gentle 1 mile walks for beginners to 10 mile hikes across Chichester district. Can be booked at chichester.gov.uk/heartsmart

Workplace Wellbeing - Workplace Health programme delivered virtually or in workplace covering a variety of wellbeing topics as well as 1:1 support.



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