



BRIDGES MEDICAL PRACTICE

Issue 2

Newsletter Spring 2019

Well the light nights are upon us. It has been a long hard winter here at the practice. We would like to thank all of the staff who have continued to work very hard and ensure that we can deliver a quality service to our patients.

Spring is upon us

For most the warm weather, the smell of cut grass and blossoms are tell-tale signs that winter has passed, but this time of year can also be a problem for others with Hay Fever



Hay Fever symptoms vary in severity and may be worse some years depending on the weather conditions and pollen count. The time of year your symptoms start will depend on the types of pollen you are allergic to.. If you have asthma, your asthma symptoms may be worse when you have hay fever.

However, Most cases of hay fever can be treated using over – the – counter medication. Your local pharmacist can advise you on treatments for you or your children. So when should we seek treatment from a GP? You usually only need to see your GP if:

- You can't control your symptoms with over- the -counter medications, or you have troublesome side effects caused by the medication.
- You're experiencing persistent complications of hay fever, such as worsening of asthma or repeated episodes of sinusitis.
- The pattern of your symptoms is unusual, such as occurring during the winter or only at your workplace (it's likely that another substance other than pollen is responsible, and further testing will be needed to confirm this).

DNA's

We still experiencing a large amount of appointments wasted by people who do not attend appointments they have booked. In April 2019 there were over 130 appointments, equivalent to 21 hours of the doctors time wasted. These could have been used by others in order to reduce the waiting times at present please therefore cancel any appointment you are unable to attend.

Online Access – Have you registered for online access to your records, make appointments, order medication and see parts of your medical records at the touch of a button. Ask reception for further details.

Improved Staff Training

As you are all probably aware GP services are under greater pressure than ever before. Many patients are unaware that they can get help from alternative providers. Patients are informed that it is still possible to book an appointment with the doctor of your choice for routine appointments providing you are prepared to wait for the earliest available appointment.

The Practice's Urgent Care System has been designed to direct the patient to the most appropriate care available.

The Care Navigator (the new name for Receptionist) is the first line of contact and will ask you for some information about the reason for the call. This will help the Care Navigator direct you to the best place to get the help that you require. This could be with the community pharmacy, opticians, A&E, Pharmacists or Doctor.

Patients under the age of 12 years old the surgery will ensure we try our best to see them the same day. However, if this is not possible, we will arrange for GP contact by phone to ensure contact is made.

The Care Navigator may log the call for the Urgent Care Doctor to call the patient back and have a telephone consultation. If the Doctor feels that the patient needs to be seen, they can be booked with one of the Healthcare Team.

Patients are reminded that this arrangement is for the treatment of urgent cases and not routine and minor illnesses.

Please remember that the Practice is not an 'Emergency Service' and does not operate a 'walk-in' service.

Patient Participation Group

The aim of this group is for patients and staff to work together to help improve the services that are offered. This group is composed of patients who wish to take a more active interest in their local GP surgery and in developing local health services. We are keen to welcome new members to the group (Male, Female, Teenagers and Young mothers) to engage with all patients and staff. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact the reception for details.

Formation of a PCN

A primary care network (PCN) consists of groups of general practices working together with a range of local providers, including across primary care, community services, social care and the voluntary sector, to offer more personalised, coordinated health and social care to their local populations. Primary care networks will be expected to have a wide-reaching membership.

What are PCNs designed to do? Primary care networks will provide proactive, coordinated care to their local populations, in different ways to match different people's needs, with a strong focus on prevention and personalised care. This means supporting patients to make informed decisions about their own health and care and connecting them to a wide

range of statutory and voluntary services to ensure they can access the care they need the first time.

The network is made up of 12 GP practices including; Bridges Medical Practice, Millennium Medical Practice, Second Street Surgery, Bewick Road Surgery, Central Medical Group, Fell Tower Medical Centre, Fell Cottage Surgery, Wrekenton Medical Group, Rawling Road Practice, Metro Interchange Surgery, Bensham Family Practice and Beacon View Medical Centre. The networks will also have a greater focus on population health and addressing health inequalities in their local area, using data and technology to inform the delivery of population scale care models. Opening the potential for extended opening hours across the network.

Reduction of services we provide

At the Bridges Medical Practice, we offer a variety of services including both GP and Nurse appointments, blood clinics, smear clinics, long term conditions clinics NHS health checks, travel vaccine clinics and dressing clinics. However, due to reduced funding through the NHS, we are having to reduce our acupuncture service delivered by our trained staff but are aiming to cease this eventually.

Our ear irrigation service is also been reduced and this will be available once a month after an assessment by one of our nurses. Before booking an appointment with a nurse please ensure you have spoken to a chemist and tried Otex drops for ten days first.

Students

We are Proud to say that we now facilitate nursing students from Northumbria University and doctors from Newcastle University here at the Bridges Medical Practice to develop the workforce of the future.

You may be asked by the clinician you have an appointment with if you would allow a student to sit in on your consultation. You are under no pressure to allow this; feel free to decline, but it is an important service.

Carers

If you care for someone and you need support, help or guidance this information is only a click away at:

<http://www.gatesheadcarers.com>

GDPR

Following the introduction of GDPR and the new regulations, the practice has had to make some changes. From 1 April 2019 we have been asking patients to provide a password to collect any documents that have patient identifiable data on including prescriptions collected from the surgery, To Whom it May Concern letters, referral letters, sick notes and blood request forms, etc. It is especially important to have a password registered with the practice if a representative collect from the surgery on your behalf. This is to protect the confidentiality of all our patients and their data. If you request any of the above documents, you will be asked to provide a password.

Patient confidentiality has and always will be of utmost importance to us.