

University of Reading Medical Practice

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Newsletter | December 13



Appointment Bookings at the Medical Practice and Staff Changes

I last wrote to you in April about the various techniques we use to try to ensure that patients can both book appointments in advance to their convenience and gain access as and when required on a more urgent basis. It is this last aspect that has been causing more problems than usual this year.

We have however recruited a remarkable number of new patients over the last 8 months and our list size has grown from some 15000 at the end of March to over 18000 currently. We are really pleased that we are seen as such a popular choice for patients and have been taking the necessary actions to ensure that everyone can book an appointment when they want to.

Unfortunately it is not a quick process to bring in new clinicians but we have lots of good news to share with you as our plans come to fruition.

From January:

- Clinical time with a doctor will increase by 9 hours per week
- Clinical time with the nursing team will increase by 20 hours.
- We will provide over 100 minor illness appointments a week during the winter months as these are in such high demand at this time.

We are also looking at ways in which we can ease congestion on the telephone system to ensure that it is easier for patients to contact us via the telephone. If you have ready access to the internet please ask Reception for details of our on line booking system.

Longer term we aim to increase doctor time even more and are currently in the final stages of a recruitment program and hope to be announcing new names to you very soon. To assist with this we will be opening up two new clinical rooms upstairs to enable us to run the additional clinics. These refurbishments will take place in April next year

We have sadly lost two very long serving members of staff recently due to retirement, but wish them a very happy and well-earned rest! Dr Felton leaves us at the end of December having been with the practice for an amazing 35 years. Her friendly and cheerful manner will be much missed by all of us. Polly Goodman our phlebotomist also sadly leaves us in December. Polly started as a Receptionist in May 2000 at the practice but then trained as a phlebotomist and has been a fully-fledged member of the nursing team for the last 10 years

We welcome another Receptionist into the role of phlebotomist as Shaunagh Cleaver steps into Polly's shoes in January. We also welcome Leigh Talman as a Health Care Assistant who will be supporting the nurses in various ways. Leigh joins us in the last week of December.

We thank locums Dr Anna Ziprin, Dr Bethan Jones and Dr Aman Verma for standing in whilst we recruit, together with our longer term locums Dr Nicky Gee and Dr Claire Tong

How to cope with coughs colds and flu this winter



Colds and flu are caused by viruses. There are more than 200 common cold viruses and three types of flu virus with many different strains, so they're hard to avoid.

Prevention is better than cure

You can stop yourself catching flu or spreading it to others by being careful with your hygiene. Always wash your hands regularly with soap and water, as well as:

- regularly cleaning surfaces such as your keyboard, telephone and door handles to get rid of germs
- using tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- putting used tissues in a bin as soon as possible

When and where to seek help

NHS Choices has a very useful section on the management of winter ailments and this symptom checker can be used to gain relevant advice to your situation

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsdirect/pages/symptoms.aspx?sat=DHAScoldandflu>

The Talk before you Walk leaflet explains all of the options available to you when you need help and is accessible on this link

http://www.southreadingccg.nhs.uk/images/publications/PDFs/Talk_Advert_Dec_2013.pdf

In brief your options are as follows:

- Most people recover from colds and flu without needing to see a doctor. A combination of rest, fluids and over the counter remedies will be enough
- Your local pharmacist can advise on over the counter remedies
- Call the Medical Practice during opening hours – consider a telephone appointment as this is generally sufficient in providing the guidance that you require.
- Call NHS 111 when the practice is closed and they will direct you according to you situation.

Please note that Emergency Departments (A&E) and the 999 number should only be called for serious or critical conditions.

If you have flu and are in one of the following groups:

- are 65 or over
- are pregnant
- have a long-term medical condition such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease or a neurological disease
- have a weakened immune system

Please call the practice to arrange a telephone call to speak to a doctor.



Happy New Year

