

# Barnabas Bulletin

Newsletter of the Barnabas Medical Centre

Issue 17, March 2017

## Getting the Best from Your GP

The NHS is currently under great stress and GP practices are not immune to this. Writing in *The Times* on Valentine's Day, West Country GP Dr Mark Porter suggested a number of tips on how to get the most from your GP practice. Here are a few of his points, and some of our own.

1. Do you actually need an appointment? Many minor ailments like thrush, headlice, hayfever, coughs and colds are just as easily treated by a visit to your local pharmacy. They do not normally need a doctor's appointment.
2. When you do need a GP appointment, unless it really is urgent, please try to avoid calling at the busiest times (before 10am, especially on a Monday). But do call if it really is urgent and the receptionist will try to find you an appointment that day.
3. Please ask for a home visit only if you or the person you are calling about really is housebound. We can see several patients in the medical centre in the time it takes to do one house call.
4. If you need a routine, non-urgent appointment, such as for a blood pressure check or a smear test, please plan ahead, book your appointment well in advance and be as flexible as possible over dates. Remember you can book appointments online so you don't need to phone.
5. If you really do need an appointment urgently you should always be able to get one within a day or two – but this may take some negotiation and the appointment may not be with your usual doctor. The first person you need to convince of the urgency is the receptionist. Just saying "its urgent" won't do, so don't be put out if reception ask for more details – they are just trying to prioritise. Please be polite and stay calm – everyone understands you're struggling, but being angry doesn't help. Never request an urgent appointment if it is not as this destroys trust.
6. You can always ask for a practice nurse or GP to phone you back. They can then assess if you really need to come in, or if simple advice on the phone is sufficient.
7. The NHS is your service but it is not free – you are paying for it through your taxes. Like anything you pay for, treat it with respect. If you have an appointment but can't make it (or no longer need it) please phone and cancel. That way it can be offered to someone else.
8. Please request repeat prescriptions in good time and remember it takes two working days before the prescription is ready. Remember too that you can order repeat prescriptions online and you can have the prescription sent electronically direct to the pharmacy of your choice.
9. When you get to see the doctor or nurse, be clear about your problem and explain it clearly. If you think you know the diagnosis by all means say – if you're right this may save time; if you're wrong your worries can be set at rest. Remain polite and don't insist on being right regardless of the professional's opinion.
10. Please wear something appropriate to your consultation. Removing layers of intricate clothing for an examination wastes valuable time.
11. If you have several problems to discuss say what they all are simply at the start of the consultation, then let the doctor or nurse work out which is the priority. If necessary be prepared to come back to discuss those which are less of a priority.
12. Don't be afraid to ask the doctor or nurse to explain something you didn't follow or don't understand. And yes, it is OK to take notes so you have a reminder.
13. Finally, if your doctor prescribes medicine, this is for a reason, so please take it – otherwise we are all wasting our time. And if we don't prescribe anything, respect that too because again it is for a good reason. g

## Pulmonary Rehabilitation

We recently received some excellent and useful feedback on the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service from one of our patients. Below we share the main points as an example of how such rehabilitation services really are able to enhance recovery and improve quality of life.

- The sessions were held for a small group of about 10 patients
- The programme is for six weeks with two sessions a week
- The sessions are well planned, for up to two hours, mixing exercise and talks
- The staff are always encouraging, enthusiastic and helpful
- "CPLD" lung conditions are discussed and explained in detail
- All questions are answered including explanations of blood conditions, x-rays, antibiotics and inhalers; side-effects were explained and discussed, which I found most helpful
- All the exercises are suitable for people of any age
- They gave me the encouragement to exercise more and I have returned to my gym as well as doing "homework"
- I am feeling stronger already due to the exercises
- Who can attend? Anyone with a lung condition which causes breathlessness
- Transport can be provided if required
- How can people participate? Ask your GP for a referral to Pulmonary Rehabilitation

A range of rehabilitation programmes are available locally for patients recovering from lung problems, stroke, heart attack or mental health problems. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and dietetics are also available.

We are always happy to receive feedback on rehabilitation programmes or other services you attend as this helps us to know which ones are going to provide the best and most appropriate help for other patients. g

**BE CLEAR  
ON CANCER**

**If you notice blood in  
your pee, even if it's just  
the once, tell your doctor**

## Prostate Cancer & PSA Testing Should I or shouldn't I have the test?

*By Dr David Knight*

There have been two large clinical studies completed in recent years, one in Europe and one in the USA. The conclusion from both studies on over 200,000 men was that there was **no benefit** in doing routine prostate specific antigen (PSA) screening tests to detect prostate cancer in men who do not have any symptoms. In fact screening may cause increased problems by misdiagnosing some men with possible cancer incorrectly, giving rise to undue stress and unnecessary investigations and possibly treatment.

It has been found that:

- The test is unlikely to prevent you dying from prostate cancer over the next 10-15 years or to help you live longer.
- Raised PSA levels are common, even if you don't have cancer, and lead to additional tests that can be harmful.
- PSA testing will find cancers that may never cause problems. However once they have been detected it is a difficult decision not to treat these cancers. These treatments can have significant side effects such as impotence and urinary incontinence.

So we are now recommending that **men without any symptoms do not have a PSA test**. However if you do have urinary tract symptoms, then you should see your doctor to have these assessed and decisions can be made about how these should be managed and what tests are required. g

## New Display Screens

If you have been in the practice recently you will have noticed that we have two new television screens in the waiting room. These monitors have replaced our old Jayex boards which were used to call patients and to provide information about the practice.

The new colour monitors not only call patients for their appointments, but also have streamed videos and articles about the practice, local services and seasonal topics.

The practice will regularly update the screens to provide relevant information on services at the surgery and the surrounding local areas.

Please enjoy. g

## PPG Corner

*Updates from our Patient Participation Group*

### Priorities

At its last two meetings the PPG has been looking at where it should focus over the next couple of years.

Our overall drive continues to be to work with the Practice to get an OUTSTANDING rating at the next CQC inspection. But what do we need to do to achieve this?

First and foremost, we've decided, we have to grow the PPG. We need more members, but also more active members who are willing and able to volunteer time to do things. The more volunteers, the more we can do.

Our second priority is to help communicate information to you. This year there is a big drive around self-care: what is it, what does it mean, and how can you care for yourself? We're already working with the Practice and with Ealing CCG to put together self-care activities. Watch this space.

Of course there are many other things we can do, and many revolve around engaging with you – so hopefully you'll see more of us during the year. We must also continue to be a "critical friend" to the Practice: representing patient views, helping design and support new facilities, and seeking improvements where these are needed.

There is much to do but we can only do what we have willing volunteers for. So if you'd like to see healthcare improve and you can spare a small amount of time, please join us. No special skills are needed.

Joining is easy: drop me an email or a note, or fill in a membership card which you'll find in the waiting area. Or just come along to our next meeting on 3 April (see below).

*Keith Marshall, PPG Chairman*  
*Email me at [barnabas.ppg@gmail.com](mailto:barnabas.ppg@gmail.com) or leave a note for me with Reception.* g

### Next PPG Meeting

**Monday 3 April**

1800 hrs, St Barnabas Church Hall

As you'll realise from the news, this is a time of great change in the NHS, so we hope to have someone from Ealing CCG at this meeting to update us on all the healthcare plans and initiatives which are happening locally. All Barnabas patients and carers are welcome at the meeting, so do come along. g

## Missed Appointments

We continue to monitor the number of missed appointments. During 2016 there were 1575 appointments for which the patient didn't turn up. That's six appointments a day, every day.

Like all GP practices we are seeing increasing demand and it is often a challenge to find appointments for patients who really need to be seen urgently. Short of having more doctors and nurses, for which we have no funding, there are only limited things we can do to ease the pressures. But those six missed appointments a day would make a huge difference to the appointments log-jam.

So please remember:

**If you no longer need, or can't keep, your appointment please tell us!**  
**A quick call is all it needs!**

## Repeat Prescriptions

Please remember it takes 2 working days from the time you request a repeat prescription to it being ready for collection.

Whether you request your repeat online or in writing, if you are registered for electronic prescriptions your prescription will go direct to your nominated pharmacy and cannot be collected from the Medical Centre. g

## Extended Hours

The Practice offers appointments, with a doctor or nurse, between 0730 and 0830 hrs on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. These are **pre-booked appointments only** and are intended to help those needing to get to work.

The Practice will open early only for patients that have a pre-booked early appointment. We will then open our doors to everyone as usual at 0830 hrs. g

## Minor Ailment?

Remember that you can now receive treatment and medication for many minor ailments from your local pharmacy without the need for a doctor's appointment.

Please ask at Reception for more details. g

# THINK!

## Why A&E?

### **A&E means Accident & Emergency not Anything & Everything!**

#### ***So where should you go when you have a medical problem?***

**Self-Care at Home.** *Hangover; grazed knee; cough; sore throat? Care for it yourself at home.* Minor illnesses, ailments and injuries can be treated with plenty of rest and a well-stocked medicine cabinet that includes painkillers; cold and flu remedies; plasters; a thermometer.

**Pharmacy.** *Diarrhoea; runny nose; painful cough; head lice; headache? See your local pharmacist.* Pharmacists offer a range of health services. As well as dispensing prescriptions and other medicines, your pharmacy can provide confidential expert advice and treatment for a variety of common illnesses and complaints, without having to book a GP appointment.

**GP.** *Back pain; stomach ache; ear pain; vomiting? Blood pressure checks; vaccinations; family planning? Go to your GP.* If you have an illness or injury that won't go away, make an appointment with your GP. They provide a range of services by appointment, and when absolutely essential, can make home visits. If you need to see a GP outside of the surgery's opening hours, call NHS 111.

**Urgent Care or Walk-in Centres.** *Minor injuries; strains; cuts; sprains? Go to your nearest Walk-in Centre or Urgent Care Centre.* These centres provide consultations, guidance and treatment for minor injuries and illnesses, as well as emergency contraception and sexual health advice. Our nearest centres are Northwick Park Hospital UCC (open 24 hours), Chaplin Road, Wembley Walk-in Centre and Alexandra Avenue Walk-in Centre (both open 8am-8pm).

**NHS 111.** *Not well? Unsure? Call 111.* NHS 111 is a free telephone service, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You should call 111 if you urgently need medical help or information, but your situation is not life-threatening. When you dial 111, you will be directed to the right local service to make sure you get fast and effective treatment.

**A&E.** *Chest pain; major injury; choking; blood loss; blacking out. Go to A&E or call 999.* A&E departments treat patients with serious or life-threatening illnesses and injuries, so you should only call 999 or visit A&E when your situation is an emergency.

**Using the most appropriate service will  
save you time and could save lives**

### **Barnabas Medical Centre**

Girton Road  
Northolt, UB5 4SR  
( 020 8864 4437

[www.barnabasmedicalcentre.co.uk](http://www.barnabasmedicalcentre.co.uk)

#### **Surgery Times**

Mon: 0830-1300, 1400-1800  
Tue, Wed, Thu: 0730-1800  
Fri: 0830-1800

\*\*\*

#### **Out of Hours**

For urgent healthcare outside surgery times please call 111

\*\*\*

#### **Repeat Prescriptions**

Repeat prescriptions must be requested in writing or online. They will normally be ready for collection after two working days.

\*\*\*

#### **Doctors**

Dr Mohini Parmar (f)  
Dr David Knight (m)  
Dr Harpreet Kooner (m)  
Dr Harjeet Bhatoa (f)  
Dr Sonya Jey (f)  
Dr Shankar Vijayadeva (m)

#### **Practice Nurses**

Henny Shanta (f)  
Anna Wan (f)  
Purnima Gurung (f)

#### **Pharmacy Assistant & Care Plan Advisor**

Paresh Virji (m)

#### **Health Care Assistant**

Kalyan Goli (m)

#### **Practice Manager**

Matthew Edwards

\*\*\* \*\*

#### **Patient Participation Group**

Chairman: Keith Marshall  
020 8864 7993

[barnabas.ppg@gmail.com](mailto:barnabas.ppg@gmail.com)

*This newsletter is a joint production of  
Barnabas Medical Centre and the  
Barnabas Patient Participation Group.  
© Barnabas Medical Centre, 2017.*

**Need this in large  
print? Please ask at  
Reception**