

# Newsletter January 2016

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## Changes to the Practice Appointment System:

Based on feedback from patients and staff the practice has been looking at sustainable ways to improve the appointment booking system.

**Routine appointments** – These can now be pre-booked weeks in advance. Patients will be offered the next available appointment by reception team. Patients will not be asked to 'call at 8am in the morning' for an appointment that day – appointments will be open for pre-booking for all days.

**Emergency appointments** - Patients who believe they have an urgent problem and need to be assessed on the same day will be given an appointment. This appointment will be for 'one problem only' and patients will be allocated the next available doctor and time slot. Reception team staff will ask the patient the reason for their urgent emergency appointment in order to better inform the doctor or signpost the patient to more appropriate care.

## Common Winter Illnesses:

**Colds** – to ease the symptoms of a cold, drink plenty of fluids and try to rest. Steam inhalation and vapour rubs can also help. Prevent colds from spreading by washing your hands thoroughly, cleaning surfaces regularly and always sneeze and cough into tissues, throwing them away after use.

**Sore throats** – a sore throat is almost always caused by a viral infection, such as a cold. Try not to eat or drink anything that's too hot, as this could further irritate your throat; cool or warm drinks and cool soft foods should go down easier.

**Asthma** – a range of weather-related triggers can set off asthma symptoms, including cold air. Covering your nose and mouth with a warm scarf when you're out can help.

**Norovirus** – this is also known as the winter vomiting bug, although it can cause diarrhoea too. The main thing to do to is drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. You can also take paracetamol for any aches, pains or fever.

**Flu** – if you're 65 or over, have a long-term health condition such as diabetes or kidney disease, flu can be life-threatening, so it's important to seek help early. However, if you're generally fit and healthy, the best treatment is to rest, stay warm and drink plenty of water.

For further information visit [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org) and [www.nhs.uk/staywell](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell)

## Most Common Illnesses Don't Need Antibiotics:

An ear infection may last for 4 days, a sore throat for 1 week, a common cold for 1½ weeks, sinusitis for 2½ weeks and a cough or bronchitis 3 weeks. Your pharmacist can recommend medication to help ease symptoms.

## Make the Right Call:

Most people recover from minor illnesses without needing to see a doctor. A combination of rest, fluids and the right over-the-counter medication will usually get you back on your feet – but there is lots of medical advice close at hand if you are worried or are not getting better.

- Use your local pharmacist. This is a good place to start when you need health advice. The pharmacist can provide over the counter medication for everyday ailments such as coughs and colds as well as pain relief for headache, stomach ache and earache.
- Call NHS 111 when you need help quickly but it's not an emergency. You will be directed to the best service for your needs. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is free to call from landlines or mobile phones. For further information go to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Talk to your GP surgery. The doctors, practice nurses and other members of the team are here to help. Contact Walderslade surgery on 01226 743221.



Visit the health, wellbeing and social care website 'Connect to Barnsley' where you can access a range of information and advice to help you, your family or your friends keep well.

Go to

[www.barnsley.gov.uk/connectto/barnsley](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/connectto/barnsley)

## Have Your Say to Improve Your Healthcare:

The Friends and Family Test (FFT) in GP practices has been running for just over a year and is about giving patients the opportunity to provide quick feedback on their care and treatment experience. Look for the feedback forms in the surgery entrance lobby or complete the text questionnaire via our MJog messaging service or online. It doesn't take long to complete and you don't need to give your details.

## Get Ready for Winter:

Winter conditions can be seriously bad for our health, especially for people aged 65 or over, and people with long term conditions. Help protect yourself and those you care for. The Stay Well This Winter messages are:

**Warm:** Keep your house warm this winter; at least 18°C (65F).

**Immunisations:** Get your flu vaccination (if you are eligible).

**Neighbours:** Keep an eye on elderly neighbours and relatives.

**Timely:** Seek advice from a pharmacist at the first sign of illness.

**Enough:** Pick up repeat prescriptions so you have enough while pharmacies or surgeries are closed.

**Restock:** Make sure you have enough food and medicine in the cupboards.

## DNA (Did Not Attend) Appointments:

There were **6067** doctor, nurse and health care professional appointments booked at the surgery between 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015. Unfortunately **283** patients who booked an appointment did not attend and did not let us know. Please help us and other patients by cancelling your appointment; we can then offer it to someone else who needs it.

Our clinical software system will automatically tell us when a patient fails to attend an appointment, so in future we will be writing to those patients who DNA. The letter will include information about the various ways appointments can be cancelled.