

The Argyle Surgery Newsletter

December 2010

Welcome to our latest newsletter

A reminder for all people over 65 and at risk of flu, you need a yearly flu vaccination. We have been made aware by the Health Protection Unit that four people have been seriously ill in the area and would urge you to come forward for flu vaccination. We shall continue to contact you by telephone to see if you wish to have an appointment.

Staff changes

We have had several changes in staff at the surgery over the last year so we thought we would take this opportunity to update you all. Fond farewells to Anne Boogert and Carolyn Figgett who have been familiar faces in our reception for many years both decided to retire this year and they are greatly missed. Richard Cooper who worked in both the admin office and on reception has moved to Australia and we wish him all the luck in the world.

New Staff

Dr Arjun Dhillon has joined the practice as a partner, he has special interest in infectious diseases and diabetes. Dr Natasha Griffin has joined the practice following her registrar year with us, she is interested in ear, nose and throat and women's health. Dr Emily Lister has joined us as a registrar until August 2011. Dr Georgina Gateshill has joined us as a registrar until February 2011. Catherine McCarthy has become a part of our reception team. Katy Porrett has replaced Richard. Tom Stock, Ashok and Achal have joined the admin team. Kristina Borowicz has sadly decided to step down after 23 years as our practice manager. We welcome Kate Sams as our new Practice Manager. She is your first point of contact should you have any practical concerns.

Telephones

Our telephone system has been updated in order to meet demand. You will have noticed that our new telephone number is 020 8090 1153, though our previous number (020 8601 2500) currently still works as normal. Call queuing enables all calls to be answered in turn. We apologise about some of the inevitable blips that occurred during this change. If you have any particular problems please leave us a note or send us an email (argyle.surgery@nhs.net) and we will look into it.

When calling in for an appointment please be ready to give your name and date of birth as well as when you would like an appointment. Please try to be as brief as possible on the telephone as this allows everyone to be able to get through to us more easily.

To improve telephone access we will be launching 'Patient Partner' in the New Year. This system will allow you to book, check or cancel routine doctor and nurse appointments 24 hours a day without needing to wait for the surgery to open. To use this service you will need a touchtone telephone and we must have your up-to-date telephone numbers. Please check your details are up-to-date with reception, this is vital if you want to use this new system.

Our Website www.argylesurgery.nhs.uk

This should be your first port of call for information about the practice. A limited online appointment service and a full repeat prescription service are available and this has been very well received.

Appointments - How to get what you want

There are many choices for appointments and we try to run an appointment system that responds to the needs of our patients. Normal appointments with the doctor are 10 minutes long and with the nurses they are 15 minutes long. If you have particular needs for example you need a translator or have particularly complex problems to discuss we would ask you to book a double appointment. We do try to accommodate as much as possible in our appointments and would ask you to think about what are the most important things for you to discuss. We release our appointments over time to allow people to book according to their needs - we have freely bookable appointments up to 6 weeks in advance, appointments bookable 2 days in advance and emergency book on day appointments. We cannot guarantee which doctor you will see for the emergency appointments.

For some special appointments we would ask you to speak to reception to ensure you are correctly booked, these include: ECGs, 24 hour BP monitors, Travel Vaccinations and Immunisations, Diabetic clinic, Smears, Coils, Minor surgery - including injections & Wart Clinic.

Vaccinations

We offer a wide range of vaccination services mostly provided by our nursing team.

Routine childhood immunisations are very important. We provide the full UK immunisation schedule. Recently we have restructured this back into a childhood immunisation clinic on Thursday afternoons. By keeping this within a clinic it improves the quality and safety of the service and allows us to ensure that all the required immunisations are in stock. Routine childhood vaccinations are all free of charge.

The Surgery offers a wide range of travel vaccinations as an accredited yellow fever centre. Travel consultations are complex and need a longer appointment which must be booked with reception as a travel consultation. To give you the best advice for your trip please fill in a questionnaire about your intended travels and this needs to be returned before the appointment can be booked. This means we have the immunisations you need in stock. The questionnaire and more information are available at reception and on our website.

Please book your appointment for as early as possible; most vaccines need a minimum of 6 weeks to be effective.

Please note some travel vaccinations are not free on the NHS and there may be a charge for some or all of your injections. Also please note malaria tablets are not available on the NHS and you may need to pay full price for them at the chemist.

For up-to-date prices and more information please see our website www.argylesurgery.nhs.uk Other good sources of information on vaccination include: NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/vaccinations/Pages/Aboutvaccinationhub.aspx> Fit for travel (NHS Scotland): <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>

Patient Participation Group

Why don't you get involved? The Surgery needs your input on issues surrounding the practice and the services we provide. In the changing political landscape your views are needed. We are looking for feedback on issues mentioned in the newsletter - what information you would like on the website, ways to improve access, services you would like us to provide and areas you would like us to improve on. If we don't know we can't fix it! If you are interested in becoming part of our patient participation group please email argyle.surgery@nhs.net.

So don't forget to wrap up warm as this winter is proving to be icy cold.

Season's Greetings and a Happy and Healthy New Year from all at the Argyle Surgery!