



The Argyle Surgery Patient Newsletter Winter 2011

Welcome to our winter newsletter. It has been a busy few months at the surgery and we are keen to keep our patients up to date and involved with the services we provide.

The building work at the Surgery has finally finished and you may have seen our new consultation room, Room 0 which has enabled us to increase our capacity significantly.

Staff changes

We currently have two registrars working with us, Dr Anna Down and Dr Carly Bush. But sadly Tom Stock who was part of our admin team has left us.

Christmas Opening Times

Are as follows:

Friday	23rd December 2011	08:00 - 18:30
Saturday	24th December 2011	Closed
Sunday	25th December 2011	Closed
Monday	26th December 2011	Closed
Tuesday	27th December 2011	Closed
Wednesday	28th December 2011	08:00 - 18:30
Thursday	29th December 2011	08:00 - 18:30
Friday	30th December 2011	08:00 - 18:30
Saturday	31st January 2011	Closed
Sunday	1st January 2012	Closed
Monday	2nd January 2012	Closed

The Surgery will then be open as normal.

For medical advice please contact **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** to talk directly to a nurse, 24-hours a day. When the surgery is closed please call **0300 130 3016** to contact the Out-Of-Hours service.

In an emergency such as chest pain, which requires an ambulance, please call 999.

It is also possible to book appointments 24hrs a day through our automated telephone service and our online appointment system. For further details please visit our website at www.argylesurgery.nhs.uk

Register for our Online Services

In our last newsletter we mentioned that our online appointment system was changing and those already registered to use online appointments would have to go through a simple process to re register with our new service. We have also been encouraging all patients to register with this service as it allows you to book, cancel or check routine appointments 24 hrs a day. If you would like to register for this please speak to reception and they will help you through the process.

Our Online Appointment Service has expanded to now include the option to **order repeat prescriptions online** which will save you having to visit the Surgery to drop off your request. Your request will be sent to the Surgery to be reviewed and issued by a doctor and you will be able to view its progress.

Should you like to take advantage of this service please speak to reception about registering for our online appointment service. For more information please visit our website www.argylesurgery.nhs.uk

Telephone Consultation appointments

We have recently formed a Patient Participation Group from volunteers within the Surgery patient population. We are very excited to hear the concerns and opinions of our patients and something that came out of these discussions was a comment around telephone consultations.

Telephone consultations are an option for patients instead of coming into the Surgery to see a doctor about a concern they may prefer to speak to a doctor or nurse on the telephone for advice. Please ensure your contact details are up to date and the doctor or nurse will call you after their clinic (between 12pm and 3pm or after 5.30pm). Unfortunately we cannot guarantee the exact time of the call.

Chaperones

All patients are entitled to have a qualified chaperone present during a consultation should they so wish. A chaperone is a person who acts as a witness for a patient and a medical practitioner during a medical examination or procedure. All the staff at The Argyle Surgery are trained and able to chaperone during examinations if you would like to have another person present.

If you know that you would like a chaperone present during your consultation then please advise the receptionist when booking your appointment or when checking in. You can also request one at any point during your consultation with the doctor or nurse and the clinician may offer you one if they think it may be appropriate. You are however not obligated to accept the offer of a chaperone if you do not want one or you can ask for a different chaperone if for whatever reason you do not want the person provided.

NHS Health Checks

The NHS Health Check is for adults in England between the ages of 40 and 74. It aims to help you lower your risk of four common but often preventable diseases. It will give you and your GP a clearer picture of your health, and help you take action to reduce your

risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and kidney disease. At an NHS Health Check, you'll be given personalised advice that will help you to maintain or improve your health, and lower your risk of developing these problems.

What will happen at your NHS health check?

There are two parts to NHS Health Checks. First, you will be asked a few simple questions and have a few straightforward health tests. The check will take around 20-30 minutes:

- You'll be asked some simple questions about your family history, and any medication you're taking.
- Your height, weight, sex, ethnicity and age will be recorded.
- Your blood pressure will be taken.
- A simple blood test will check your cholesterol level.
- Your body mass index (BMI) will be calculated. BMI is a measure of whether you're a healthy weight for your height.

As the blood test will need to be sent away for analysis you will not be able to get your results immediately. Once all your information has been looked at you will be contacted by a healthcare professional (who could be your GP or practice nurse) who will give you your results and explain what they mean.

You'll be given advice and support on maintaining good health, and on lifestyle changes that will help you to improve your health. If necessary, you'll be offered treatments that will help: for example, medicine to lower raised blood pressure or lower cholesterol.

If you would like a health check please speak to reception and book an appt with a healthcare assistant or a nurse who will be happy to do this for you. You can also do some of the tests, like the questionnaire height, weight, and blood pressure on the Surgery Pod at the Surgery without needing an appointment.

Missed Appointments

The average GP appointment costs the NHS £25. We would kindly ask that if patients cannot attend their appointments that they contact us and cancel them with as much warning as possible so that they can be made available to others. You can cancel appointments online, with the automated telephone system or by speaking to reception. Missed appointments waste time and money as well as depriving others of the opportunity to see a doctor sooner.

Patient Participation Group

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has volunteered to join our Patient Participation Group. We have now published the report from our initial consultation on our website and are preparing to launch the next round of questionnaires. If anyone is interested in joining the PPG please ask at reception or email us and we would be delighted to include you.

Winter tips for Coughs and Colds

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. These viruses can be spread through droplets that are coughed and sneezed out by an infected person. The viruses can also be transferred on a person's fingers. For example, if you have a cold and you touch your nose or eyes and then touch someone else, you may pass the virus on to them.

The main symptoms of winter bugs are coughing, sneezing, blocked nose, sore throat, headache and a slight temperature. If these are the only symptoms you have, it's unlikely that your GP will be able to do anything.

You may want to visit your local pharmacy, where you can get advice on how to manage the symptoms and buy over-the-counter medicine.

Our doctors suggest: "Try to rest, and try to eat well, avoid stress and keep well hydrated. If you have a fever, you may need extra fluids. You could also take paracetamol and/or ibuprofen to treat fever and pain, or inhale steam with a decongestant eg menthol, in it to help clear a blocked nose."

Children can also be treated using over-the-counter painkillers to ease discomfort and help to bring down a fever. Both paracetamol and ibuprofen are available as a liquid for children and can be given from the age of about three months.

In most cases, antibiotics (which are used to treat bacterial infections) aren't necessary.

Children and colds

There are some benefits, particularly for children, in catching a few coughs and colds. While most bugs will run their course without doing any real harm, there are certain cases when you or your child should see a GP. These include:

- if you or your child has a chronic condition such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease
- if you have a very high temperature and feel ill, for example if you also have an unusually severe headache or abdominal pain
- if your child is vomiting but does not have diarrhoea, or has a rash in addition to the fever
- if your child stops drinking and is unusually lethargic
- if your child's fever doesn't respond to paracetamol or ibuprofen

Babies as well as older and frailer people should get help if they're unwell. All babies under three months with a temperature of more than 38°C (100.4°F) should be urgently assessed by a doctor, as should babies aged three to six months with a temperature higher than 39°C (102.2°F).

This newsletter was written by the clinical team at the surgery.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the newsletter, please email argyle.surgery@nhs.net