

Patient Newsletter



Winter 2017

WHAT'S NEW?

CHANGES TO BOOKING AN APPOINTMENT

To make it easier to speak to your GP and get an appointment, we've introduced a new booking system commencing Monday 4th December. There are three easy steps:

1. Call the practice to book a telephone consultation with a GP – this no longer needs to be at 8.30am
2. One of our reception team will ask you "is this a new problem or an ongoing problem?"
3. The doctor will phone you back to discuss your problem and decide if and when you need to be seen.

Please note: While this new system is being introduced we will be temporarily unable to offer online bookings

You will notice a change in the way a requests to see or speak to a member of the clinical team are managed. Our Reception team will continue to ask if your condition is new or on going and you will be contacted by telephone by the most appropriate team. Our teams consist of Doctors who, on a rota basis, will be looking after either acute, on the day issues, or patients with continuing care needs. These teams have been worked out based on the days that they work to give the best access.

A common bug bear among patients is around reception staff asking questions about the reasons for a patients call when ringing for an appointment. Commonly patients will feel that receptionists are prying into the patients business and that they're not medically qualified so what business is it of theirs? Conversely however patients are also commonly frustrated at appointment availability or wait time for routine appointments.

The two points may seem unrelated but they are linked. It may help if we explain the reasons behind the processes we use and why. As with the majority of practices in the country we are feeling the pressure of demand appointments, and particularly GP appointments. It is a fact that not all requests coming through to the surgery require to be seen by a GP, and nor do we have sufficient GP capacity for them to manage every appointment enquiry.

We do however have a range of clinical staff with different skills who are qualified to deal with a variety of different health matters. We are continuing to develop the skill mix in the practice for example through our recent recruitment of a clinical pharmacist. Ultimately the purpose of a receptionist asking the purpose of the call is to attempt to identify the most suitable staff member or service to support the patient. This helps the patient to be seen at the earliest opportunity and supports appropriate use of available clinical appointments.

Whilst some patients may have a good understanding of what conditions our staff are qualified to see, many patients will not. To be clear, what receptionist are absolutely not attempting to do is to make a clinical assessment or give medical advice and nor are they qualified to do so. They are however trained and given guidance by our clinicians over who or what service is most appropriate for certain conditions.

It is also worth pointing out that in terms of confidentiality all of our staff, both clinical and non-clinical, are bound by the same standards. Staff are expected to understand however that some patients may not wish to disclose personal information for a variety of reasons, and that it is ok, it simply helps when this is possible.

HAVE YOU STILL NOT HAD YOUR FLU JAB?

If you are 65 or over or you have a long-term health condition, flu can be serious. That's why you're eligible for a free flu jab. Please book at Reception.

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Have you visited our website lately? Packed full of lots of information:

<http://www.thestandrewssurgery.co.uk>

STAY HEALTHY THIS WINTER

It may be cold outside, but winter needn't be the unhealthiest time of year for you and your family.

Here are five ways to make sure that, even when your body is telling you to hibernate, you can keep healthy and fit, no matter what the weather's like.

Banish winter tiredness

Many people feel tired and sluggish during winter. This is due to the lack of sunlight, which disrupts our sleep and waking cycles.

Try these tips:

- get outdoors in natural daylight as much as possible
- get a good night's sleep – go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- destress with exercise or meditation – stress has been shown to make you feel tired

Eat more fruit and veg

When it's cold and dark outside, it can be tempting to fill up on unhealthy comfort food. However, it's important to ensure you still have a healthy diet and include five portions of fruit and veg a day.

If you find yourself craving a sugary treat, try a juicy clementine or satsuma instead. Winter vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, swede and turnips can be roasted, mashed or made into soup for a comforting winter meal for the whole family. Explore varieties of fruit and veg that you may not normally eat.

Drink more milk

You are more likely to get a [cold](#) in winter, so make sure your immune system is in tip-top condition.

Milk and dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are great sources of:

- protein
- vitamins A and B12
- calcium, which helps keep our bones strong

Choose semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk – rather than full-fat – and low-fat plain yoghurts.

Try new activities for the family

Don't use the cold winter months as an excuse to stay in and lounge around. Instead, get out with the whole family to try out a new activity – maybe ice skating, or taking a bracing winter walk on the beach or through the park.

Regular exercise helps control your weight, boost your immune system, and is a good way to break the tension that can build if the family is constantly cooped up inside the house.

Have a hearty breakfast

Winter is the perfect season for porridge. Eating a warm bowlful on a cold morning isn't just a delicious way to start your day, it also helps boost your intake of starchy foods and fibre. These foods give you energy and help you feel fuller for longer, stopping the temptation to snack mid-morning. Oats also contain lots of vital vitamins and minerals. Make your porridge with semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk, or water, and don't add sugar or salt. Add a sliced banana, berries or other fruit for extra flavour and to help you hit your [5 A Day](#) target.

Surgery Opening Times

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Sat 23 December | Closed |
| Sun 24 December | Closed |
| Mon 25 December | Closed |
| Tues 26 December | Closed |
| Weds 27 December | 8.30 – 18.30 |
| Thurs 28 December | 8.30 – 18.30 |
| Fri 29 December | 7.30 – 18.30 |
| Sat 30 December | Closed |
| Sun 1 January | Closed |
| Mon 01 January | Closed |
| Tues 02 January and onward | usual opening hours |