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St Margarets NEWS

Spring 2013



Welcome to *St Margarets News* our new look quarterly newsletter. We hope you find it interesting and informative and we welcome any feedback or ideas that you may have for future editions.

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Taking internal bookings for Autumn 2013

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BOOKING APPOINTMENTS

The majority of our appointments are available for booking at 8.30am every day either over the telephone or in person; we also have a limited number of appointments that can be booked up to four weeks in advance. You can use any one of the following numbers to contact the surgery:

Dr Philip Melrose	Tel 0121 706 9796
Dr Catherine Lewis	Tel 0121 706 8479
Dr Peter Love	Tel 0121 706 1515
Dr Anne Love	Tel 0121 706 0307

Please remember that routine appointments with the Doctor are all 10 minutes. Also please try to arrive on time for all appointments with either the Doctor or nurse as it is very frustrating for patients who do arrive on time who have to wait because the Doctor is running late as a result of patients arriving late.

EMAIL

We now have a practice Email address that can be used for your convenience to contact the practice, it is solccg.stmargarets@nhs.net.

If you have an Email address and would be happy for us to contact you via Email where appropriate, please can you let us have it and we will add it to your records.

TEXT MESSAGING

Please ensure we have your up to date mobile telephone number. We are now able to test appointment reminders, recalls and test results where appropriate, and this is proving very useful so if you have a mobile phone and you are happy for us to contact you in this way, please let our receptionists know and we will add this to your records.



PRACTICE WEB SITE

We are in the process of setting up a new website for the practice so please look out for further information displayed at the practice over the next couple of months. We are introducing some additional services via the website and these will include being able to order your prescription on line and also book appointments on line, we feel that this will be of great benefit both to patients and the smooth running of the practice.

The website will hold lots of useful information about our services and staff. Our aim is that the website will grow to hold a wealth of patient information. If you have any suggestions of what information you would find useful, please let us know.

PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

We do not accept requests for repeat medication over the telephone unless you are disabled or housebound, you can however Fax across requests should you need to, the number is: 0121 765 0161, and as mentioned previously we will soon be offering on line prescription ordering. Please allow 24 hours before you collect prescriptions. Please remember there is an ordering and collection service available through Olton Pharmacy and Dovehouse Pharmacy.

BANK HOLIDAY DATES

– PRACTICE CLOSED:

Good Friday, 29th March 2013

Easter Monday 1st April

Monday 6th May

Spring Bank Monday 27th May



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PROTECTED LEARNING DAYS – PRACTICE CLOSED HALF DAY:

Please note the practice will be closed on the following dates as part of the Solihull NHS planned calendar of training events. For GP assistance during the closure please contact the Badger service using the contact details advertised on the telephone system.

Surgery is closed on the following dates from 1:00pm

- **Wednesday 27th February**
- **Tuesday 12th March**
- **Thursday 9th May**
- **Tuesday 11th June**
- **Tuesday 13th August**
- **Tuesday 26th September**
- **Thursday 7th November**
- **Tuesday 10th December**

The surgery will re open at 8.30am the following day as per usual

DON'T BE A DNA!

There were 194 patients who did not attend for their appointments during December, January and February

If you are unable to make your appointment with anyone at the practice please let us know so that we can book someone else in instead of you. Similarly please cancel or re-book any hospital appointments that you cannot attend.

SUMMARY CARE RECORDS

The NHS in England is introducing Summary Care Records to improve the safety and quality of patient care. Because the Summary Care Record is an electronic record it will give healthcare staff faster, easier access to essential information about you, to help provide you with safe treatment when you need care in an emergency or when your GP practice is closed. If you decide to have a Summary Care Record it will contain important information about any medicines you are taking, allergies you suffer from and any bad reactions to medicines that you have had.



- *If you choose to have a Summary Care Record, you do not need to do anything. This will happen automatically. However Healthcare staff will ask your permission every time they look at your Summary Care Record.*
- *If you choose not to have a Summary Care Record, you need to let your GP practice know by filling in and returning an opt-out form, these are available from the practice and also further information can be obtained from the practice.*

Your confidentiality will be protected by law as anyone who works for the NHS is bound to respect confidentiality and keep all information about you secure. You can change your mind at any time, please talk to Reception staff about this and they will be able to help you.



PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Did you know that we have an active Patient Participation Group at the practice? The Patient Participation Group or PPG is the patient's voice within the practice, and anyone is welcome to join us at a meeting or ask for a particular subject or topic to be discussed. All meetings are attended by a doctor and practice staff member for the practice and also the patients. They meet every two or three months and discuss issues that arise regarding the practice, including improvements that can be made or acting on criticism, in order to enhance the services we provide. There is a dedicated notice board in the lobby area of the surgery and we are hoping to start running some small initiatives involving different groups of patients in the near future, the first of these being on Dementia and we welcome both patients and carers so please have a look at the notice board on your way out as there may be something of interest to you.

If you would like to know more or have something to contribute, please speak to one of the Receptionists.

TRAVEL VACCINATIONS

If you are planning to travel abroad this summer, please make sure that you come in to the surgery and fill in a Travel Assessment Form in plenty of time before you travel, 6 to 8 weeks is usually sufficient as most vaccinations take time to take effect. Once you have filled in the assessment form the nurse will decide which vaccinations you need and we will contact you in order to arrange appropriate appointments. Once our website is up and running these assessment forms will be available to access on line.

HAYFEVER

Hay fever is a common allergic condition that affects up to one-in-five people at some point in their life.

Symptoms of hay fever include:

- **sneezing**
- **a runny nose**
- **itchy eyes**

The symptoms of hay fever are caused when a person has an allergic reaction to pollen. There is currently no cure for hay fever but most people are able to relieve symptoms with treatment, at least to a certain extent.

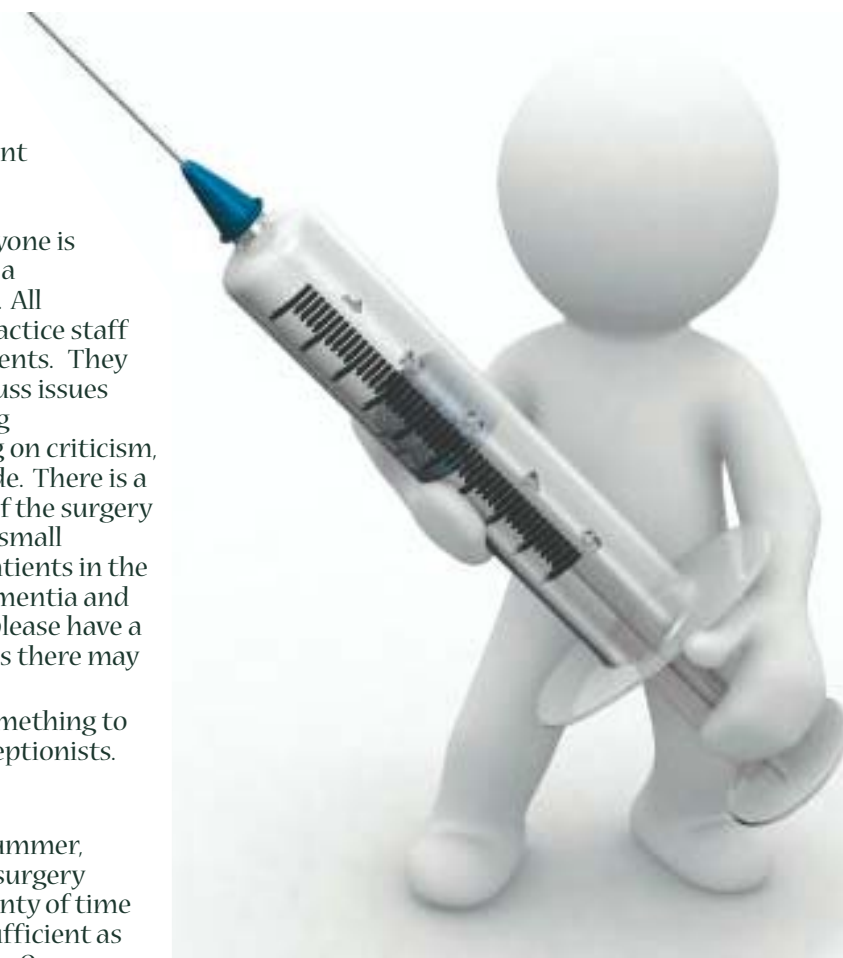
In an ideal world, the most effective way to control hay fever would be to avoid exposure to pollen. However, it's very difficult to avoid pollen, particularly during the summer months when you want to spend more time outdoors.

Treatment options for hay fever include antihistamines, which can help prevent an allergic reaction from happening and corticosteroids (steroids), which help reduce levels of inflammation and swelling.

Many cases of hay fever can be controlled using over-the-counter medication available from your pharmacist. But if your symptoms are more troublesome it's worth speaking to your GP as you may require prescription medication.

More information is available from NHS Choices at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Hay-fever/Pages/Introduction.aspx>



NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Practice Manager – Karen Castle and she is here every day should you need to speak to her.

Office Manager/Secretary – Donna McGowan is here daily should you need to speak to her regarding a referral or other correspondence that has been done for you.

Kelly and Vicki are two new faces that you will see on Reception; they are both doing well and have fitted in to our existing team very nicely.

