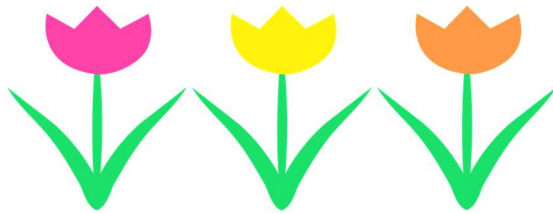

NEWSLETTER



BIRCHWOOD
SURGERY

COLOUR COPY AVAILABLE THROUGH WEBSITE!

ISSUE 6: APRIL-JUNE 2018



Spring Is Here!

At last, we move into warmer weather and say goodbye to the freezing temperatures. We hope you all enjoyed the snow and made some wonderful memories with your loved ones.

As we move into the warmer climate we see an increase of allergy sufferers calling the surgery for advice. Please read on for self-care information that you may find useful.

We have also included some valuable information and resources regarding regional and national cancer campaigns. By including this material we hope to promote awareness to our patients and encourage early recognition of symptoms.

Along with some important notices, this issue we discuss what we have done to help reduce missed appointments, which is one of the biggest problems many health organisations face. We listened to our patients and realised that they were struggling to get through on the phone to speak to our team to cancel or re-arrange their appointments; therefore we introduced new ways for patients to cancel their appointments. Read on to find out how we got on.

We have also supplied information regarding Electronic Prescribing Services. A service provided through NHS England to reduce paper waste and save time for patients, GP practices and pharmacies.

We hope you enjoy our latest addition, and the warmer spring weather!!

Congratulations!

To Dr Whelan who will be going on maternity leave from the 6th April. I am sure you will all join us in wishing her the best of luck!

Welcome

We are happy to welcome Locum Dr Louise Plumtree, and Dr Rachel Clarke, who will be covering Dr Whelan's maternity leave. Dr Clarke will be joining us on Wednesday 18th April and will work all day on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Dr Plumtree joined us in March and will be working all day on Tuesdays.

We would also like to give a big welcome to Nurse Shirley Arnopp. Shirley joined our nursing team at the beginning of February and already feels part of the Birchwood family. She works on Monday and Friday, 8.30am – 5.00pm.

Lunch time closure

Since Monday 19th February we now close our surgery between 12.30pm and 1.30pm for lunch.

Our phone lines are also closed during this time for non-urgent enquiries. However if you need a home visit or require urgent medical advice, our emergency desk is still manned during this time. Just call our surgery and follow the instructions.

*Should you require any emergency medical attention during this time please call **999***

Birchwood Team

Doctors

Dr C A Brooks – Senior Partner

Dr R J O Graham – Partner

Dr F R Raymond – Partner

Dr C R Ali – Partner

Dr C Whelan – Partner

Dr S Setty – Partner

Dr C Botley - Partner

Dr Sue Graham – Salaried GP

Dr Szilvia Papp – Salaried GP- Mat Leave

Management

Zoe Smith – Practice Manager

Louise Briggs – Deputy Manager

Inder Gill – Front of House Supervisor

Lauren Coates – Nurse Manager

Important Notice!

Since 1st August 2017, our registration list has been closed after receiving approval from NHS England. We do not yet have any indication as to when we will be re-opening it. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

Emergency Out of Hours Telephone Number

If you require urgent medical advice Monday to Friday 6.30pm – 8.00am or at weekends or bank Holidays please call **111**.

Seasonal Allergies



PRESCRIPTION REQUEST & COLLECTION

PRESCRIPTION REQUEST HANDLED IN:	PRESCRIPTION READY BY:
<i>Monday</i>	<i>Thursday <u>AFTER 3PM</u></i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Friday <u>AFTER 3PM</u></i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Monday <u>AFTER 3PM</u></i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Tuesday <u>AFTER 3PM</u></i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>Wednesday <u>AFTER 3PM</u></i>

**PLEASE TAKE BANK HOLIDAYS INTO ACCOUNT
AND ALLOW US AN EXTRA 48 HOURS WHEN
REQUESTING YOUR PRESCRIPTION.**

TELEPHONE BOOKING

**If you wish to book a routine appointment,
we advise ringing after 10am. Between 8.30-
10am the phones are particularly busy with
patients requesting urgent on the
appointments. Routine appointments can
be booked up to 2 weeks in advance.**

As the weather gets warmer, plants and trees start to bloom, releasing pollen into the air which triggers seasonal allergy symptoms, commonly known as hay fever. Symptoms of hay fever include:

- *sneezing and coughing*
- *a runny or blocked nose*
- *itchy, red or watery eyes*
- *itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears*
- *loss of smell*
- *pain around your temples and forehead*
- *headache*
- *earache*
- *feeling tired*

There is no need to visit your doctor, if you are suffering with one or more of the above symptoms please see your local Pharmacist or get more information from www.patient.co.uk or www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever

Minor Illness Nurses

Our Minor Illness Nurses are available to help with acute problems and illnesses and can prescribe medication where appropriate.

Conditions where seeing a doctor/minor illness nurse is NOT usually necessary:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Conjunctivitis
- Most sore throats
- Coughs and colds
- Emergency contraception
- Insect bites within first 72 hours
- Chicken pox
- Hayfever
- Backache
- Scabies/lice/worms
- Mild joint pain/soft tissue injury

The Doctor's advice for these conditions is to seek self-care advice from www.patient.co.uk or your local pharmacist. As most of these conditions can be managed at home they do not require treatment from a doctor or minor illness nurse.

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PLEASE TAKE BANK HOLIDAYS INTO ACCOUNT AND ALLOW US AN EXTRA 48 HOURS WHEN REQUESTING YOUR PRESCRIPTION.

Electronic Prescribing

Have you considered opting for electronic prescribing? Nominate yourself at your pharmacy, who will sign you up. No more having to drop off a side slip to the Surgery. Once signed up you can request repeats through your chemist and collect from the chemist at your convenience.

APRIL – Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Symptoms

The symptoms of bowel (colorectal) cancer can include:

- bleeding from the back passage (rectum) or blood in your poo
- a change in your normal bowel habit
- a lump that your doctor can feel in your back passage or tummy (abdomen), more commonly on the right side
- a feeling of needing to strain in your back passage (as if you need to poo), even after opening your bowels
- losing weight
- pain in your abdomen or back passage
- tiredness and breathlessness caused by a lower than normal level of red blood cells (anaemia)

Sometimes cancer can block the bowel. This is called a bowel obstruction. The symptoms include:

- griping pains in the abdomen
- feeling bloated
- constipation and being unable to pass wind
- being sick

A bowel obstruction is an emergency. You should see your doctor quickly or go to A&E at your nearest hospital if you think you have a bowel obstruction.

When to see your doctor

Go to see your GP if you are worried about any of the symptoms mentioned above.

Remember these symptoms can be caused by other conditions. Many of these are much less serious than cancer, such as piles (haemorrhoids), infections or inflammatory bowel disease.

Resources:

Cancer Research UK:

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/screening/be-clear-on-cancer/bowel-screening

Bowel Cancer UK:

www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-us/bowel-cancer-awareness-month

Macmillan:

<https://be.macmillan.org.uk/be/s-337-understanding-bowel-cancer.aspx>

Beating Bowel Cancer:

www.beatingbowelcancer.org

Sun Awareness Week – Skin Cancer

8th – 14th May 2018

Symptoms

- A spot or sore

You need to have a spot checked if you are concerned about it. This could be because the spot is new, doesn't go away or looks unusual.

Spots and sores are common. But if you have one that doesn't heal within 4 weeks, get it checked.

Also, look out for a spot or sore that hurts, is itchy, crusty, scabs over or bleeds for more than 4 weeks.

The colour of the spot could be red or dark, but this isn't always the case.

- Ulcer

Look out for an area of skin that's broken down (an ulcer) and doesn't heal within 4 weeks, and you can't think of a reason for this change.

- A lump

This might be small, slow growing, shiny and pink or red.

- Red patches on your skin

These red patches could also be itchy. This could be due to other non-cancerous skin conditions. But get it checked to make sure.

When to see your doctor

See your doctor if you have:

- a spot or sore that doesn't heal within 4 weeks
- a spot or sore that hurts, is itchy, crusty, scabs over, or bleeds for more than 4 weeks
- areas where the skin has broken down (an ulcer) and doesn't heal within 4 weeks, and you can't think of a reason for this change

Your doctor can decide whether you need any tests.

Resources

British Association of Dermatologists:

www.bad.org.uk/for-the-public/sun-awareness-campaign/sun-awareness-week

Macmillan:

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/skin-cancer/symptoms>

Cancer Research UK:

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/skin-cancer

Cervical Screening Awareness Week – 12th – 18th June 2018



A cervical screening test (previously known as a smear test) is a method of detecting abnormal cells on the cervix.

Detecting and removing abnormal cervical cells can prevent cervical cancer. However, cervical screening isn't a test for cancer; it's a test to check the health of the cells of the cervix.

Did you know: About 3,000 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed each year in the UK?

It's possible for women of all ages to develop cervical cancer, although the condition mainly affects sexually active women aged 30 to 45. The condition is very rare in women under 25.

All women who are registered with a GP are invited for cervical screening:

- aged 25 to 49 – every 3 years
- aged 50 to 64 – every 5 years
- over 65 – not regularly tested; only women who haven't been screened since age 50 or those who have recently had abnormal tests

Being screened regularly means any abnormal changes in the cells of the cervix can be identified at an early stage and, if necessary, treated to stop cancer developing. The aim of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme is to reduce the number of women who develop cervical cancer and the number of women who die from the condition. Since the screening programme was introduced in the 1980s, the number of cervical cancer cases has decreased by about 7% each year.

- Screening is a personal choice and you have the right to choose not to attend.
- Each year around five million women in the UK are invited for cervical screening (smear test)
- Cervical screening saves 5,000 lives a year in the UK
- Cervical screening is free and you should receive your invitation to attend for regular screening from your GP surgery (it is important that you let them know of any change in your name or address)

- If you are feeling anxious beforehand, you can ask a member of your family or friend to accompany you. Your practice nurse or GP will be happy to talk
- through any anxieties that you have prior to your cervical screening appointment
- Between 90 and 94% of all screening results come back normal, with no abnormalities found
- It is important to remember that an abnormal screening result rarely means cancer
- Having regular cervical screening offers the best protection against developing cervical cancer.

Resources

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust:

www.jostrust.org.uk

Cancer Research UK:

www.cancerresearchuk.org

Sexual Health Hertfordshire

Free - Confidential - Friendly

They offer:

- Chlamydia testing
- Pregnancy testing
 - Contraception
 - Free condoms
- C-card for 13 to 24 year olds
 - Emergency contraception
- Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
 - HIV testing
- Sexual health support and advice

Call 0300 008 5522

Calls are charged at your standard network rate and will be included in any inclusive minute call packages

Visit www.clch.nhs.uk/sexualhealthhertfordshire
for more information.

Patient Transport Services

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EAST) have made further progress in managing

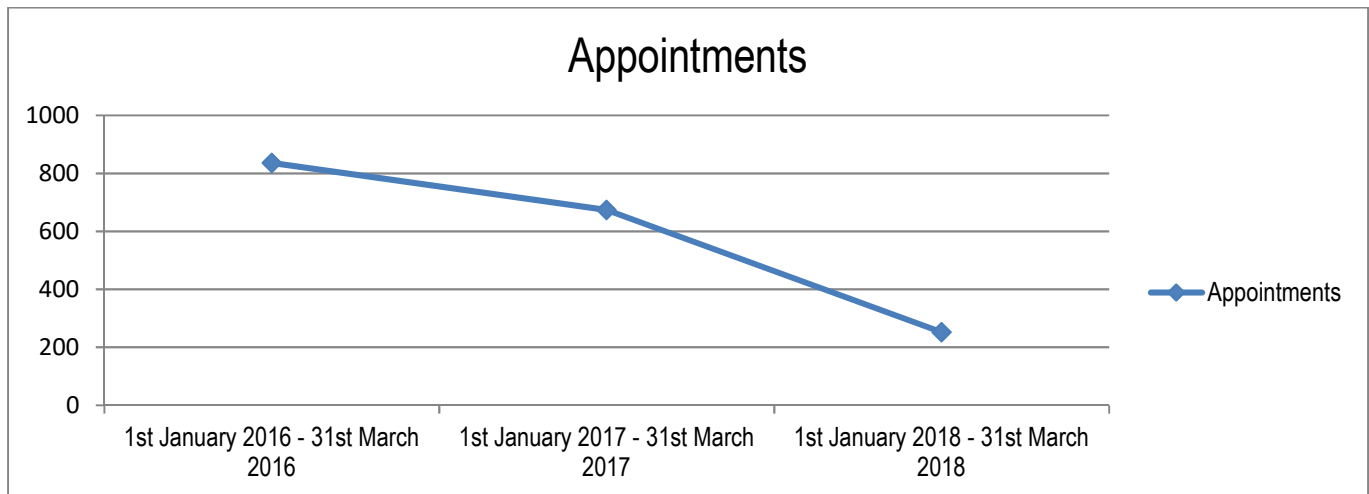
Patients should call 01603 481208 to book transport.

The contact center is open Mon-Fri 8am-6pm and has an answer phone service which operates outside of the opening hours.

Missed Appointments

Our DNA Policy allows us to record any appointments that patients have not attended. This policy was introduced to encourage patients to remember to cancel any unwanted appointments, allowing other patients to book a much needed appointment with a GP or Nurse.

From the 1st of January 2018 to the 31st March 2018 we have recorded **252** missed appointments which equates to **3300** minutes.



This is clearly a significant reduction from last year (1st January 2017 to 31st March 2017, **674** missed appointments, equating to **9433** minutes) and 2016 (1st January 2016 to 31st March 2016, **836** missed appointments, equating to **10838** minutes).

How can I cancel an appointment I don't need?

There are several options:

- Call the Surgery on 01462 705040, choose option 0 and follow the voice instructions
- Visit our Reception team and join SystmOnline. This is an online service which allows you to manage your appointments, as well as ordering repeat medication.
- Sign up for our SMS service. We will automatically send you a SMS message on confirmation of your appointment. A reminder will then be sent to you before your appointment, giving you the option to reply CANCEL, which will automatically cancel it for you

**BY CANCELLING AN APPOINTMENT THAT YOU NO LONGER NEED,
YOU ARE GIVING SOMEONE ELSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A
MUCH NEEDED APPOINTMENT WITH A GP OR NURSE.**

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)



What is EPS?

EPS means Electronic Prescription Service. EPS allows prescribers to send prescriptions electronically to your local Pharmacy. This makes the prescribing and dispensing process more efficient and convenient for both patients and staff. If you get regular prescriptions, the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) will save you time by avoiding unnecessary trips to your GP. This means you'll no longer have to collect a paper repeat prescription from your GP practice – instead, you can go straight to your nominated pharmacy to pick up your medicines or medical appliances. Because your pharmacist has already received your electronic prescription, they may be able to prepare your items in advance, so you just have to pick it up with no extra wait. However, this depends on the capacity of pharmacists on the day, and may not be possible all the time.

In the future, EPS will become the default option for the prescribing, dispensing and reimbursement of prescriptions in primary care in England. More information about this will be available soon.

How can I start using EPS?

You don't need a computer to use EPS – you can use it as long as both your GP surgery and the pharmacy (or other dispensing appliance contractor) offers the service.

Ask your pharmacist for more advice – they'll be happy to help you.

You'll then need to nominate the place you'd like to pick up your prescription medicines or appliances from in the future.

You can choose the most convenient place for you, such as near your home, where you shop, or where you work. This is flexible and can be changed at any time – just let your doctor or pharmacy know.

How can I cancel the service?

You can always change or cancel your nomination. Simply speak to your GP or pharmacist before you order your next prescription. Allow time for the update to take place to avoid your next prescription being sent to the wrong place.

Who can see my prescription?

EPS is reliable, secure and confidential. Your electronic prescription will be seen by the same people in GP practices, pharmacies, and NHS prescription payment and fraud agencies that see your paper prescription now. They'll also be able to see whether you've nominated more than one dispenser and can check where your prescriptions will be sent to. If you're on repeat prescriptions, dispensers will also see all of the items on your reorder slip.

What can I do if I'm unhappy with the nomination process?

All patients must be provided with sufficient information about EPS and give their consent before a nomination is recorded. You can complain to the pharmacy, dispensing appliance contractor (DAC) or your GP practice.

Alternatively, you can also complain to NHS England or the local clinical commissioning group (CCG).