

NEWSLETTER



BIRCHWOOD
SURGERY

COLOUR COPY AVAILABLE THROUGH WEBSITE!

ISSUE 10: APRIL -JUNE 2019



SWING INTO SPRING

Well...what a whirlwind couple of months it has been! With snow, sun and everything in between 2019 has definitely kept us on our toes.

In the following months as spring blossoms and we welcome the change in season we want to give you some helpful hay fever advice, keep you up to date on the campaigns running across the UK and some updates of our own.

As ever, we hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter and we'll see you in the summer.

-Birchwood Surgery



We are now taking on new patients!

Please read further inside for more details.

G

D P R

We would like to remind our patients that due to the new General Data Protection Regulation rules (GDPR) being rolled out throughout the UK; you will now need to provide ID to pick up anything from us.

Alternatively, if you need someone to pick something up on your behalf you will have to make us aware of who will be picking it up for you, and then that person will need to show us ID when they get into the surgery. Items that you will need to show ID for include:

- Sick notes
- Insurance documents
- Any GP letters
- Blood test forms
- Blood test results
- Online user details
- Prescriptions



BIRCHWOOD TEAM

Doctors

Dr R J O Graham – Senior Partner

Prescription request handed in:	Prescription ready by:
Monday	Thursday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Tuesday	Friday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Wednesday	Monday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Thursday	Tuesday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Friday	Wednesday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>

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

EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS TELEPHONE NUMBER

If you require urgent medical advice Monday to Friday between 6:30pm-8:30am, weekends and bank holidays please call NHS 111.

WHEN TO CALL BIRCHWOOD

If you are looking to book an appointment, a reminder that we only book **emergency appointments on the day and routine appointments up to four weeks ahead.**

We ask that if you are calling for prescription queries or general enquires, that you call from 10:00am onwards as between 8:30am – 10:00am our phone lines are very busy with patients booking appointments, If you are waiting for test results, please call after 2pm, choosing the results option.

OPENING HOURS

Monday – 8:30am – 6pm
Tuesday – 8:30am – 8pm
Wednesday – 7am – 6pm
Thursday – 8:30am – 6pm
Friday – 8:30am – 6pm
Saturday – Closed
Sunday – Closed

Urgent appointments become available from 8:30am each morning for that day.

**Update on ordering medication
PRESCRIPTION REQUEST & COLLECTION**

A reminder to our patients that since February 2018 we now close our surgery

between 12:30pm and 1:30pm for lunch every day.

Our phone lines are also closed during this time for non-urgent enquires.

However if you need a home visit or urgent medical advice, our emergency desk is still manned during this time. Just call our surgery and follow the instructions on the recorded phone message.

Should you need any medical advice during this time, please call NHS 111.

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

ONLINE SERVICES

Did you know that you can sign up to use our online services? It is a queue free, paperless and simple way to be able to order your prescriptions, book appointments and request repeat medication. You will also be able to see a summary of your record which you can print of from your own home, should you need copies.



To sign up for this all you have to do is pop into the surgery with a form of identification (a driving license, debit card etc) and we can issue you a username and a password. It's as simple as that!

SMS REMINDERS

Fancy a helpful reminder about your upcoming appointments? Sign up to our free SMS service and receive appointment reminders via text message. Please pop into the surgery and let us know you would like to sign up, or give us a ring and we will do it over the phone.



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.

Patients who **CAN** be booked in the Minor Illness Clinic:

- Breathing problems
- Mild to moderate abdominal pain
- Sore throat (for more than 5 days)
- Ear pain (for more than 5-7 days)
- Prolonged/worsening coughs especially asthma/COPD patients
- Severe back/joint pain
- UTI's
- Unwell with a rash

Anything ongoing or previously prescribed for is not appropriate to be in minor illness clinic and will need to be seen by a Doctor.

When booking an appointment the admin staff have been trained to triage you to ensure you are booked into the appropriate appointment and will seek medical advice from both the doctors and nurses on duty that day.

ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING (EPS)



To recap for those of you who may not have read our last issue of the newsletter, the electronic prescription service (EPS) allows prescribers to safely and securely send your prescription electronically to your local/usual pharmacy online. This means less paper waste, less time waiting in queues and is efficient and convenient for both yourself and our staff. In the future, EPS will become the default option for the prescribing, dispensing and reimbursement of prescriptions in primary care in England.

You don't need a computer to start using EPS, as long as both your GP surgery and the pharmacy (or other dispensing appliance contractor) offers the service then it is available to you!

You can nominate any pharmacy, whether it is the one closest to your home, on your route to work or where you shop – and you are able to change this any time!

All you need to do is pop into the pharmacy you wish to collect your prescriptions in and nominate them as your designated pharmacy and we'll do all the work from there, simple!

If you wish to change or cancel this service, then all you have to do is make your pharmacy aware that you wish to move or cancel the service and it will be done for you.

CERVICAL SCREENING

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme has made a significant impact on cervical cancer mortality since it was established in 1988, saving an estimated 5,000 lives a year. However, coverage is at a 20-year low. Figures published by NHS Digital show that, at 31 March 2018, the percentage of eligible women (aged 25 to 64) screened adequately was 71.4%. The national target for cervical screening coverage is 80% with coverage at its lowest amongst those aged 25 – 35.

If you are eligible for cervical screening and are due a check up, please call us to book in an appointment.



Please note that if you are booked in for an appointment for a suspected urinary tract infection (UTI) then you will be asked to bring a urine sample with you / come in early and provide us with a urine sample. We would like to remind our patients that **we do not take samples unless a GP or Nurse has asked for it.** Thank you.

12PointCare GP Federation are committed to improving access to General Practice.

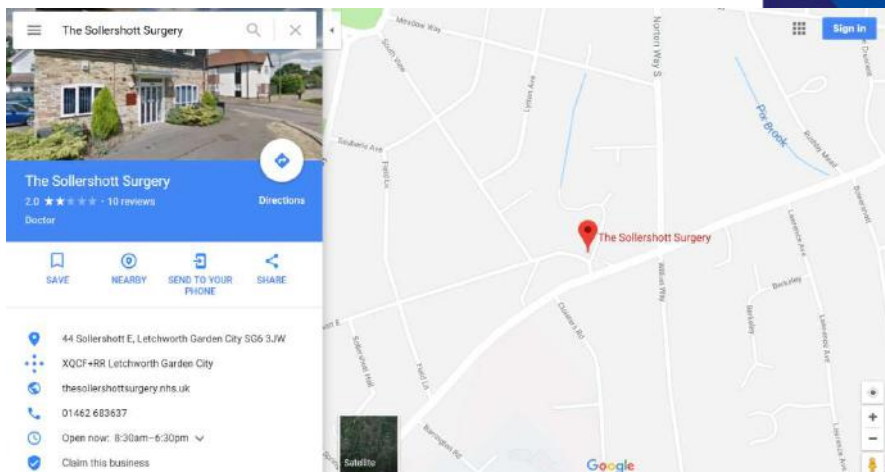
From October 2018 patients will be able to see a GP or another health professional between:

6.30pm and 8.00pm on weekdays

8.00am and 4.00pm on Saturdays

8.00am – 12.00pm on Sundays

**Sollershott Surgery, 44 Sollershott East,
Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3JW.**



Our health professional team for the North Herts Extended Access Service consists of GPs, Practice Nurses and Healthcare Assistants.

If you would like to make an appointment in the Extended Access Service, please call us (Birchwood Surgery) and we will arrange this appointment for you.

HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S

Firstly we would like to say a warm welcome to Dr Beebeejaun who joined us at the end of January. Dr Beebeejaun has joined us as a salaried GP and works with us on a Tuesday.

We would also like to welcome Marie Nash who is a Diabetic Specialist Nurse. Marie has many years of experience in Diabetes and will be running diabetic clinics on Friday mornings.

Finally, a huge welcome to our new reception staff who have been working fantastically in their new role! We would like to remind patients that these members of staff are still in training and we ask that patients are polite and patient with us.

We are sad to be saying goodbye to Dr Ali in May. After being with us for 7+ years Dr Ali has made the decision to relocate closer to home. We wish her the best of luck in her new GP role.



REMINDERS

If you were one of Dr Brook's patients then we are in the process of registering you with one of our other GPs. We would kindly ask patients not to call the surgery at present as this is quite a lengthy process, but if you would like to know who your new registered GP is then please feel free to ask the next time you are at the surgery.

Please remember that unless you are registered as house bound, we do not accept medication requests over the phone. Please either come in to the surgery and request your prescription or ask your nominated pharmacy to do it on your behalf.

If you are travelling abroad please be aware that November 2018, the surgery no longer provides travel health consultations, malaria prophylactic drugs or giving non NHS vaccines.

For more information, please take a look at our website.
<https://www.birchwoodsurgery.co.uk/digitalpractice/travel-service>

If you are unwell and unable to go to work, you are able to self-certify for the first week of your absence. Only after this week should you see a GP in order to get a sick note. GOV.uk have made a template to help you document your sickness for this first week.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-sick-pay-employees-statement-of-sickness-sc2

If your child has an appointment during school hours, we are happy to sign and stamp one of our appointment books as proof of the appointment but please be aware we do not write/provide specific letters for each child/each circumstance you are here.

We have had a lot of reports of staff and patient cars being hit and damaged. Please remember to take every care when using the surgery car park.



PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP!

What is a Patient Participation Group?

Members of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) are volunteers who work with the practice to represent patients, offering views on the services and facilities that are provided. Patients also have the option to be involved in the wider health issues across North Hertfordshire.

When do we meet?

We aim to meet at the practice at least 4 times a year. We usually hold the meetings on a Tuesday evening from 6pm onwards. The meetings usually last a couple of hours. All details of the meeting are forwarded to members in advance.

What are we not?

We are not a forum for individual agendas or personal complaints. Complaints must be made directly to the practice to comply with the standardised NHS complaints Procedure and be handled under a strict code of confidentiality. If you have a complaint, please either speak to the practice team or pick up the practice information leaflet on complaints.

What do we have planned for the future?

We want to encourage additional patients to join the group. It is expected that the PPG will become more visible and assist the practice with new initiatives and ideas.

We always welcome suggestions and ideas that contribute to the patient experience when you visit the practice. Your suggestion can be forwarded to the Practice Manager to be discussed with the PPG where appropriate.

Want to know more?

If you are interested in knowing more, take a look at our PPG board in the corridor opposite the waiting room. Also, you can let our reception team know and we will be able to send you one of our information packs.

ARE YOU TAKING GABAPENTIN OR



PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP SPOTLIGHT

In the last couple of PPG meetings our members have been looking at national health issues. We have decided to dedicate a spotlight section to each subject. This section will be a brief oversight of some of the things we discussed, and then a more detailed version can appear on our website.

This quarter's topic is:
**TEENAGERS' & YOUNG ADULT'S
MENTAL HEALTH**

What causes young people to develop mental health issues?

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| -School | -Sexual identification |
| -Work | -Money |
| -Family | -Drugs |
| -Friends | -Abuse |
| -Social Media | -Bullying |

What can we do?

Doctors can listen to our patients and appropriately and accurately assess what immediate help they need. Dependant on the situation, a GP can urgently refer to a mental health team for a same day assessment, refer to an immediate crisis team or even section a patient for their own safety. Alternatively a GP can start a patient on medication or recommend self-referral services or suggest counselling.

What can patients do?

Patients can help themselves by self-referring to the local wellbeing team, making appointments with guidance programme 'Youth Connexions' or looking at websites like www.kooth.com or www.talkwellbeing.co.uk.

NEW PATIENTS

Our books are now open again and we are able to take on new patients.

PREGABLIN?

(Lyrica, Alzainm Neurontin)

The law is changing from the 1st of April 2019.
Pregabalin and gabapentin are being
reclassified as controlled drugs.

Your GP and local pharmacy will ensure you
continue to get the medicines you need.

Please remember to order your medicine in
good time.

Please see our website for more details:

[www.birchwoodsurgery.co.uk/practice_news/
are-you-taking-gabapentin-or-pregabalin-
lyrica-alzain-neurontin/](http://www.birchwoodsurgery.co.uk/practice_news/are-you-taking-gabapentin-or-pregabalin-lyrica-alzain-neurontin/)

EAR SYRINGING



Allder's Opticians in Letchworth Garden
City also offer an ear syringing service.

They are located at 15 Eastcheap and do
syringing on a Friday afternoon. The current fee
is £40 for one ear and £70 for both. Their phone
number is 01462 673216 so please do ring them
if you are interested in finding out more.

CARERS INFORMATION

If you are a carer or are cared for, we do offer
Carers packages for you. These are free of
charge and are available at the surgery.

Inside these packs are helpful leaflets,
information guides, money saving coupons etc.
and a whole range of support information. Please
feel free to pop down to the surgery and ask the
receptionists at the front desk to give you one.



CAMPAIGN BOARDS

Throughout the year we support and advertise many campaigns.

Two of the most recent ones were cervical screening awareness month and diabetes prevention week.

These campaign boards are in the main reception area.

We like to keep them up to date with interesting, seasonal and relevant information.

DIABETES AWARENESS WEEK



From the 1st of April until the 7th of April 2019, it is Type 2 Diabetes Awareness Week.

Type 2 diabetes diagnoses are rising each year and we want to make sure our patients are healthy and happy and available prevent diabetes as much as they can.

If you feel you are at risk of having diabetes then we would suggest looking at the Diabetes UK website. It has some fantastic information available on symptoms, risk factors and preventions.

If you do have some concerns and would like to speak to a GP about it then please book a routine appointment with a GP to discuss this.

www.diabetes.org.uk/Preventing-type-2-

**TYPE 2
DIABETES
PREVENTION
WEEK**

1-7 APRIL 2019



DIABETES PREVENTION WEEK

BIRCH

www.facebook.com/groups/395828197643736/

Birchwood Surgery now has it's own facebook group. This group is a closed group for patients of Birchwood Surgery in Letchworth. Facebook is an excellent platform to communicate with patients and we are hoping to reach a wider percentage of our patient population. The group will be used to promote campaigns, Patient Participation Group (PPG), share our quarterly newsletter, opening times and general information and updates.

**ver, we hope you enjoy this edition of the Birchwood
urgery newsletter and we'll see you again in July!**