

Park Practice

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### Update from Dr Martin Writer

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter. As the days get longer and a bit warmer, then hopefully the number of people with viral illnesses will drop. This year has been one of the most difficult we have ever had as a health system - in part due to the back log from COVID but also as a result of the huge number of illnesses people have experienced this year. We are grateful for the patience that many of you have shown when you have struggled to get appointments due to us being so busy. Hopefully things will get easier as we go forward.

We are delighted to welcome our new trainee GP, Dr Fritha Price, Michelle who is a Practice Nurse and Claire who is an Assistant Practitioner. I am sure they will complement our already excellent team.

### Prostate Cancer

#### ***My father had prostate cancer. What are my risks?***

You are **two and a half** times more likely to get prostate cancer if your father or brother has had it, compared to a man who has no relatives with prostate cancer.

Your chance of getting prostate cancer may be even greater if your father or brother was under the age of 60 when he was diagnosed, or if you have more than one close relative (father or brother) with prostate cancer.

Your risk of getting prostate cancer may also be higher if your mother or sister has had breast cancer or ovarian cancer.

Although prostate cancer can run in families, having a family history doesn't mean you will get it.

However, it is important to speak to your GP if you have any relatives with prostate cancer, breast cancer or ovarian cancer, as your risk of hereditary prostate cancer may be higher.

### ***Do you have a family history of prostate cancer?***

If you are over 45 and your father or brother has had prostate cancer, you may want to talk to your GP.

For more information please go to the following website –

[www.prostatecanceruk.org](http://www.prostatecanceruk.org) or click on the link.

### **New Telephone System Trial**

As you may be aware, our telephone system is set up to hold 15 callers in the appointments queue at any one time.



This was changed from a limitless queue a number of years ago following

consultation with our Patient Participation Group, where they indicated a limited queue would be preferable.

When we had to change our telephone system, we lost the ability to be able to give caller 16 an engaged tone immediately and we appreciate that hearing the recorded message before getting the engaged tone is frustrating.

We have decided to trial a queue for up to 50 callers for a 2-week period (27<sup>th</sup> March to 7<sup>th</sup> April) and we would

welcome feedback if you find this preferable.

### **Pre-booked Appointments**

We are able to offer patients pre-booked appointments, which usually range from 3-8 weeks in advance.

If you have pre-booked an appointment and then speak to or see a clinician about your issue sooner than this, we would very much appreciate it if you could cancel your pre-booked appointment so that it can be used for another patient.

If the appointment is at the surgery, you can cancel from your text reminder but as we are unable to send text reminders for telephone calls, we would be grateful if you could telephone in to cancel.

### **Bowel Cancer Awareness Month**



Bowel cancer is also known as colorectal cancer or colon cancer. The month of April is used to enlighten people on bowel cancer and also for an opportunity to raise financial support for patients and to sponsor further research into the disease.

Being aware of the symptoms of bowel cancer is always important.

Symptoms include:

- A pain or lump in your abdomen (tummy).
- Feeling more tired than usual for some time.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Change in bowel habit.
- Change in stool consistency.
- Blood traces in the stool.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have bowel cancer. However, if you notice any of them, you should discuss them with your GP.

Age is a risk factor, as people over the age of 50 are more susceptible to the disease. However, younger people can also be diagnosed with bowel cancer.

People aged between 60 and 74 are invited to take part in bowel cancer screening every two years. Screening aims to detect bowel cancer at an early stage, when treatment has the best chance of working. A home test will be automatically sent to you, this is called a Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT). Full instructions are sent with the home test. The sample is then sent back to the screening centre and the results take about two weeks.

For more information on bowel cancer please click or visit their website:-

[www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk](http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk)

## Missed Appointments

There were **200** missed face to face appointments with our clinicians and nursing team in February 2023. This wasted 33 hours of surgery time.

If you can not attend your appointment, please contact the surgery to cancel this, as your slot can be given to someone else.

## Text Messages

If you have your own mobile phone, and **not one which is shared with someone else, ie a family member**, let us know if you would like to be sent texts from the surgery.



This could be about reminding you about your forthcoming appointment, invites for health campaigns such as having the COVID vaccination, as well as the link for downloading this newsletter!

Please let us know if you would like to be kept informed in this way.

## Have you received your invite for cervical screening and not actioned it?

If you are aged between 25-49 years of age **and** have received your cervical screen invite letter but not actioned it, please contact the surgery to arrange an appointment. We currently have **461 eligible patients** who have not booked an appointment for their cervical screening in this age bracket.

Cervical screening is one of the best ways to protect yourself from cervical cancer.

Cervical screening checks a sample of cells from your cervix for certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV).



These types of HPV can cause abnormal changes to the cells in the cervix and are

called “high risk” types of HPV. If abnormal cells are not treated, they may turn into cervical cancer.

For more information on cervical screening please click on the below link, or the website is [www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening)

[Cervical screening - Why it's important - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening)

## Hello and Goodbye!



Dr Fritha Price is a GP Registrar and will be with us for two years. She graduated from Leicester Medical School in

2015 and completed her foundation years training locally at the Conquest Hospital in Hastings.

We also welcomed several new members of the admin team in January and February.

We said goodbye to Amy, our pharmacist technician, in December. She will be travelling around Australia and Thailand for twelve months.

## Do you suffer from aches and pains?

Most people with aches and pains can be diagnosed at the GP practice and can be well managed in the community. A smaller number require timely referral to secondary care orthopaedic, rheumatology, spinal or pain management services to enable best outcomes.

With increased demand on all services and research supporting the role of self-management of these conditions additional resources can help people to feel confident in coping with their aches and pains and also have a good quality of life. Not everyone is ready to manage their condition and so there are resources to help people but for those who would like the advice on how to progress we have some links in this article that we hope will help.

Matt Daly, a First Contact Practitioner, is a specialist musculoskeletal physiotherapist based at Park Practice one day a week, and has shared some helpful information to help patients who are keen to look after themselves.



### *For shoulder pain:*

With spring around the corner, some people can pick up their activity levels as the light and the outside temperature improves. This can mean for example, an increase in gardening or DIY resulting in shoulder pain. This information can be helpful:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLt7UngHKF0HenXb7oEQaQPyeJaJAdWAI4>

### *For knee and hip and back pain:*

One of the key treatments of back pain, hip and knee arthritis is exercise therapy. For ideas and programs that can help you please see:

<https://escape-pain.org/>

### *For some heel pain:*

With the good weather, we can see that people change their exercise habits and their footwear. A sudden change can bring on some new pains in the heel and this information can be of help:

<https://www.esht.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/0729.pdf>

**If you have high levels of pain or changes to your bladder or bowel habits, please seek more urgent attention for an assessment.**

If you have a new musculoskeletal problem, please contact the surgery to make an appointment to see Matt. He will be able to assess you, diagnose the problem and provide self-management advice on how you can improve the situation.

## Travel Vaccinations

Our Practice Nurses can provide travel health advice and arrange for appropriate immunisations.

Please complete the on-line travel health form on our website and our Practice Nurses will then contact you.



It is important you do this at least 6-8 weeks before departure, if possible,

as some vaccines need time to take effect and some may require a course over several weeks.

## Closing dates for Easter

Please be aware we will be closed on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 through to Monday 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 inclusive for Easter.

Whilst we are closed, if you have a medical emergency, please call 111 and they can direct you to the best place to get help. **Only** attend Accident & Emergency if you have a life-threatening emergency.

Remember to order your prescriptions in plenty of time before we close for Easter.

