

# THE HUNGERFORD SURGERY PATIENT NEWSLETTER

[www.hungerfordsurgery.co.uk](http://www.hungerfordsurgery.co.uk)

Issue 2 – Spring 2010

## **Spring has sprung!**



Welcome to the spring edition of our patient newsletter. We hope you enjoyed reading Issue 1 and a reminder that we welcome

suggestions from patients as to any particular subject matter you would like to see featured in future editions. A copy of the newsletter can be picked up from the surgery reception or downloaded from our website.

Healthcare and the NHS will no doubt be high on everyone's agenda during the campaign for the forthcoming General Election. Whatever the result on May 6<sup>th</sup>, you can be assured that everyone here at the surgery will continue to work hard to maintain and improve the services we provide whilst striving to meet the new challenges that are sure to arise.

With the clocks having gone forward, and the lighter evenings upon us, thoughts of the long winter nights and the snow are beginning to fade and hopefully we can all look forward to a fine spring and summer.

*Mike Hall*  
*Practice Manager*

## **Summary Care Record**

The majority of patients registered with a West Berkshire GP Practice will have recently received a letter, from the Berkshire West Primary Care Trust, concerning the introduction of Summary Care Records (SCRs).

SCRs will give health-care staff faster, easier access to reliable information about you to help with your treatment. This might be particularly important when you use emergency or out-of-hours services when your GP practice is closed. At first, your SCR will contain information about your health, such as details of any allergies, your current prescriptions and whether you have had any bad reactions to medicines. After that, each time you use any NHS health service, details

about any health problems, summaries of your care and the professionals treating you will be added to your SCR.

There continues to be much debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the SCR and the issue has recently featured on local and national media.

If you are happy to have an SCR, you do not need to do anything and a record will automatically be created for you.

If however you choose not to have an SCR, or wish to limit the information that health-care staff beyond your GP practice can access, you will need to complete the appropriate NHS form (no.4479) which can be picked up from the surgery reception or downloaded from [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk). Once returned to the surgery, your medical records will be updated to reflect your wishes. Further information and guidance can be obtained from the surgery and whatever you decide; you can change your mind at any time.

## **Helping you to get the right appointment**



When you call to make an appointment at the surgery, you may have noticed that the receptionist will often ask for further details about the patient's condition. For example, 'can you give me brief details of the problem?' or 'is it important that you are actually seen today?'

Rather than wishing to imply that the receptionist needs to know the exact nature and urgency of the problem, the questions are simply designed to help us to help you get the right appointment with the right health-care professional at the optimum time. We completely respect your privacy if you would rather not say but a few brief details helps us to ensure you get the appointment you need.

## **How the sick note is changing**

From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010, the existing Med 3 and Med 5 sick note forms have been revised and a new version has replaced them. GP's are now required to provide more information on the functional effects of the patient's condition and suggest options for a return to work.

The new 'fit note' will enable GP's to help patients return to work before they are 100% recovered, but when they are able to safely carry out some tasks. GP's will no longer have to make a decision either that a patient is fit for work or that they should be signed off completely but instead give the GP the option of advising that a patient 'may be fit for work taking account of the following advice'.



The GP can still advise the patient that they are not fit for work and the patient can still use the statement for sick pay and benefits.

Patients can obtain more information from the surgery or the NHS Choices website – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

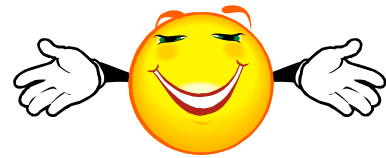
## **Farewell and a warm welcome**

Two highly respected and valued members of our local healthcare team have recently left their respective posts in the Hungerford area.



Having helped deliver hundreds of babies in the West Berks area, Midwife Kamla Cook took a well deserved retirement at the end of December 2009. The help and support that Kamla gave to mums and dads was always valued and she never lacked for a cheerful smile whatever the workload. We already miss her bubbly personality although Kamla drops in to see us from time to time. We send our best wishes to her and Martin for their retirement plans.

Also moving on after many years service to the local community is our Health Visitor Amanda Clare. Numerous families have benefitted from Amanda's wealth of experience and the support and advice she provided to those with young children has been invaluable. Amanda and her husband David are moving to Cambridgeshire and we wish them all the best for life in their new home.



Replacing Kamla Cook is our new community midwife Kate Green.

Kate trained as a direct entry midwife in the delivery suite of the Royal Berks Hospital in Reading before joining the Newbury community team. Kate lives in Thatcham and is therefore ideally placed to cover a large area of West Berks extending from Hungerford and Lambourn in the west across to Tilehurst on the far east of the patch. At any one time Kate can expect to have an average of 80 to 90 patients under her care in the Hungerford area alone and she offers advice and support on a range of ante-natal issues including the arrangement of home births if appropriate.

Replacing Amanda Clare is our new Health Visitor Sarah Edwards who has moved across from working in Thatcham.

Sarah was born in South Africa, where she did her nurse training, before moving to the UK in 1997. She did her paediatric nursing in the children's A&E department of a Birmingham hospital before moving down to the Royal Berks in Reading where she decided to pursue a career in health visiting. Sarah is married with two young children. Joining Sarah is new staff nurse Jenny Coppard and in due course the team will be completed by the addition of a new nursery nurse.

We welcome them all to Hungerford and look forward to working closely with them.

## **Practice Based Commissioning**

The Practice is a member of the Newbury and District Commissioning Group along with ten other GP practices in the West Berkshire area. Together we help identify opportunities to improve current healthcare services and where appropriate, introduce new ones. If you are interested in hearing more about the work of this group please contact Mike Hall, Practice Manager.

## Do you know your NHS Number?



Everyone registered with the NHS in England and Wales has their own NHS Number. It is the only national unique patient identifier, used to help healthcare staff and service providers match you to your health records. It is an important step towards providing you with safer patient care.

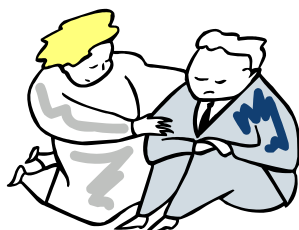
Each NHS number is made up of 10 digits shown in a 3-3-4 format. If you have an old medical card, it will have an old-style NHS number made up of both letters and numbers. This has been replaced, for all patients, by a new NHS Number made up entirely of numbers.

If you want to know you're NHS Number, or if you have an old-style number and want to know your new one, you can contact the surgery and we will be happy to look it up for you although we will need to confirm additional identification details.

It is not essential that you know your NHS Number in order to receive care, but it is helpful if you can give it to NHS staff who need to find your health records.

## Let's hear it for the Carers

Do you look after a partner, relative or friend who cannot manage without help because of illness, frailty or disability?



If so, you are a carer and might welcome support from your general practice. This support could help reduce the stress of your care-giving role and help you continue to give the quality of care that is necessary. You may also need support for yourself – to look after your own health and to ensure that you have time for yourself.

If you haven't already done so, why not contact us and register as a carer? We want to improve the help and support we provide to carers and we would very much like to hear your views and ideas. The Hungerford surgery currently has 47 registered carers but we are sure that there are many more people out there who would benefit from more support and to this end we now have a dedicated member of staff who can provide you with more information. So why not give us a call on 01488 682507.

## 'These Are The Hands'

By Michael Rosen

The Children's Poet Laureate, Michael Rosen, wrote this poem in celebration of the NHS.

These are the hands  
That touch us first  
Feel your head  
Find the pulse  
And make your bed

These are the hands  
That tap your back  
Test the skin  
Hold your arm  
Wheel the bin  
Change the bulb  
Fix the drip  
Pour the jug  
Replace your hip

These are the hands  
That fill the bath  
Mop the floor  
Flick the switch  
Soothe the sore  
Burn the swabs  
Give us a jab  
Throw out sharps  
Design the lab

And these are the hands  
That stop the leaks  
Empty the pan  
Wipe the pipes  
Carry the can  
Clamp the veins  
Make the cast  
Log the dose  
And touch us last



## Did you know?

**In 2009, there were 21,744 appointments made with a doctor here at the Surgery.**

**Sadly, 769 (3.5%) patients didn't turn up for their appointment. That is almost 3 weeks worth of appointments wasted!**

## History of the Practice

Records of the early practitioners in Hungerford exist back to the 16th century. The present practice originated in the 1920s, when the two town practices joined, forming the single practice of Drs Starkey-Smith and James. The surgery was at Manor House in the High Street, the home of Dr. Starkey-Smith and his family. Dr. Stuart Boyd joined in 1935, and, in 1946, Dr. Blake James retired, at the age of 77 years!



There was a major change in the practice after the War, when Dr. Max Wallis joined in 1946, and Dr. Robert Kennedy in 1947, these two partners being responsible for the whole practice, except for a brief period from 1955 until 1958 when they were joined by Dr. Gordon Currie.

A new purpose-built surgery was erected in The Croft in 1959 and many of you will have fond memories of those long gone days when Frances Francis single handily managed the administration of the whole practice. Frances still pops in from time to time and it is always a delight to see her. The building was extended three times during the 1970s and 80s before doubling in size in 1993 with the major extension we see today.

As the patient population of the Hungerford area expanded in the 1970's and 80's, so did the number of GP partners and Dr Hugh Pihlens (1973), Dr Jeremy Bray (1978), Dr Robin Dunn (1980) and Dr Peter Hetherington (1986) all joined the practice.

Dr Helen Dace became the 5<sup>th</sup> partner to join in 2001 before a rapid period of change saw Dr's Pihlens, Bray and Dunn retire in 2006 and 2007. Anticipating the changes, Dr Niti Sodhi (2004) and Dr Alex Anderson (2006) joined as partners and in 2007 Dr Sarah Bruen joined as a salaried GP.

Like most towns and villages, the doctor's surgery in Hungerford has played an important part in the 'tapestry' of history and has been an integral part of the community. Long may that continue.

## Hay Fever – Top Tips

The spring and early summer months maybe exciting times for gardeners but hay fever can make the 'growing season' a virtual nightmare for sufferers. Hay fever is caused by allergy to pollens, mostly grass and tree pollens that are abundant in May and June and can cause an enormous amount of discomfort. Most people will find that a combination of practically based measures and medications will provide effective hay fever relief.



1. The best way to stop hay fever is to avoid pollen altogether and some people go to extraordinary lengths to do so. However this is far easier said than done, as pollen is usually invisible to the naked eye.
2. If possible, minimise trips outdoors and avoid grassy / wooded areas.
3. Keep a close watch on the pollen count which is often featured on television, radio and in newspapers.
4. Avoid being outside when the pollen count is highest which is usually early mornings and late evenings.
5. Avoid country walks and gardening during times when the pollen count is highest. It's a really good excuse for asking someone else to cut the grass!
6. One overlooked but important tip is to wear sunglasses when you are outside as this can help to prevent pollen from entering your eyes.
7. Try to keep windows and doors closed, particularly on windy days as wind provides an easy route for pollen to come into contact with your nose, eyes, mouth and skin.
8. Pollen can cling to your hair and skin, so do wash clothes and hair regularly.
9. Don't hang clothes outside to dry as this allows pollen to cling to the fabric, particularly when it's windy.
10. If you can, try to plan holidays to areas with lower pollen counts such as seaside resorts.

