

SPINNEY SURGERY NEWSLETTER

For patients of the Spinney Spring 2004

Menopause and HRT – Information Evening Thursday 22nd April 7.30 pm Crossways Hall, St Ives.

Are you, like us, somewhat concerned by the recent publicity surrounding HRT? The menopause is often a difficult time both emotionally and physically, and it is quite unsettling to be faced with confusion about the advantages and potential drawbacks of HRT.

Questions we may ask are:-

- ❖ Should I cope with these hot flushes without HRT?
- ❖ Am I at risk of osteoporosis?
- ❖ Do I need a bone density scan?
- ❖ What are the alternative medicines?
- ❖ What are the associated risks of breast cancer?

These and other questions will be addressed by Dr. Clare Henderson, GP at the Spinney Surgery. She will lead a meeting organised by the

Spinney Patients Association on April 22nd at 7.30pm.

It will be an informative and relaxed occasion and partners are encouraged to come along too.

Join in a discussion, ask questions, view stands of relevant information and partake of some delicious refreshments.

We look forward to seeing you **on Thursday 22nd April at 7.30pm at Crossways Hall.**

*Pauline Denham & Sheena Henderson
(Committee members of SPA)*



Changes in Staff at the Spinney

Dr. Malli Baskaran joined us on the 2nd February as a GP Registrar for the year. He will be working closely with Dr. Smerdon but will also be seeing patients of most of the doctors at the surgery.

Nicola Stocker joined us in October as our medical records summariser.

Carol Ackerley joins us in February as a fifth nurse to our team.

Carol will be developing a new service, which will improve access to the practice team. As more information becomes available we will let you know via our in house newsletter which is available from reception in between issues of the main newsletter which is sent to your home.

Dr. Nicky Butler officially left us in January, having finished her time as a GP Registrar. Dr. Butler will be undertaking some locum sessions for us during the year.

Saturday Surgeries.

Many patients will have heard or read about changes to the National Health Service planned for this year. One of the many changes that will affect our practice and others in the area (and indeed the country) is that of Saturday morning surgeries. From the 1st July, 2004 out of hours care on a Saturday will be provided by Huntsdoc GP Service which already covers out of hours from 6pm to 8am daily and at weekends. Many patients will have

already used Huntsdoc's services, but in summary - if medical attention is required when the surgery is closed, patients should telephone 01480 447800 and they will be put through to Huntsdoc which is based at California Road, Huntingdon (near the Regional College). The practice will provide reminders nearer the time.



Video

Consultations

Many of you will be aware of the fact that we sometimes ask you to give permission for your consultations to be videoed as part of the doctors' educational programmes. We are very grateful to you for this as it provides an invaluable opportunity to look at how we work, as well as helping our GP Registrars learn about communication and consultation skills. Demonstrating that they have reached a particular standard is now compulsory. Our Nurses are now being included in this work and we will soon be asking some patients who attend particular clinics for permission for their consultations with the Nurses to be videoed. We are in the process of training 2 of our Nurses to look at these videos of their own work. Not only is

this part of their professional development but it is also part of a research project George Smerdon and Rosemary Lane are working on which is about how to teach Communication skills in a multi-professional setting. We hope you will feel able to support this work but pts will be asked and, as always, the strict professional rules about confidentiality observed.

Physio Direct

A new service, which has been very successful in Huntingdon, was launched in St Ives at the beginning of January. It is called Physio Direct. If patients have a soft tissue injury, or pain such as back or neck pain etc, then they can telephone Physio Direct on 01480 416191 or 01480 416092 Their call will be taken by a Physiotherapist, or if one is not available the call will be returned later. The Physio will ask a range of questions and follow a range of procedures which will help them decide what care is appropriate. This is a good way of directing patients to the correct clinician and also reduces the need for the patient to make an appointment to see their GP to be referred.



Car Parking

From an earlier edition of the newsletter patients will have read that the biggest area of frustration is that of the car park, not only its size but also the entry and exit area. Things were not improved when a CCTV camera was placed directly in front of the line of vision needed to exit safely. The Spinney Patients Association have offered to try to come up with suggestions as to how the car parking can be improved and to contact local organisations to get help this.

Meanwhile though, there have been an increasing number of accidents in the car park. We have had considerable damage to the fenced area, as well as patients and staff cars being damaged. Unfortunately the practice cannot be held liable for this damage, and we would ask car owners to be more vigilant when parking to avoid any bumps and dents. Thankyou.

Closure Afternoons

As part of a local initiative in Huntingdon, the Primary Care Trust provides training sessions and cover for

local practices to undertake training and allow practices to close for half a day each month. We appreciate that this is frustrating for patients, however we aim to give as much notice as possible, and do this via notices in the surgery, information on our web site, various newsletters and word of mouth. During the closure the telephones are put through to Huntsdoc and requests for urgent medical attention are dealt with appropriately.

The closure afternoons for the coming months are as follows:-

Thursday 11 th March
Wednesday 28 th April
Tuesday 25 th May
Thursday 17 th June
Wednesday 14 th July
Tuesday 14 th Sept

We apologise for any inconvenience the closure of the surgery causes during these afternoons. Sometimes the PCT change the session, but we will do our best to make sure patients are aware.

Young People C_ontraceptive Ch_oices

On Thursday afternoons, Nurse Jane Bryson runs our drop in service. Patients aged under 25 are encouraged to attend for family planning or contraceptive advice. No appointment is required and Jane will offer advice and

practical help. Occasionally the clinics are cancelled if Jane is unavailable but there is usually a notice on our front doors to give this information confidentially. Please feel free to use the service. It's confidential and free!

Antenatal Clinics

These have traditionally been held on a Monday afternoon, however recently they have been changed to Wednesday afternoon. Sarah Watson our midwife for many years has moved house and been replaced by Carol Wright.

<h3>Spinney Patients Association</h3>

Have you seen the SPA Noticeboard recently? Apart from showing you who are the members of the Committee, we also plan to use the board to try to get more information to you about SPA events and generally about matters affecting you as a Spinney patient.

Don't forget this is your Association, so please feel free to raise with any of the Committee members any issues of concern to you as a patient at the Spinney with which we may be able to assist.

The Association is planning 3 Information Evenings this year. The

first to be held on Thursday 22nd April and information about that evening is earlier in the newsletter. The next evening is on the 6th July, and the topic will be "Recognising Drug Problems or Use of Drugs Amongst Our Own Children". This is a worrying issue for all parents so do come along and see what help, information and support is available. The talk is aimed at parents, so it please make arrangements for childcare and come armed to learn about the issues. Coming to this evening does not mean that your children are involved with drugs, but if you have knowledge and information, it may help them with this tricky and potentially dangerous issue in the future.

Our final event of the year is on 21st October and is entitled "Cancer in Men and Women". The focus here will be on recognising symptoms of and learning to live with a range of different cancers affecting our society today. More details will follow.

Do watch the notice board and website as well as the newsletter for further information as to times and dates etc.

We look forward to welcoming you to our

next Information
Evening on 22nd April.

**Lloyds Chemist
Prescription Collection
Service.**

For patients living in St Ives, Lloyds of Kings Hedges and The Pavement are happy to collect your prescription from us, and dispense ready for you to collect. If you require this service you should request a form from Lloyds to enable this to happen. When you order your prescription, you should request for it to be given to Lloyds every time. It is extremely helpful if you remember to do this each time, as it is not possible for us to ensure that we remember everyone who wishes to take part in this service. If you order your prescription on the Internet, it is possible to select the appropriate box to identify your request.



Building Work.

Over the last year we have been trying to improve the facilities for patients. The SPA provided a water cooler in reception, and we have added new blinds, new seating and air conditioning will be installed this year to upstairs treatment rooms. We have re-vamped the upstairs waiting area and new carpet is being laid as I type this. Next on our list is to improve the Dispensary hatch area to make it more patient friendly. It has been difficult to balance drugs, pens, purses and glasses on our little ledge and therefore we are making the hatch a lot larger, with toughened glass so more natural light can get in to the room, and a new beech counter at a height suitable for all. We hope to plan this so it does not cause too much disruption, but please bear with us during this time. Thankyou.

Drug Changes.

Patients will be aware that we are under constant pressure to ensure that our prescribing costs are within the budget allocated to us. Many drugs are expensive because they are a "brand name" and cheaper drugs can be prescribed by using the "generic name". Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust provides practices with information, which is based on evidence relating to various drugs, and guides them accordingly. Patients should be reassured that decisions to alter drug type is never taken lightly and there is always the opportunity for the patient to discuss any concerns or worries with their GP.

We are also aware that many patients are not allowing two working days for their prescriptions to be prepared and requesting it urgently at the last minute. Please do try and plan ahead, it is essential for us to have these two working days to make sure medications are issued properly and the appropriate checks are carried out.

