
Patient Participation Group

Newsletter August 2018



Grosvenor
St James
MEDICAL PRACTICE

It is inescapable that the NHS is under pressure as never before. However, we must remember it is our NHS, we pay for it so for everyone's benefit we need to get the best out of it.

HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR GP

Much of the following is an abbreviated version of an article by Dr. Mark Porter (GP, broadcaster and journalist) from "The Times", Feb. 14, 2017 on useful points on getting the best out of your GP.

1. Do you need that appointment?
Go to your local emergency department only for conditions that are best dealt with there e.g. minor fractures. Try to avoid busy periods e.g. mornings, especially Mondays. Thursday evenings and night times are quieter.
2. GPs are being discouraged from prescribing drugs available over the counter for minor conditions. So why not go to your pharmacist for advice?

Indeed there have been requests made by NHS England and the WKCCG to stop routinely prescribing medication that is available Over the Counter. We would like to advise patients that OTC medication is often cheaper if they join the online Pharmacy First - website <http://www.pharmacyfirst.co.uk/>
3. If you do need a GP appointment try to avoid calling at the busiest time - before 10.30 especially Mondays. Quieter times are afternoons or use the online booking service.
4. Ask for a home visit only if you or the person you are calling about is truly housebound and try to give the GP as much warning as possible.
5. Plan ahead especially if your appointments are routine. Be flexible.
6. Much time for both doctors and patients involves repeat prescriptions. Simplify this by asking your surgery about online ordering or for arranging for your local pharmacy to regularly order your repeat prescriptions for you.
7. Try to be prepared for your GP consultation. Be concise about your concerns and express them clearly. Please wear something appropriate, as much time can be spent stripping off layers. If a urine sample is likely to be required, please bring one with you.
8. Remember the ten minute consultation time. It may seem efficient to discuss several problems in one visit but to expect your GP to tackle many issues in ten minutes is unrealistic. You may mention other problems but your GP will need to prioritise and you may need separate appointments.
9. The NHS is our service but to get the best out of it we need to treat it with respect. Try to be honest about your condition - do not exaggerate.

If you have an appointment you cannot make please phone and cancel in a timely manner so that it may be offered to someone else. (There are a disturbing 30 million no-shows annually).

HEALTH HELP NOW

Health Help Now is a website which has been optimised for use on computers, smartphones and tablets that have internet access. It is suitable for everyone to use. Under 16s should use the product in conjunction with their parents.

If you require urgent treatment for symptoms which are not listed on Health Help Now, please ring NHS 111. Health Help Now aims to help people find the right service in Kent and Medway for their health needs, especially when they need medical help fast but it is not a life-threatening emergency.

Access at: <http://kent.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk>

There are almost 500,000 visits to Accident and Emergency departments (A&E) in Kent and Medway every year. Forty per cent of them do not result in any treatment. That does not mean those people are all in the wrong place. It is important for some conditions to be checked in A&E even if no treatment is needed. But national statistics suggest that between 75,000 and 150,000 of those visits to Kent and Medway A&Es could have been dealt with better by a different NHS service – such as pharmacists, GPs, or minor injuries nurses.

Changes which are coming to the NHS:-

The NHS is looking to ease the pressures on itself and its GPs by introducing new policies of “Local Care” and “One You”. With Local care the intention is to have all types of care available within local reach of patients i.e. diabetes, physiotherapy, weight management, stop smoking help, COPD, Asthma, Mental Health Care. The “One You” is an effort to get you to take greater care of yourself. In many ways this will overlap with “Local Care”, which is managed by the Social Services in conjunction with the local councils and can be accessed by referral from your GP.

Shortly the receptionists will be asking patients the purpose of their request for appointments. This will enable you to be directed to appropriate experts in the treatment you need, saving time for on-referrals by the doctor. If you accept this you may save yours and the doctor’s time, thus streamlining the NHS.

The other major new initiative is the creation of “HUBS”. These are a group of local surgeries coming together to recruit the services of specialists in various fields, probably rotating service from existing surgeries. The intention is to have these hubs accessed by referral from your surgery and working from 8-00a.m. to 8-00p.m. on weekdays and weekends. One already exists in Maidstone and is working well. Other areas will be included in the near future.

Have you a view on this? If so please phone or e-mail [John Franks](mailto:John.Franks@pt-c.co.uk), chairman of the PPG, on 01892 822386 or jappad@pt-c.co.uk and advise a) what services you want? b) where do you want a hub? And c) what time would you like it open? Weekdays/ Saturdays a.m. or p.m. or Sundays?
Replies are required very promptly please.

SURGERY NEWS:

ANNUAL RECALLS FOR MEDICATION REVIEWS

We would like to remind all patients that we recall for ALL of annual reviews to be done within your birthday month. Patients do not have to wait for an invite letter, you can book all of your reviews within your birthday month at any time. The reason we do it this way is to make it easier for patients to remember when reviews are due. We only remind you three times in our recall year (which goes from April to March) so this mean you should only receive a maximum of three letters a year from us inviting you for all of your outstanding annual reviews.

The annual reviews we recall you for are Asthma, Diabetes, Chronic Heart Disease, Hypertension, COPD, Memory Reviews, Mental Health reviews, Circulatory Checks, Rheumatoid reviews and Stroke reviews.

The PPG offer support to the practice and it's patients giving constructive advice on matters relating to the surgery and local NHS issues. If you would like to be more involved with your PPG please email them on: grosvenor.ppg@nhs.net.