

IVG GARDEN & GARDENERS

Those of you who have had occasion to visit the Surgery during the summer cannot have failed to notice the garden which has provided beauty and colour to lift the spirits, not only of patients but also of passers-by who often stop to express their admiration. Our grateful thanks go to all the IVG volunteers who have made this possible. Thank you for the kind donations of plants by patients and also to those who help with the actual planting. The heavy task of watering has been carried out regularly during the week and at weekends, and nimble fingers have kept the weeds down. The two shrubs lost in the snow have been dug out and replaced.

We shall soon be clearing and planting for the winter, so that this cheerful environment can be kept throughout the year. If you would like to join our growing team (in both senses!) please contact **Dorothy Shaw** (01395) 277511.

MEDICINES WASTAGE ONLY ORDER WHAT YOU NEED

An estimated 1,500 tonnes of unused prescription medicines are thrown away every year, which costs the NHS in the region of £370 million. Under current legislation once medication has left the pharmacy it cannot be re-used, and all medication returned to the pharmacies, even if it is unopened, has to be destroyed.

PLEASE ONLY ORDER WHAT YOU NEED

Also when collecting your dispensed medicines from the pharmacy, check that you have only what you need BEFORE you leave the pharmacy.

CHANGES TO MEDICATION

Our Practice regularly reviews our prescribing of medicines to ensure that we are following the most up to date national and local guidance, and obtaining the best value for money for the NHS. The change in the prices of medicines means that there may be occasions when we will have to change your regular medication to an equivalent drug that is more cost effective for the NHS. We trust that you will understand that by ensuring we spend our prescribing budget wisely the overall Health Service available to you benefits.

TREAT YOURSELF TO A NEW MAKEOVER

Enrol in our
Healthy Living Group
held at Imperial Surgery
every Wednesday 2-3pm
and gain all these benefits:

Learn about healthy eating and exercise
and lose weight at the same time

Weigh in each week to check your progress

How to change unhealthy eating behaviours

Increase in confidence and self esteem

Healthy Eating Recipes

There is a small donation of £1 per session which
goes to the
IVG (patient support group).

If you would like to know more ring
Chris Hodges on (01395) 280365 or
e-mail chrishodges@nhs.net
or just pop along!

IVG BOOKSHELF

Over the years our bookshelf in the waiting room at the Practice has been a great success, and the income from sales has helped to fund many projects, all for the benefit of patients. We raise about £350 per year in this way and would ask you to keep on donating all your unwanted books and magazines. Books can be collected, ring **Irene Buer** (01395) 265862

TELEPHONING THE SURGERY

If you are telephoning the Surgery for queries or blood results, please ring on (01395) 280362, and not on the appointments number. Also please if you could avoid ringing for non urgent calls before 9.30 am. In the afternoon please similarly relieve pressure on the phones by telephoning after 2.30 pm.

Likewise, it would be appreciated if you could avoid ringing the Surgery on Monday mornings prior to 10.00 am for non urgent calls; as you can imagine first thing on a Monday is very busy with urgent calls following the weekend.



Imperial Medical Practice Autumn Newsletter 2011

news from the Imperial Medical Practice
& the Patient Support Group,
known as the Imperial Venture Group.



Patient Support
Group



NEW REGISTRAR

Dr Alex Warner, who many of our patients got to know over the last year, has now qualified as a fully fledged GP. During his year at the Practice as Registrar he grew in confidence and became a very valuable member of the medical team. He is now working in a number of practices as a locum GP, so you may still see him from time to time. He has been replaced by **Dr Helen Rogers** who became our new Registrar in August and will be with us for 6 months - then there will be a 6 month break and our next Registrar in August 2012 will be with us for 12 months again.

Hello from Helen:

I have recently taken over as GP Registrar at Imperial Medical Practice. I will be working here as part of my General Practice training program. I will be fully qualified as a GP in 2 years time. I run my own clinics every day. I enjoy the variety and friendliness of working as a GP, getting to know my patients and their families.

I have taken a slightly longer route to become a doctor than others! I grew up in the beautiful city of Bath and completed an undergraduate degree in Modern History at Oxford University. After that I worked in Sicily as an English teacher.

I soon realised I had a burning desire to be a doctor, so went back to university in Bristol to train in Medicine. After medical school, I worked in hospitals in the Bristol area for 2 years before coming down to Devon. I undertook a year's training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Centre for Women's Health at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital, after that rotating to the Emergency Medical Unit and Emergency Department at the RD&E. Some of you may have met me before whilst I worked in those departments. I have a special interest in Women's Health but enjoy the variety and challenges of all areas of General Practice.

I have many interests outside of being a Doctor. I enjoy art and architecture and take great pleasure from travelling and living abroad. I spent half a year of medical school learning Medicine in Vienna, Austria. My husband and I have travelled

extensively in India and worked in hospitals in South India and the Himalayas. We have also travelled in other parts of Southeast Asia.

Back home in Devon, I enjoy making use of everything there is on offer. I am a member of a nearby sailing club and enjoy road and mountain biking, cooking and gardening.

I have very much enjoyed my first month of working in sunny Exmouth at the Imperial Medical Practice and look forward to getting to know both staff and patients more fully.

& Goodbye from Alex:

I met many of you during my 12 months at the Practice, but for those that I didn't a registrar is a GP in training - so basically a doctor who is being supervised by a more senior GP, who was **Dr Mark Nicholson** this year. This past year was the final year in a total of twelve years that it has taken me to become a GP (some doctors take even longer as they gain more diverse experience) and this explains why I am now sprouting grey hairs and a dignified paunch.

It has without doubt been the most enjoyable and interesting year of my career so far, mainly because of all of you patients, my trainers, and the staff at the Imperial Practice. It has been a great Practice to work in and I feel you are all very lucky to be patients here.

I have always wanted to be a GP as I enjoy the diversity of the job, the interesting people I meet, and being able to help the medical needs of a community. After this year I am going to work in the local area as a locum, gaining experience from different practices before I join a practice more permanently. I also look forward to furthering my training in Expedition medicine, so I can be involved in exciting adventures abroad.

GP & Nursing News:

Dr Louise Dunn & Harriet Swarbrick (Practice Nurse) took maternity leave in the Spring and both have welcomed new daughters to their families, Phoebe and Alex respectively. Congratulations to them both. **Dr Dunn** is due to return in June 2012.

Dr Robin Levantine and Dr Sally Dutson will continue to give their excellent support in the meantime, albeit Sally is also expecting a baby and will leave in December this year. We are in the process of organising more cover by female doctors.

SEASONAL FLU VACCINATIONS

Many of our patients will have received this Newsletter along with their invitations to have their seasonal flu vaccination. These clinics, by appointment, will be held on the mornings of Saturday, 15th October 2011 and Saturday, 5th November 2011.

The flu jab is FREE

What is seasonal Flu? Seasonal flu occurs every year, usually in the winter. It's a highly infectious disease caused by a number of flu viruses. The most likely viruses that will cause flu each year are identified in advance and vaccines are then produced to closely match them. Flu is caused by viruses and not bacteria, so antibiotics won't treat it.

Who should have the vaccine?

- Those 65 years or over
- Those under 65 years who have serious medical conditions, e.g. diabetes, heart disease, stroke etc
- Those living in residential or nursing homes
- The main carer of an older or disabled person
- Those who are pregnant

Why is a seasonal flu vaccination my best protection against flu? The vaccination will help your body to fight flu viruses. Your body starts making antibodies against the viruses about a week to ten days after the injection. These antibodies help to protect you against similar seasonal flu viruses that you may come into contact with. The seasonal flu vaccine will NOT protect you against the common cold or other winter viruses.

For more information about how to protect yourself and your family this winter visit:

www.nhs.uk/winterhealth

Don't wait until there is a flu outbreak this winter - **GET YOUR SEASONAL FLU JAB**

PATIENTS WITH COELIAC DISEASE

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease. Gluten, which is found in wheat, barley and rye triggers an immune reaction in people with coeliac disease. This means that eating gluten damages the lining of the small intestine. Other parts of the body may also be affected.

As the result of updated medical guidance we shall be calling in all those of our patients who have coeliac disease for a review. This will include having an annual check up to give health advice, monitor symptoms and to discuss possible complications, such as osteoporosis. It is important to maintain a strict gluten-free diet in combination with a healthy balanced diet, such as 'five-a-day' fruit and vegetables, and plenty of calcium rich food.

There are a variety of staple foods such as bread, pasta, flour, crisp-breads and pizza bases available on NHS prescription. However, new advice is that non-essential 'treat' foods, such as gluten free cake mixes and sweet biscuits should be prescribed only in exceptional circumstances. In line with other Practices we would ask you to review such prescriptions.

The national charity Coeliac UK have recently supported this too. We shall be happy to answer any questions you may have and Coeliac UK has a very useful website at www.coeliac.org.uk

NEW PRACTICE WEBSITE

About three months ago we were forced to change our website as our previous provider could no longer offer support. In many ways the old site had served us well, but it was beginning to look a bit dated, and a change was probably needed. The website is still at exactly the same address:

www.imperialmedicalpractice.co.uk

However, we are conscious that the changes to the online prescription service have caused some of our users difficulty. None of us like change very much, and 'what was wrong with the old system' has been voiced. Well we had no choice but to change provider, and the new prescription facility comes with a higher level of security (the old system really didn't have much security at all). This does mean that when you start to use the online prescription service you have to go through a registration process, which does work if you carefully follow the instructions.

However, if you have problems please don't fret, if you ring **Chris Hodges** at the Practice (01395) 280365, she will guide you through the process. Many of our patients are successfully ordering their repeat prescriptions online so do persevere.

There is a significant amount of useful information on the website which may answer questions that you have about the Practice and medical conditions. If you think something could be usefully added please do let Chris Hodges know - you will find an email facility on the website in the Contact Details section.

IVG UPDATE & AGM

(The Imperial Venture Group - Patient Support Group)

In April and May of this year the IVG wrote to every patient household in the practice to give an update, after nearly a decade in operation, on the way forward for the group, and to attract 'new blood'. With the ongoing changes to the NHS at the moment, the IVG is about to enter a new and interesting phase and it is more important than ever for patients' group to make its voice heard. The IVG exists as a partnership between the practice and the patients for mutual benefit and support. Now we need as many active members as possible to take us into the future.

A new committee will be elected at the AGM on Monday, 21st November 2011 starting at 7.30 pm at the Baptist Hall, Elm Grove, which is just around the corner from the surgery. These will be YOUR representatives, so please make a note of the date and come along to express your views.

The AGM is over within 30 minutes, and traditionally is followed by a guest speaker on a medical topic of wide interest. This year we are very lucky to be able to welcome Dr. Manish Gandhi, who is a consultant cardiologist at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital. He is kindly giving up some of his valuable time to be with us and his topic will be 'How to have a Healthy Heart'. There will be the opportunity for questions if you have queries or concerns about your own condition.

These sessions have always proved extremely popular and illuminating. Do come along as the talk is bound to interest and help many patients. The talk is open to anyone who would like to attend and is not just limited to Imperial patients, so you are most welcome to bring along friends and family. There are refreshments after the AGM and prior to the talk.

URGENT HELP NEEDED WITH OUR NEW PATIENT REPRESENTATION GROUP

As part of the new government changes to the NHS there is a commitment to an NHS centred on patients, ensuring that patients share in decisions about their care - "No decision about me, without me".

As part of this commitment the Practice will be engaging in the creation of a patient group, based on the IVG, but including more patients than on the management committee.

This group will be involved in a patient survey, which will be conducted both in-practice and online, to the

convenience of those participating, with a view to providing more patient input into the way the Practice operates, and to highlighting any areas of concern that may lead to future changes within the Practice.

If you would like to help with this work it would be very much appreciated and would genuinely assist with even more 'patient-centred' management of the Practice.

Please email **Nic Power**, Practice Manager, on nicolapower1@nhs.net to say that you can help with the Patient Representation Group, and then we can start to move this work forward.

This will not be onerous or time consuming - but it will make a difference.

Please Help

IVG CAR TRANSPORT SCHEME

One of our IVG Volunteer Drivers has written the following reflecting his experience and feedback as a driver:

"Got an appointment at your local surgery? No problem - well not if you are fit and ambulant that is. If however mobility has become a bit of a struggle the Imperial Medical Practice can turn to a team of IVG volunteer drivers. I have been a member of this team for 18 months and would recommend it wholeheartedly. Where else can one be hailed as a 'Charming Young Man' when a more usual form of address is 'Alright Grandad?'. Organised with great efficiency by Bunty Hawketts the scheme calls on my services once or twice a month to ferry patients to the Practice or to Exmouth Hospital. I find it of real interest to talk to people, some of whom have lived in Exmouth for their whole lives and clearly recall all the changes that have occurred over that time." **Joe Abbott**

If this has fired your imagination and you would like to join as a volunteer driver phone **Bunty Hawketts** (01395) 272763.

Another of our drivers has suggested that the contact details for obtaining a **Blue Badge** for those with severe mobility problems would be a good idea.

The number to ring for Devon is: **0845 1551 007** (Care Direct). They will ask a number of questions including your diagnosed medical condition that reduces your mobility, the medication you are taking, the treatment you receive, how far you can walk etc. One IVG driver observes that those patients that he drives who bring their blue badge have a much better experience and feel less stress when on street parking is required. We hope that this might prove helpful.