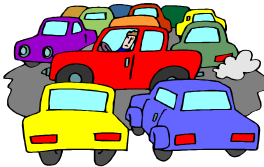


Inside this issue:

- Leatside Car Park
- Leavers/Joiners/New Babies
- Training Afternoons
- Swine Flu Advice
- Hike Against Cruelty to Kids
- Wear It Pink Day!
- Curry4Cancer
- Monday, Monday
- Blood Donor Dates

Leatside Car Park



It has been a problem for some time that people are parking in our car park and then going off to do their shopping without giving any consideration to our patients. The surgery is busy at all times and one of the grumbles from patients is that they are unable to find a parking space when attending an appointment or collecting a prescription.

We do have a sign near the entrance saying that 'Parking in this car park is for visitors to Leatside and the Pharmacy only'. If you see someone park their car and walk off please let one of the receptionists know so that we can deal with the problem.

Leavers/Joiners/New Babies.

Dr Stephen Thake, our current Registrar will be leaving us for a few months, his last day is 2nd February. He will return later in the year on 4th August, when our previous Registrar Dr Anna Corbett will also be coming back to finish her GP training.

SWINE FLU ADVICE.

CATCH IT: germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

BIN IT: Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of them as soon as possible.

KILL IT: Hands can transfer germs to any surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

Anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms should contact the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1 513 100 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu

Hike Against Cruelty to Kids.

On the 27th September 2009 Jane Sharland (our Finance Administrator) and her husband John completed the 25 mile Challenge Walk (actually it turned out to be 26 miles as they got lost!!) on behalf of the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

The walk started and finished at Bicton College and took us 12 hours to complete, although we were not the last to go over the finishing line. Although a hot day and very stony underfoot in parts we finished it despite blistered and sore feet, raising a whopping £562.50. Many thanks to all those people who supported us. Jane

Wear It Pink Day!

On Friday 30th October it was "Wear It Pink" day—the aim was to raise awareness and money for breast cancer research.

After numerous e-mails reminding my colleagues to wear pink to work only 2 of them turned up without wearing pink—not bad!

Those who did wear pink had to pay for the privilege (the other 2 did not get away with it though). Three of us made some yummy cakes to sell at coffee time, they disappeared very quickly indeed! After lots of pinkness, loads of donations and far too many cakes we managed to collect £116.61—fantastic I think!

A HUGE thank you to those who donated.
Stacey, Receptionist.



Training Afternoons:

The Surgery will be closed on the following date between 1:00pm and 3:30pm for staff training. The Chemist will remain open as usual.

- Wednesday 20th January and Wednesday 17th March

Curry4Cancer

On 6th October Reena (one of the Pharmacists from Boots Chemist) made us all lovely curries and served us with the help of volunteers dressed in traditional Indian costume. There was also a guess the number of jelly beans in a jar. They raised £225 for Breast Cancer Care.



Monday, Monday!

We are very busy on Mondays.

We have some ideas why and have over time tried to accommodate this increased demand for our services on a Monday by providing more receptionists to man the phones that day as well as making sure all the Doctors, including the part-timers, are available that day.

It is increasingly difficult to manage what we see as disproportionate extra demand on one day though.

All the Doctors and the Nurses have Surgeries that you can book ahead of time.

If you want to see any Doctor, routinely, then the next appointment is I think in 2 (working) days time.

If you were to ring today to book to see me personally, the next appointment is about a week away. All the Doctors get booked up like that. If you haven't had the foresight to book an appointment anticipating an illness a week away then what you'll do is ring in when you actually feel ill to see if you can see a Doctor (or Nurse).

So...to balance this, each day we allocate 3 sessions of Doctor time to manage this "same-day" need.

In the mornings we have one Doctor able to see patients in a same-day Surgery with 18 or 20 appointments.

Another Doctor is manning the phones -madly ringing people back to discuss the problem they rang in with to see if it can be dealt with on the phone, by the Nurse, deferred a day or two... or some other way. Seeing if we can't manage the demand.

In the afternoon one Doctor does both tasks.

Most days this is fine, but Mondays is getting a bit crazy. Last week Dr Frankland dealt with I think 110 phone calls in the morning session. Most other days it is a mere 50 or so in the morning.

The Doctor in the afternoon session is seeing patients who have been booked in to see them as well as trying to triage telephone calls, so that can be pressured too.

(btw I do sometimes wonder why patients ring in to see the Doctor but leave ringing until 5pm? Why didn't they ring earlier in the day?)

You could argue that we just need to provide more medical staff to cover the demand... However,

We feel though that we have enough cover, it is just that the distribution through the week is excessively skewed.

If we were to take another doctor out of their routine work to cover the excess demand on a Monday then they would have fewer appointments for the routine investigative and preventive work that we do.

What I think we want to avoid is a situation where we make accessibility variable (that is to say, better on a Monday), because that then begins to *support* the need for people to ring in on a Monday. If there are Doctors available and there is demand then I feel it would in the end only escalate the situation. What we would rather do is see if we could modify the patients' behaviour. To this end we have begun to think what are the basic guidelines for accessing a Doctor.

Something like:

1. Consider when you need to be seen. Being seen on the same day that it occurs to you to ring isn't always necessary.
2. Try to plan ahead, even if just a little.
3. Consider even if you need to see the doctor face to face... a phone call might well do. Or an email. Or see the Nurse. (The Nurses are all very good)
4. Try to keep seeing the same Doctor for ongoing conditions. It does help. But you will probably need to book further ahead.
5. Consider leaving phoning until later in the week. It should still get sorted out, whatever it is.

Any others you can think of...? - might be nice to add a comment to the blog for this... I have, after all, written this purely from my own perspective and feedback is appreciated. Dr Dylan Watkins

Next Blood Donor Dates at Nearest Locations to Totnes:

At Totnes Civic Hall, High Street, Totnes. Thursday 7th January between 1:30pm – 3:15pm and 5pm — 7:15pm.

At Paignton, Methodist Church, Tower Road. Thursday 14th January, Friday 5th March and Wednesday 17th March. All days are between 1:00pm—3:15pm and 5pm—6:45pm.

An appointment time can be pre-booked for the above sessions by either phoning 0845 7 711 711, or using their website: www.blood.co.uk Also ring this number if you are not sure if you are eligible to give blood.



For more information about the practice please visit our website at: www.leatside.co.uk