The Calverton Surgery Newsletter June 2023 **Antibiotic Overuse**

In this month’s newsletter I have decided to focus on the problem of antibiotic overuse. There are increasing concerns within the NHS that antibiotics are over relied on by patients and over prescribed by doctors. The headline on a recent NHS patient information leaflet I saw said *‘Taking antibiotics when you don’t need them puts you and your family at risk’*. It goes on to remind us all that an antibiotic, as well as treating possible problem germs, also causes other bacteria living particularly in our bowel quite normally, to become resistant to that antibiotic. This means that future antibiotics may not work for us and, we can pass on those resistant germs to our close family members. The concern is that antibiotics are being prescribed for potentially viral infections or for bacterial infections which may have got better without treatment. Many common problems will get better on their own, for example ear infections after a week, sore throats about the same, sinusitis can be 2 – 3 weeks, some colds 2 weeks and if with a cough and chestiness sometimes 3 weeks. Essentially this means that if you have symptoms, even if they are dragging on a bit, but you are systemically well (just an occasional temperature perhaps but taking fluids well and not getting worse over time) then it is fine to let nature run its course. Exceptions would be if your symptoms include a mottled skin or rash that doesn’t fade with pressure; confusion, slurred speech or drowsiness; significant breathing problems; a severe headache and vomiting; chest pain; difficulty swallowing or drooling; coughing blood or clearly feeling worse over time. Depending on how quickly symptoms are changing will determine what to do (111, 999, or contacting the surgery during a working day).

For most self-limiting conditions, our high street pharmacists are a terrific and probably under-utilised resource. They are the experts on over-the-counter medicines to help with symptoms or discomfort. Also remember never to share antibiotics or keep for later use. There is more information by putting ‘keep antibiotics working’ in your search engine, or become an antibiotic guardian via antibioticguardian.com

Next, a word about local Children’s Centre Services as there are things on locally most days of the week. More information from the Core Centre in Calverton or via nottinghamshire.gov.uk/childrenscentreservice

Finally, a special mention for 2 of our long serving staff members. Chris Macintyre in our reception team has just passed her ‘30 years of service’ milestone. Also, Carole Stevens is back with us in our admin team helping out after retiring in 2020 (following 29 years with the surgery). An outstanding effort by both and many thanks.