

WINTER EDITION | DECEMBER 2019

THE SPINNEY SURGERY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to our third and final newsletter of the year. As we get closer to the end of the year, we would like to bring you all the news from the surgery including a CQC updates, clinics we will be running, staff changes and more.



XMAS OPENING TIMES

23rd December: closed between 1pm - 2pm
24th December: closed between 1pm - 2pm
25th December: closed all day
26th December: closed all day
31st December: open all day
1st January: closed all day
2nd January: closed between 1pm - 2pm

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

In October, we said goodbye to Pam Purnell who from 1984 has helped to process repeat prescriptions for our patients as she retired from the practice to spend more time with family and pursue her hobbies. We hope you'll join us in wishing Pam all the best.

Dr. Abu Belal has also decided it is time to step down from partnership at the practice. We are currently advertising and interviewing for a new GP partner to join our team.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

From the feedback survey we sent out this year, we understand that our patients would like to see the same doctor for each of their health concerns as gives patients consistency with their care and the chance to build up a rapport with their GP.

From this feedback, the Spinney would like to welcome a number of new GPs to our team who will be working throughout the week to see patients.

We would like to welcome Dr. Sarah Bass GP Registrar who has joined the team and will be with us until February 2021. Dr Bernard Agyei has also joined our team as a GP Registrar and will be working with us until the end of 2020.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Emilie Couchman will be joining the team in April. Returning from a maternity leave, Emilie will be initially working two days a week increasing to three days when she has settled back in.

Dr. Mike Moor will also be joining the team as a regular GP working on Thursdays. Dr. Moor has worked as a GP partner in the St Neots area before taking early retirement, and we are really pleased he is able to bring his experience and knowledge to our practice.

Also joining us this year, we have Michelle Thompson and Claire Hudson who will be working alongside our reception team. Michelle started at the Spinney in October and Claire will be joining us in December after both previously working at local GP surgeries. We look forward to having them on our team and for you to meet them on reception.

APPOINTMENT ATTENDANCE

Since our summer newsletter went out explaining the cost of patients missing appointments, we have sadly noticed an **increase** in non-attendance at the practice. In the month of November, **195 patients** did not attend their appointments with a member of the practice.

With a lot of our feedback focusing on the availability of appointments, it's vital that the practice and patients work together to ensure that the Spinney can offer appointments and care wherever possible. This means notifying the surgery as soon as if you realise you no longer require your scheduled appointment to allow for someone else to receive care.

If patients repeatedly fail to attend appointments, they will be removed from this practice list and be required to find an alternative doctor.



SMS CONSENT

Going into 2020, the Spinney Surgery will start to use text messages (SMS) for some patient communication such as appointment reminders as well as information about repeat medication reviews. We hope that in contacting our patients in this way, attendance for appointments will increase and there will be less disruption when issuing repeat prescriptions.

If you do not want for us to contact you via text, please let us know by either emailing us at **no-reply.spinney@nhs.net** or calling our reception team on **01480 495347**. All those who have not opted out by December 16th will be enrolled for SMS contact and will receive texts from the practice.

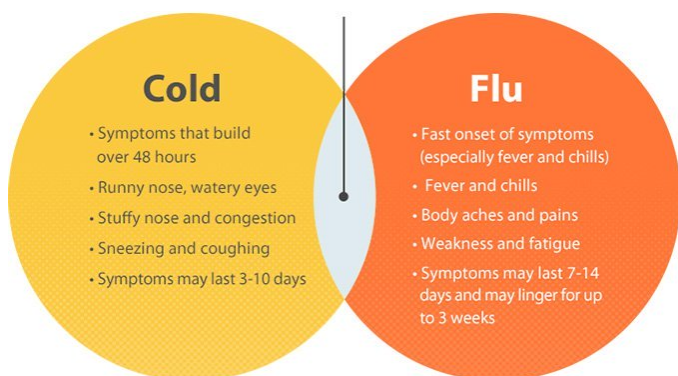
FLU VACCINATIONS

As the evenings get darker and the cold weather starts to hit us, so do our coughs, colds and most importantly, the dreaded flu.

Patients who are **over 65 years old**; at risk due to **health issues** (diabetes, respiratory, auto-immune disease etc.); **pregnant**; a **carer** or **housebound** are more at risk at catching the flu which may have a serious impact on your health.

There are still a large number of patients who have not attended for their flu jab and we have a large enough supply for those who are risk so if you have not yet had your jab, please make sure you book an appointment to get this done as soon as possible.

Sometimes the common cold can be mistaken as the flu, however their symptoms can differ:



Symptoms can be similar, so keep an eye on what's bothering you most.

If you think you have the flu, please ensure you stay at home where you can recover comfortably and also reduce the risk of others catching it.

You should make sure you drink plenty of water and try some over the counter remedies like throat sweets, paracetamol or nasal sprays to ease your symptoms.

LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE VETERAN

The Royal College of Practitioners estimates that there are 2.4 million UK Armed Forces veterans in Great Britain, making up an 5% of the population aged 16 and over. They also estimate that roughly 18,000 service people move back into civilian life every year, including 2,000 who leave on medical grounds.

As a result of their time in the forces, veterans often have unique health needs which need to be flagged up and accommodated for by their healthcare providers. In addition to veterans, there are about 5.4 million adult spouses, partners, widowers and child dependants (overall mainly female) of veterans, often facing uncertainty, stress and isolation.

At the Spinney, we aim to support and provide high quality care for patients from every walk of life, including the veterans in our community who may benefit from additional support and advice. For this reason, we are working towards gaining Military Veteran Aware Accreditation.

Going forward into 2020, the Spinney hopes to appoint a clinical lead on veterans in the surgery who will attend dedicated training, and NHS Armed Forces network meetings, staying up to date with the latest research and innovations and ensuring that the practice is meeting the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant.

In order to identify where this additional support can be given, please make us aware whether you are currently serving in the forces, whether you have someone in your immediate family who is or whether you have left the forces as a result of retirement or on medical grounds. This can be done during your appointment with a healthcare professional or disclosed to our reception team.

CQC UPDATE

The CQC are an independent regulator of health and social care in England who monitor, inspect and regulate services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. Every four years, a Lead Inspector and GP will visit GP practices for the day and create a report on their findings before going on to rate the practice.

Our visit took place back in August with the Inspector noting a number of good and excellent practices at the surgery, some of which are listed below:

- **Our infection control system and action plan to implement other improvements was complimented**
- We demonstrate a sensitive approach to patients with Learning Disabilities and Mental Health issues
- **Childhood immunisation rates have improved and are above the World Health Organisation rate of 90% with us reaching 97.2% and 99.1%. Any children who do not attend for immunisations are followed up to ensure parents are aware of the benefits of immunisation**
- The introduction of a Clinical Pharmacist, reviewing hospital discharge letters to ensure medication is correct and make appropriate adjustments, has been beneficial to the practice
- **Patients with long term conditions have structured annual reviews**
- We offer good access for contraceptive services/sexual health at the surgery
- **The end of life care offered by the surgery is coordinated effectively**
- When asked, staff reported a positive and supportive working environment. Staff are happy in their roles and new staff felt well inducted to their role

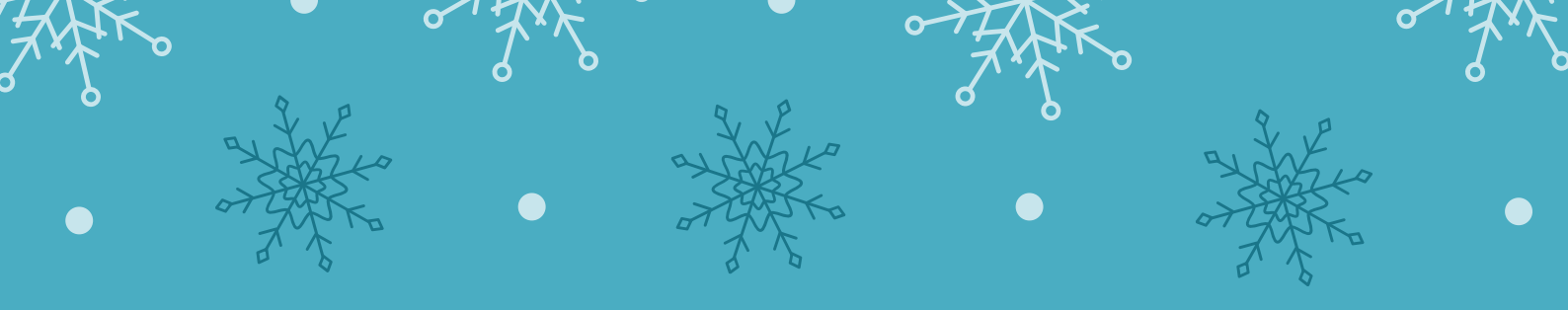
There are always things that need to be improved and we were no different to other practices in the Cambridge and Peterborough CCG. Over the page, we have summarised some of the things that the Inspector found to need improvement at the practice and we have also detailed what action we plan to take going forward to rectify these factors:



- A proactive and comprehensive audit programme needs to be in place to demonstrate ongoing review. We now have a full audit programme which is overseen by a GP and Managing Partner. This covers many drug related audits as well as systems audits.
- **Antibiotic prescribing continues to be higher than average – as a surgery we need to make sure we constantly review this and explore why we prescribe more than other like sized surgeries**
- Safety alerts (i.e. drug shortages, drug recalls and safety notices) are reviewed and documented, however there were some historical alerts that had not been reviewed appropriately. The current system of safety alerts is working well and checks made regularly to ensure all alerts have been reviewed.
- **Learning from Significant Events and complaints needs to be shared more widely in the surgery**
- Patients not attending for various checks was higher than other like sized surgeries. Going forward, we will be using a computer reporting programme called Ardens, which makes it much easier to identify patients who are not responding or attending which will mean staff can encourage these patients to attend wherever possible.

The things that were good outweighed the things to be improved, however due to the nature of CQC checks and the trend in the Cambridgeshire area, the audit, antibiotics, and alerts meant that the practice has been rated as Requires Improvement.

Obviously we were disappointed with this rating, however we have already submitted our action plan, which has been accepted. By the nature of the visits we are unable to have another visit immediately but we are hoping it will be before August 2020.



This is a unique opportunity for you to find out and think about any potential risks you may have of developing vascular disease and we would encourage you to take up our offer.

If you would like to have a NHS health check, please contact the surgery and find out if you are eligible. If you already have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, stroke or have had a check in the last five years, then you will not be eligible. We can let you know your eligibility when you call to book in.

NHS HEALTH CHECKS

Patients aged between 40 and 74 years old are being offered the opportunity of being screened for disease in the blood vessels – called vascular disease. Vascular disease causes things like heart attacks and strokes and can be responsible for thousands of deaths in the UK each year. Often if undiagnosed, a heart attack or stroke can be the first sign that someone has vascular disease.

Early recognition and management of these conditions can not only be life changing but lifesaving. For this reason, we would like invite you to attend one of our NHS Health Check appointments.

During these appointments, a healthcare will take a sample of blood for a cholesterol test and take your blood pressure. These, together with some basic family health history, will help us identify a risk of developing vascular disease in the next ten years. We can then offer you help and support to reduce this risk.

When we get the results of your blood test and blood pressure, we will then be able to determine whether you are at an increased risk of developing vascular disease. We will then write to you with your results as well as a plan if you are at increased risk.



MEDICATION REVIEWS

We are working through all patients on repeat medication to ensure they have had all the appropriate monitoring undertaken and review. You may be asked to attend an appointment with a health care assistant, or provide a blood pressure reading, before you can have your next prescription.

Please make sure you do respond to any requests to attend for checks and monitoring. This helps us ensure that you continue to be safe on the medication you are taking.



EPS PHASE 4

The next phase of the electronic prescription service (EPS) is due to go live on January 30th, 2020. In this phase, almost all prescriptions will be processed electronically with paper prescriptions only being available in special circumstances.

We will update patients with more information as we receive it at the practice.

GLOW STUDY

The Spinney surgery is supporting a new project which will look into different ways of supporting people with type 2 diabetes to help manage and improve their health.

The GLoW study (Glucose Lowering through Weight management) will be enlisting over 550 patients from surgeries across Cambridgeshire to take part in one of two education courses to see which method of care helps patients to manage their diabetes better along with which is the best value for money. Participants will be followed up at six months / one year and their diet, blood sugar, weight, use of medication and health resources etc, will be measured.

Patients from the Spinney who have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in the past three years will have recently received letters inviting them to take part in the study. Please be aware that it is entirely optional and you do not need to take part if you don't want to. Not participating will also not affect any of the care provided by your GP.

If you are interested or think you have been missed from this criteria, please contact the GLoW study team on **0800 783 4611** or email them at **GLOW.Study@mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk**



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

During our summer survey, we received a lot of feedback about the limited resources to mental health issues for our patients. It's been estimated that one in three people experience problems with anxiety and nearly 50% of all people diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder

This is why we are pleased to now be able to offer a new course with one of the Wellbeing Service's Psychological Practitioners. These sessions are targeted to those who have anxiety and would like to learn how to better manage it.

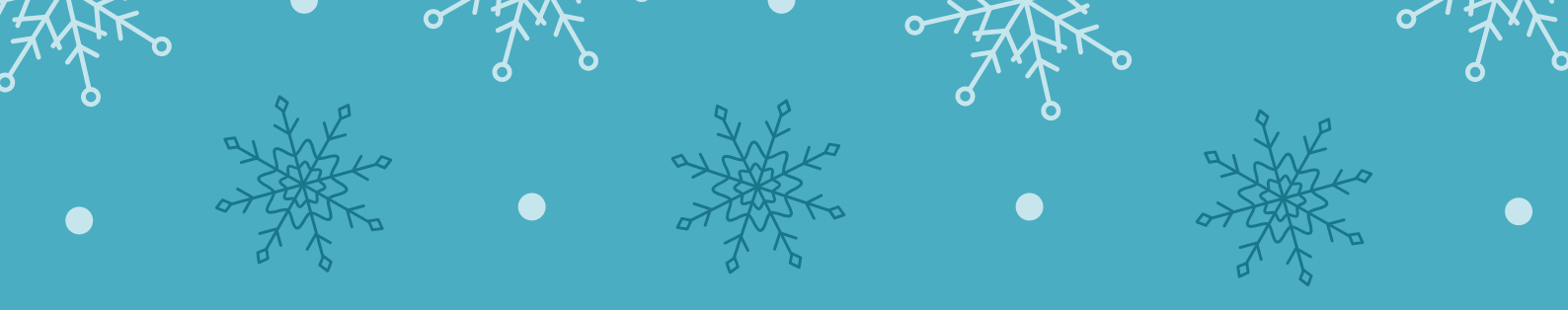
Anxiety can affect us in a few different ways. it can be physical (heart racing, sweating, shaking, breathlessness), behaviours you do (avoiding situations or activities) or manifest in the thoughts you have (worrying, predicting worse case scenarios).

You may benefit from this course if:

- you are suffering from mild-moderate anxiety
- you would like to improve your understanding of anxiety
- you would like tools and techniques on managing anxiety
- you would like to learn and share similar experiences
- you need a course that fits around your day

The first course will be on **January 14th, 2020** and will take place **every Tuesday** for 5 weeks between **17:30-19:30** at **Newtown Centre**, Huntingdon, PE29 3RJ.

If you would like to attend a session with a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner, then please get in contact with the team at **01480 445243** or email the team at **pwshunts@cpft.nhs.uk**



DEMENTIA SUPPORT SESSIONS

In order to better support, educate and care those who either have been diagnosed with dementia or support those who do, the Alzheimer's Society has been working hard to expand its resources for GP practices.

As a result of this work, the Spinney is now able to offer sessions with a dedicated Support Worker who will be able to provide information and support about dementia as well as help patients access the correct services.

These sessions will be carried out at the surgery every two months starting from December 2019 and concluding in June 2020. You don't need to have a confirmed diagnosis of dementia to attend: whether you have a memory problem or are a carer, family member or friend of someone who does, you are more than welcome to attend in order to receive the support needed.

If you wish to book in for a session with one of the Alzheimer's Society's dedicated support workers, please get in touch with our reception team on **01480 495347** who will then be able to book you into a session that best suits you. Patients are welcome to attend as many sessions as they feel would be beneficial.

EVERYONE HEALTH

Everyone Health is a free service provider who are able to offer sessions for everyone who is looking to get healthier, whether it be for the festive period or going into the new year. See below just a few of the sessions offered for our patients at the Spinney:

Alive n' Kicking: 12 weeks of nutritional topics for the family, including goals set by all of the family, interactive games for children and plenty of information about healthy eating and lifestyles

Health Trainer Service: six appointments with a health trainer who will help support you make sustainable lifestyle changes in a motivational, one-on-one setting. This can be for those looking to make healthier habits, lose or gain weight.

Adult Weight Management: 12 weeks of learning about the different aspects of nutrition alongside dynamic physical activities (for those with a BMI of +25)

Falls Prevention: for those who feel unsteady on their feet and would like to increase their confidence and mobility

Alcohol Intervention Service: if you feel your alcohol intake is excessive or would like help with dependency issues, this service can provide the support needed on a one-on-one basis.

These services are welcome to anyone in the community, including patients who may benefit from extra support such as those with disabilities, patients who have a carer or who are not fluent in English. All sessions are run by trained practitioners.

Referrals for any of these services can be completed by your GP or you can self-refer on their website at **everyonehealth.co.uk**

CARER FRIENDLY TICK AWARD

As a surgery, we pride ourselves on the support and care we are able to offer to carers in the community, whether it be a simple health check or checking in with how they're coping and whether they need additional support.

For this reason, we are incredibly proud to have been nominated and subsequently awarded with the Carer Friendly Tick award by Caring Together in Peterborough.



The Carer Friendly Tick award recognises our commitment to the patients at our surgery who work tirelessly and often silently to care for those who need it most whether it be a loved one, family member or friend. The life of a carer is incredibly rewarding but can also leave carers themselves needing an extra helping hand which we aspire to be in difficult times.

We would like to say a big thank you to the carers in the community for all you do, as well as Amanda Orchard, our Chairperson of the Spinney Patients Association, who kindly collected this award on our behalf.

If you are a carer or know someone who is, and would like more information, support and guidance, please don't hesitate to get in touch with at the surgery or fill in the form on our website at www.spinney-surgery.org.uk

KEEP WELL THIS WINTER FROM AGE UK

As we get older, the colder weather and winter bugs can have more of an impact on our health which is why it's so important to take extra care of ourselves and make sure we have everything we need to stay healthy.

Take a look below at some of Age UK's top tips on staying well during the winter period and if you feel you would benefit from some extra support or advice, don't hesitate to get in touch with Age UK at **0800 678 1602**

Make sure your heating, gas and electric is working or ask someone close to check for you. Ensure you have someone to call should any of these break or run out so you're not left for too long in the cold.



If you are worried about your heating bills, there are schemes in place to help such as the Winter Fuel Payment and Warm Home Discount. For more information about these, call Age UK on **0800 169 65 65**.



Keep simple cold, flu and sore throat remedies at home in case you do feel poorly. This will save you making the chilly trip out to get them.



Get your repeat prescriptions ordered in plenty of time so you don't run out whilst the practice is closed for Christmas. It'd also be a good idea to consider have the flu jab too.



It's not unusual to feel down and out of sorts in winter especially when the days are short and the nights feel long. Try to keep a routine and see if friends or family would like to visit.



If you live alone, why not ask someone to check in on you once or twice a week? Not only will you have peace of mind someone will be looking out for you during the cold, but it's a great opportunity for a catch up too.

