

Thorpewood Medical Group Newsletter

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Spring—April 2015

Surgery Update

Telephone System Upgrade: It has been a long time coming, and there have been many frustrating holdups along the way, but phase one of the new surgery phone system was installed in March. It was two years ago that we identified that our current phone system was outdated, and not as effective as the more up to date systems available. A contract was signed in September 2013 for the agreed upgrade to the system.



The necessary NHS infrastructure improvements to allow installation of the new system have taken a while, but in March 2015 we were able to install phase one. Phases two and three of the upgrade will happen shortly, now the NHS move from Windows XP to Windows 7 has been undertaken at the surgery, thus further enhancing the new system benefits.

We hope you will notice the difference in customer service when calling the surgery – whilst we cannot guarantee that every call will be answered within a certain timescale, we can inform patients as to where they are in the call queue, and provide some, hopefully helpful, information whilst you are waiting.

General Election: Without wishing to be political in any form, we must expect some changes to come from the General Election, whichever party, or combination of parties, forms the next Government. Primary care, and the wider NHS, is certainly going through very challenging times, and I hope we can continue to meet your medical needs for many years to come. This maybe in a format very similar to the last ten years or so, it may be in different ways. The overriding wish of the practice is to continue to provide for your medical care as best as we possibly can, and I know the Partners and staff are working tirelessly to ensure that happens.

Ian Wilson
Practice Manager

Sad to say “goodbye”

It is with sadness that we say ‘Goodbye’ to Ruth George, our Senior Practice Nurse. Ruth has been at Thorpewood for the last 17 years, and has been a real influence in developing our long term condition clinics, and the proactive chronic disease management within the practice.

We wish Ruth every happiness and personal fulfilment in her future life. I know all the staff at Thorpewood will miss Ruth, and it will be difficult to ‘fill her shoes’



Transport Plus

Transport Plus is a unique public transport service provided jointly by Norfolk County Council and ERS Medical assisting adult members of the public to access essential health, social and wellbeing services. As part of this partnership, a specific transport service using primarily volunteer car drivers has been set up to assist people in the community with such a need.

Journey booking requests can be made through a Call Centre 0344 800 8020. Staff will take full details of the request, plan and organise the journey with available transport resources. A minimum of 3 clear working days notice is required and certain criteria will need to be fulfilled. A mileage charge of £2.50 is made for the first 5 miles, then 0.45p per mile.

More details can be found at
www.norfolk.gov.uk/Travel_and_transport/Public_transport/Community_transport/Services/

Travelling abroad?

Going on holiday?

Taking a gap year?

Useful websites: www.nathnac.org/travel www.nhs.uk/livewell/travelhealth www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk
www.fco.gov.uk www.nhs.uk/livewell/travelhealth/pages/sunsafetyQA.aspx



If you would like advice and / or vaccinations before travelling abroad:

1. Call into the surgery, at least **8 weeks** before your date of travel (**6 months if you have a complicated itinerary**) to collect a travel questionnaire and information sheet (or these can be downloaded from our website www.thorpewoodmedicalgroup.nhs.uk)
2. Complete and return the travel form to the surgery.
3. A member of the nursing staff will review your travel requirements.
4. You will be contacted within a week and an appointment made with a practice nurse if required.
5. Please note we are not travel advice specialists so may not be able to give full advice for all travellers and may advise you to attend a travel clinic for specialist advice and a risk assessment.

Applying for European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

If you are a UK resident, you are entitled to medical treatment that may become necessary while on holiday, at a reduced cost or sometimes free, when temporarily visiting an EU country.

Only treatment under the country's state scheme is covered. EHIC cards are only valid for 5 years. Make sure you check the expiry date before travelling.

Visit www.ehic.org.uk for detailed information and how to apply.



Praise for Thorpewood Medical Group

The practice would like to thank all patients who have responded to the Friends and Family Test which came into being at the beginning of this year. We have had excellent feedback on the services we provide.

NHS Friends and Family Test

The results are divided into two categories; Total Recommenders (Extremely Likely, Likely) and Total Non-Recommenders (Unlikely, Extremely Unlikely).

We are very pleased to see that the majority of patients fall into the 'Total Recommenders' categories (over 90%). Positive comments range from the friendliness and helpfulness of the reception team to the excellent clinical care of all clinicians; every month one of the clinicians is named. This is very heart warming and a great boost to staff working in the NHS during these difficult times.

The comments which fall into the 'Non-Recommenders' category (under 10%) are generally due to the wait for an appointment; three to four weeks for a routine appointment is too long. **Unfortunately we have approximately 250 appointments a month which have been booked and not used. Do please cancel your appointment if you no longer require this; in cancelling your appointment the waiting time for a routine appointment would fall significantly.**

The monthly figures/comments are displayed in the surgery and on the practice website, please take time to read these and please continue to feedback to us.

Carol Postle
Patient Services Manager