

STATION ROAD SURGERY NEWS

SUMMER 2024

BROUGHT TO YOU BY STATION ROAD SURGERY
PATIENTS PARTICIPATION GROUP

EDITION 7

Welcome to the latest edition on the SRS newsletter.

Since last writing, nearly a year ago, there has been much change at SRS. The building work at the surgery was completed late summer 2023; the new rooms created were soon occupied. At the end of January this year the Pharmacy First scheme was introduced, thus easing some of the pressure on GP appointments. In March Accurx replaced eConsult as the new online consultation service. Most patients find it more user friendly; it has also been welcomed by the GPs. We are all aware of the difficulties nationwide in getting GP appointments. However, the good news is, a growing number of extra appointments are available out of hours. Find out more about some of these changes in this newsletter. The PPG remain fully involved in supporting SRS behind the scenes. You may however see some of us, stewarding at the autumn flu clinics or watering the pots outside.

Howard Borley
Chair SRS PPG

THE CURE WE HAVE ALL BEEN LOOKING FOR

If a drug was produced that guaranteed it could reduce our risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers - as well as lowering our risk of early death by up to 30% – we would all be asking our doctor to prescribe it!

However we can get all these health benefits by simply exercising more. Exercise is free, easy, has immediate effect and you don't need a doctor to prescribe it.

Research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing the risk of stress, depression and various forms of dementia.

Modern life has resulted in us being less active than people used to be, but by making a few simple changes, we can easily increase the amount of physical activity we do each day and thus improve our health. NHS advice is to exercise regularly, at least 150 minutes a week, and reduce time spent sitting.

A good first step is simply to walk a little further each day and remember to get up and move around a bit, if you have been sitting for longer than an hour. Additionally, on the NHS website, there is guidance on suitable exercises, for groups of all ages, including young children and the elderly.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise>

If you wish to find even more exercises there are any number of them to be found by simply searching the internet.

Strength and flexibility exercises

To maintain our bodies strength and flexibility as we age, we should aim to do at least two exercise sessions a week specifically designed to improve mobility in joints and work all the major muscle groups. Strength and flexibility exercises help us to maintain the ability to perform everyday tasks as we age. This is because they slow down the rate of bone and muscle loss associated with ageing. They can also improve posture, reduce aches and pains, and lower the risk of falls. Exercises, specifically designed for these purposes, can be found within the NHS website given above. There are numerous others to be found online and the good news is, it's never too late to start doing them!



PRESCRIPTION CHARGES

If you have to pay for prescription items you may be aware that from the 2nd of May 2024 prescription charges increased from £9.65 per item to £9.90. If you have to have regular prescriptions it may be worth your while financially to purchase a prescription prepayment certificate (PPC). Although these also increased in price they can still work out cheaper for some people.

A 3 month PPC now costs £32.05 and will save you money if you need more than 3 prescribed items in a 3 month period.

A 12 month PPC costs £114.50. It will save you money if you need more than 11 prescription items a year.

You can also buy a hormone replacement therapy (HRT) PPC for £19.80. This will save you money if you need more than 2 prescribed qualifying HRT items in a year.

Once purchased a PPC will cover all your NHS prescriptions, including NHS dental prescriptions, no matter how many items you need. (It does not cover the cost of other health items, such as wigs and fabric supports).

To find out more either talk to your pharmacist or phone 0300 330 1341.



MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

On 6th July **Dr Staniforth** will be taking part in the Peak District Ultra Challenge. She will be walking 50km to raise money for the Macmillan cancer charity which provides patients and families with much needed support at a desperate and vulnerable time in their lives.

We wish her the very best of luck in this worthy endeavour!

If you would like to contribute, please go to www.justgiving.com and search Arabella Staniforth.

Why Vaccinations Are Important

Vaccinations are the most effective way of protecting yourself and your children from infectious diseases. In recent years there has been a decline in the number of people choosing to get their children (or themselves) fully vaccinated against many preventable diseases. There are many reasons for this, including unfounded fears around the dangers of certain vaccines, often based on stories read on social media. Consequently, last winter we saw a huge rise in the number of measles cases in the UK and before that a rise in the cases of polio. Both of these diseases can have devastating long lasting effects on the health of children and in some cases can even prove fatal.

Even more recently it was announced that whooping cough cases have been rising since December 2023, with rates being highest in babies under 3 months of age. Sadly because of the seriousness of the disease in this age range there have been a rise in the number of infant deaths as a direct result. Pregnant women can protect their babies from whooping cough by getting vaccinated themselves in every pregnancy, ideally between 20 and 32 weeks. This passes the protection on to their baby in the womb, so that they are protected from birth in the first months of their life. This is when they are at their most vulnerable and before they are able to receive their own vaccines.

All the current evidence tells us that getting vaccinated is safer than not getting vaccinated.

To find out more about what vaccinations you and your family are eligible for and when see:

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/>

What sort of appointment do I need?

When you phone up to request an appointment you will probably be asked for the reason you want it. Whilst you are within your rights not to tell the receptionist, you are likely to get the help you need more quickly if you do. This is because the receptionist will be able to direct you to the best clinician to suit your needs, and this may not be a GP. For example, if you have knee pain they may suggest the physiotherapist within the surgery. For certain other conditions you may be signposted to a pharmacist (see the Pharmacy First article on page 3). This not only helps you, but frees up GP appointments for patients who can't see anyone else.

You might also consider an online consultation. You can use this for non – urgent medical queries either about ongoing or new conditions, or for admin enquiries, such as test results, a fit (sick) note or a fit to fly letter. If you would like to use this service, go to the SRS website and click the green banner. The consultation system that is used now is administered by Accrux and replaced the previous online consultation system called eConsult. It is easier to use than eConsult and asks fewer questions.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

PHARMACY FIRST

What is it and why has it been introduced?

As most of us are aware, a common difficulty today is getting a doctor's appointment. This is a nationwide problem and definitely not particular to our own surgery.

In order to help reduce the number of patients needing to see a doctor, a new scheme. **PHARMACY FIRST**, was introduced at the end of January 2024. Local retail pharmacists can now treat seven common conditions. For blood pressure checks, oral contraception and the treatment of the seven common conditions listed below, your pharmacist can now be your first port of call. This will give GPs extra time and space to treat patients with more complex medical needs.

What are the seven common conditions?

- Sinusitis (adults and children 12 years and older)
- Impetigo (adults and children 1 year and older)
- Sore throat (adults and children 5 years and older)
- Shingles (adults 18 years and older)
- Otitis media (earache) (children between the ages of 1 to 17 only)
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (women between the ages of 16 and 64 only)
- Infected insect bites (adults and children 1 year and over)

How can I access the pharmacy first service?

Pharmacy First is a walk-in service which you can self-refer to. You may also be referred by your GP surgery, an urgent and emergency care setting or by 111.

What will happen at my consultation?

The pharmacists will see you in a private consultation room. They will ask you questions and may examine you and ask your permission to access your medical records. Following approved guidelines, they will then recommend the best course of action. If clinically appropriate, this may include prescribing antibiotics or antivirals. The service itself is free of charge, but usual prescription charges will apply. After a consultation the pharmacy will send a notification to your GP.

Pharmacists are highly qualified medical professionals. They train for 5 years in the use of medicines and the management of minor illnesses. They are also experienced at spotting warning signs which may warrant a referral to another healthcare provider.

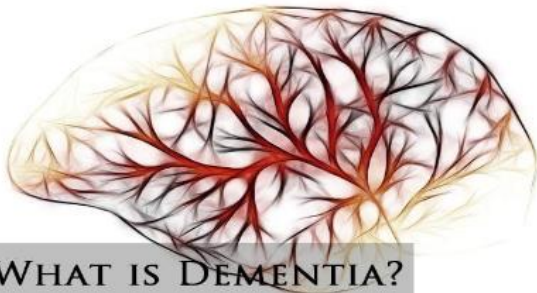
OUT OF HOURS APPOINTMENTS – LATEST NEWS

The Primary Care Network is now funding an access hub **at SRS on a Monday and Wednesday between 10.30 and 2.30** (or Tuesday and Wednesday if the Monday is a Bank Holiday). This provides a number of extra appointment slots for urgent, same day appointments. It is for patients from all of the 5 GP surgeries in the PCN group.

Appointments are with one of the GPs working in the group, and are either face to face or by telephone. This is in addition to the extended hours appointments that are run by the Bromley GP Alliance. These are held at Station Road Surgery Monday – Wednesday 4pm-8pm and at Addington Road Surgery at the same time on a Thursday and Friday. There are also GP and nurse appointments at Addington Road on Saturdays between 9am and 5pm (nurses AM only). These appointments can be booked in advance. To request one please talk to a member of the reception team.

Disclaimer: Whilst we have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy and validity of all the information provided in this newsletter, neither the practice nor the PPG accept responsibility for events arising from the use of the information.

FOCUS ON HEALTH – Dementia



WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

FOCUS ON HEALTH – Dementia

Dementia is a general name for a gradual decline of brain function that impacts on a person's ability to perform everyday tasks. There are many different sorts of dementia, the most common being Alzheimer's disease. Others include vascular, Lewy body and frontotemporal. Some people develop a combination of these dementias, this is known as mixed dementia.

SYMPTOMS

Initially symptoms are often very mild. They can vary from person to person and also with the different types of dementia. However common early signs include:

- Memory loss - having difficulty recalling what has happened recently.
- Difficulty concentrating, planning or organising.
- Problems with language or communication.
- Misunderstanding what has been seen.
- Being confused about time or place.
- Personality changes.

Dementia is not a natural part of ageing. If you are worried that your own, or someone else's symptoms may possibly be dementia, the first thing to do is contact your GP. Other, more easily treatable conditions can have similar symptoms.

GETTING A DIAGNOSIS

There is no single test for dementia. The doctor will talk to you about your symptoms. They may request blood tests and possibly an MRI or CT scan, they may also refer you for other tests to rule out other causes.

You may be referred to a memory clinic, or to a specialist for further investigation, assessment and possible treatment.

Whilst, at the present time, there is no cure for dementia, there are treatments and medications that can help with a person's symptoms.

Trials are currently taking place on drugs that have been shown to slow the progress of Alzheimer's, especially if they are started in the early stages of the disease. At the moment they are not available on the NHS but give hope for the future treatment of the disease.

GETTING SUPPORT

If you have received a diagnosis of dementia, understandably, you may feel scared and find it difficult to come to terms with. Give yourself time to adjust to what the diagnosis means to you. If you can, share your feelings with friends and family. The local authority can make an assessment of your care and support needs free of charge. Contact Erica, the social prescriber at the surgery to find out about how this can be arranged and/or about other local support groups.

You can also contact the following:

www.alzheimers.org.uk 0333 150 3456

www.dementiauk.org 0800 888 6678

<https://selmind.org.uk/bromley-dementia/bromley-dementia-support-hub/> 0203 328 0366

REDUCING YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING DEMENTIA

Whilst no single action can guarantee you won't get dementia, there are things you can do to reduce your risk of developing it:

- Be physically active, along with a balanced diet this will also help you maintain a healthy weight.
- Don't smoke
- Drink less alcohol – fewer than 14 units a week
- Keep mentally and socially active
- Eat a healthy diet – avoid processed foods and eat a diet rich in fruit, vegetables, nuts, pulses, olive oil and fish.

