

GP Direct Patient Newsletter

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The GP Patient Survey – lets hear your views The Department of Health has commissioned ‘The GP Patient Survey’, which is now in its third year, to be carried out nationally to assess patient satisfaction of their GP Practice. The survey which has been mailed out to over 5 million patients across the country in January 2009 gives patients the opportunity to give feedback about the service they receive from their GP Practice. If you have received the survey you will be sent reminders in February and March to complete it and send it back – please do so as it will give us a better picture of patient satisfaction.

The survey covers issues relating to ease of access, making appointments, opening hours and the general satisfaction with the Practice. Following the publication of the 2008 survey results which were on the whole very positive about the service offered by GP Direct, we took steps to improve our service even further and ensure that our service was focused on the needs of our patients. Some of the keys steps taken which we hope have enhanced the service we offer you are as follows:

- 1) Increased opening hours – we are now open on two evenings every week (up until 8pm) and on Saturday morning (9am to 12noon), in addition we have increased our opening time to 6.30pm on the other days.
- 2) Improved our telephone system – in late 2007 we introduced a new telephone system which allows for calls to be dealt with more effectively.
- 3) Expanded our online appointment, repeat prescription and messaging service known as EMIS Access, this is a service which many hundreds of patients have signed up to.
- 4) Improved our appointment system to make it more flexible for you to see a doctor on the same day or if you prefer to see a doctor in advance. This is addition to the on call doctor who is available on the telephone every weekday from 8.30am to 6.30pm.

Important notice for parents

Parents are kindly reminded to take full responsibility for their children whilst at the Surgery. We have had many cases of children running around the surgery knocking on doors where doctors or nurses are consulting. It is important that parents ensure their children are with them at all times while visiting the Practice.

Chlamydia screening

If you are aged 15-24, male or female, and are sexually active it is highly recommended that you get a Chlamydia check at the Practice. Just ask for an appointment with the Practice nurse or doctors' assistant for a Chlamydia screen (just a urine sample is needed).

Chlamydia is a rapidly growing sexually transmitted disease that often occurs without any symptoms and it is for that reason that is important to get screened as it can go on to cause infertility. Chlamydia is treated very easily so if you are found to be positive, treatment will be immediately offered. For more information visit www.make-it-clear.org.uk

MEASLES on the rise – over 18 or going into higher education? If so make sure you're protected against measles

Cases of measles have been on the increase nationally and locally for the past few years which has led to many people becoming very ill and in a number of cases dying.

The MMR catch up campaign aims to immunise those between the age of one and 18 (or older and going into a higher education establishment) who has not been fully vaccinated against Measles. If you have not been vaccinated please book an appointment with one of our nurses, if you are unsure if you have been fully vaccinated ask to speak to one of our nurses on the phone. The first routine MMR vaccination is given at 13 months and the booster is given at 3 years and 4 months.

Dr. Shahla Ahmad appointed on PEC Board

We have a great pleasure in announcing the appointment of Dr. Shahla Ahmad on the PCT PEC board. Dr. Shahla Ahmad has been a partner at GP Direct for 10 years. Her role on the Primary Care Trust's (PCT) Professional Executive Committee (PEC) will include supporting the PCT in developing their vision and strategic direction and ensuring clinical effectiveness and clinical governance.

She will be committing one day a week for her role as a PEC member.

All the staff at GP Direct would like to thank all of our patients for the many gifts received over the festive period.

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Don't ignore your cancer screening invite – it might just save your life

The NHS Cancer Screening Programmes have been effective tools in the early detection of a number of cancers which improves the chances of successful treatment. We want to remind our patients of these invaluable programmes and briefly explain which cancers are screened for and some of the key details.

1) Cervical Cancer Screening Programme The screening programme targets women aged 25 to 64 years of age. You will usually receive a letter from the Health Authority requesting that you make an appointment with your GP Practice nurse to get a cervical smear done, this will be used to see if there are any changes in the cells within the cervix which can lead to early detection of cancer. If abnormal changes are detected early on this will improve the chances of successful treatment. The first invitation is at 25 years of age, between 25 and 49 years of age women are screened every 3 years and between 50 and 64 years of age women are screened every 5 years.

Why are women under 25 and women over 65 not invited?

Cervical cancer is rare in women under 20. Teenagers' bodies, particularly the cervix, are still developing, which means young women may get an abnormal result when there is nothing wrong. This could lead to unnecessary treatment so screening young women might do more harm than good.

Under the age of 25 years, invasive cancer is extremely rare, but changes in the cervix are common. Although lesions treated in very young women may prevent cancers from developing many years later, the evidence suggests that screening could start at age 25. Lesions that are destined to progress will still be screen-detectable and those that would regress will no longer be a source of anxiety. Younger women will not have to undergo unnecessary investigations and treatments.

Any woman under 25 who is concerned about her risk of developing cervical cancer or her sexual health generally, should contact one of the GPs.

Women aged 65 and over who have had three consecutive negative results are taken out of the call recall system. The natural history and progression of cervical cancer means it is highly unlikely that such women will go on to develop the disease. Women aged 65 and over who have never had a test are entitled to one.

2) Breast Cancer Screening Programme The NHS Breast Screening Programme provides free breast screening every three years for all women in the UK aged 50 and over. Around one-and-a-half million women are screened in the UK each year. Women aged between 50 and 70 are now routinely invited.

Because the programme is a rolling one which invites women from GP practices in turn, not every woman will receive an invitation as soon as she is 50. But she will receive her first invitation before her 53rd birthday. Once women reach the upper age limit for routine invitations for breast screening, they are encouraged to make their own appointment.

3) Bowel Cancer Screening Programme About one in 20 people will develop Bowel cancer in their lifetime (figure from Cancer Research UK, 2005). Bowel cancer screening aims to detect bowel cancer at an early stage (in people with no symptoms), when treatment is more likely to be effective.

Bowel cancer screening can also detect polyps. These are not cancers, but may develop into cancers over time. They can easily be removed, reducing the risk of bowel cancer developing.

The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme offers screening every two years to all men and women aged 60 to 69. People over 70 can request a screening kit by calling 0800 707 60 60.

If you are unsure whether you should get screened for any of these conditions or if you have questions you would like to ask a doctor feel free to request a telephone consultation with a doctor who will be more than happy to discuss it with you. For more information visit www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk