

The GP



Direct Journal

Keeping you informed

August 2009 – Volume 4 Issue 1

The editor introduces the revamped newsletter in his new regular column

We tell you all you need to know about travel vaccinations in our 5 point guide

We answer your questions in the *patient corner*

Why not challenge yourself in our *health puzzle* section

The importance of Diabetic checks is the topic of discussion in our *eye on medicine*

Dear reader,

We are now entering the fourth volume of the GP Direct Newsletter which we hope you have found both informative and interesting. This latest volume will unveil a new look newsletter with some great new features. We have received lots of positive feedback about the newsletter so far, with many of you saying that it is informative and helps you keep in touch with developments at the Practice. We believe that the changes we have introduced in this new look newsletter will make it a real source of information and interest for you.

The ***GP Direct Journal*** as it will now be called intends to keep you informed about our services and developments at the Practice and will offer you a chance to air your views. We will have some regular sections which we hope you will enjoy, like *the meet the doctor* section, the *patient corner* where we will answer your questions about the Practice or the NHS. Healthcare is a constantly evolving field and we are always evolving to ensure we are best placed to meet your needs.

We have also reached an important milestone this month with now almost 1000 of you registered to use EMIS Access which allows patients to book appointments, request repeat prescriptions, message the Practice and update your contact details online. For more information about this service visit our website on www.gpdirect.co.uk or ask one of our receptionists for more information.

We hope you enjoy the read and we welcome your feedback.

Omer Hussein

Patient corner

I am a father of three children all aged four or younger and I was recently told that I could not register them for EMIS Access, why is this the case?

I am pleased to tell you that this rule has now changed and you can now register children aged 10 or younger for EMIS Access. The reason why we did not allow parents to register their children for EMIS Access is because there was no system to remove this access when the children reached an age when they might require their confidentiality to be protected, therefore we allow access for parents for their children up to 12 at which point we cease access. For more information on this or about EMIS Access in general please [visit our website or ask the receptionist for more information.](#)

Therefore you may now register for EMIS Access accounts for your children; however we will require to see both your children's and your own ID.

Do you have a burning question you would like to ask us about the NHS? Maybe you want to know more about local or national initiatives, or maybe you just want to know more about the Practice and its services. If so why not write to us with your question or alternatively drop us an email at info@gpdirect.co.uk (please do not add identifiable information as we do not consider emails to be totally secure, so please keep the questions general).

If you have any suggestions or ideas for the GP Direct Journal please feel free to contact us to discuss these.

Please address questions or suggestions to: The GP Direct Journal, 3-7 Welbeck Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 0RQ

Eye on Medicine – The Importance of monitoring your Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a condition where the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly. You have two types of diabetes, type 1 and type 2, however the regular checks which are undertaken for sufferers of both types are similar.

In this article we want to highlight some of the complications that can arise from Diabetes and how regular checks can help prevent these from occurring. The key checks that are done are of your glucose (sugar) and lipid (fatty substances) levels in your blood, blood pressure and feet and eye checks.

Blood sugar and cholesterol levels

You should have these checked at least once annually to ensure that your blood glucose level is well controlled, this is done by measuring something called HbA1c (Glycated Haemoglobin) poorly controlled glucose levels can cause complications with your feet and eyes. Blood lipids are also checked to ensure that these are not too high otherwise they can contribute to cardiovascular disease (heart or stroke related problems), if they turn out to be high you can take measures to reduce these levels through an improved diet or if necessary with medication such as statins which help in lowering cholesterol levels.

It is also recommended for patients taking insulin or who are moving onto insulin to regularly check their blood glucose levels by using a home monitoring device.

Blood pressure

It is well known that high blood pressure can contribute to cardiovascular disease therefore for Diabetic sufferers it necessary to keep a close eye on your blood pressure as there is an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The blood pressure target we aim

for is within the safe limits of normal. Blood pressure should be checked at least once annually however you can check it more regularly at home with blood pressure machines which are readily available from pharmacists.

Feet check

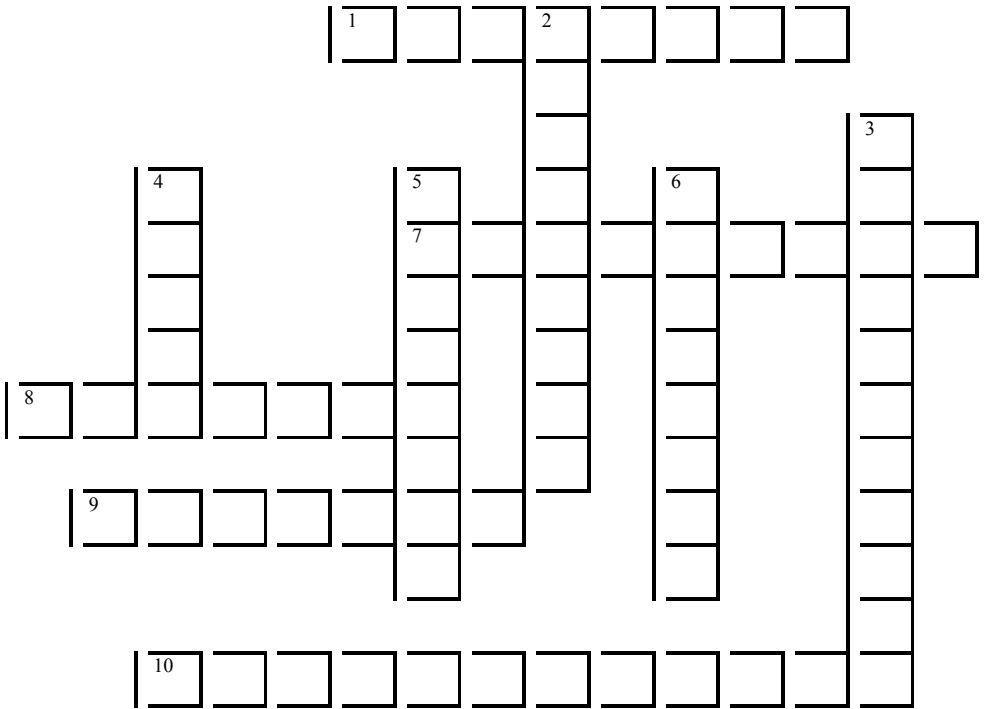
Longstanding increased sugar in the blood can contribute to problems with your feet. An annual check can look for evidence of nerve damage (neuropathy) or decreased circulation of blood in the foot which can cause problems such as ulcers. Therefore it is important to get your feet checked by a healthcare professional that can assess whether any Diabetic related feet problems are apparent. Good control of your blood glucose levels and good foot care will help ward off potential problems with your feet. This check is essential as in the most serious cases poor circulation can eventually lead to foot ulcers with risk of needing amputation.

Eye check (Retinal Screening)

High blood glucose can damage the tiny blood vessels near the retina of the eye, this can cause a number of associated problems which can lead to loss of vision or even blindness, however treatment is available and can prevent this from occurring in most cases. It is therefore essential you have a yearly eye check which will look for early changes. The test will include testing your vision, looking at the back of the retina and also taking a digital photograph of your retina. In Harrow this is currently being carried out by the Diabetic Retinal Screening Service.

If you are a Diabetic please do not put off your annual review, as you can see good management is a key to preventing many of complications. Also if you have been invited to take part in our annual Diabetes screening programme please take up the offer as early detection can lead to better management.

Health Puzzle



ACROSS

- 1 Eye tester
- 7 Pain killer
- 8 S in NHS
- 9 Eases breathing
- 10 About bones

DOWN

- 2 Flu
- 3 Children's medicine
- 4 Feeling hot
- 5 Excessive sugar in the blood
- 6 Broken

The answers are at the bottom of page 7.

Your 5 point guide to travel vaccinations

We regularly receive questions from patients about travel vaccinations so we decided that an updated guide would be helpful for all of our patients.

Here is our 5 point guide to travel vaccinations:

1. You should aim to get your travel vaccinations completed well before you travel - for some vaccinations it could be as early as three months before you travel. However at the bear minimum most vaccinations should be given at least two weeks before traveling to ensure they are fully effective.
2. You should check which vaccinations you require by visiting the ***fit for travel*** website which has been set up by NHS (Scotland) as a free resource for the general public. You will find a link for this site on **www.gpdirect.co.uk**
3. If you do not have a record of your current vaccination record you should call the Practice and request for one of our Practice Nurses to give you a call and they will update you as to what you require.
4. Most travel vaccinations are free of charge however some do incur a charge, such as Yellow Fever (£40) and Meningitis ACWY (£25), for up to date prices please visit our website and click on the Non-NHS fees section, when you pay for a vaccination you will also receive a certificate.
5. Malaria protection varies depending on your destination. Some anti-Malaria protection is prescribed by the Practice privately (at a cost of £15) and should then be taken to the Pharmacy to be dispensed (the charge of the medication will be charged by the Pharmacy). However some anti-Malaria medication has to be bought directly from the pharmacy without a prescription. The type of medication required will depend on your destination.

If in doubt about your travel vaccination protection please request to speak to one of our Practice nurses.

Answers from the Health Puzzle: Across: 1. Optician, 7. Ibuprofen, 8. Service, 9. Inhaler, 10. Orthopaedics
Down: 2. Influenza, 3. Paediatrics, 4. Fever, 5. Diabetes, 6. Fracture



Shaftesbury Pharmacy

5/6 Shaftesbury Parade

South Harrow

Middx HA2 0AJ

Tel: 020 8864 9436

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 9.00am - 7.00pm

Saturday: 10.00am - 1.00pm

Would you like your prescriptions collected from GP Direct and your medication ready for collection at the Pharmacy? Save a journey to the surgery and waiting at the Pharmacy!

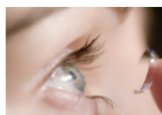
Let Shaftesbury Pharmacy know and this can be arranged.
Patient care is our priority.

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