

# Jorvik Medical Practice

## Newsletter Spring 2007

The NHS seems daily to be in the media, locally and nationally, and sadly not much of the news seems good. The financial difficulties of the local Primary Care Trust have resulted in unfair restrictions of care to local people – so much for central government pledges to remove “post code” differences in provision. GPs have been subject to, what we feel is, unfair criticism, much of this seemingly orchestrated by the Department of Health who appear to be deliberately misleading, if not disingenuous. Our recent practice patient survey reveals overall satisfaction with the service we provide, a verdict repeated nationally. The NHS is far from perfect but its greatest strength has always been the dedication and commitment of the staff at all levels working within it. We are concerned that this dedication, and indeed the future of the NHS itself, is under serious threat, as rapid changes imposed by government, are resulting in fragmentation and destabilisation. Contrary to what politicians might state we are not opposed to change, but we feel this should be achieved by working with us.

**Hay fever** season is fast approaching. It is common, often starting in teenage years and tending to improve with time. The cause is an allergic response to pollens (trees: March to May; grasses: May to July). Typical symptoms include watery and itchy eyes, runny nose and sneezing. It can also exacerbate asthma.

Although it is impossible to avoid pollen altogether, simple measures to reduce your exposure can help. Stay indoors as much as possible; avoid large grassy areas, especially when the grass is being cut; keep car windows shut and consider a pollen filter; wear wrap around sunglasses; wash your hair after you have been out.

Antihistamines remain the mainstay of treatment and are available over the counter from pharmacies. Older antihistamines such as Piriton (chlorphenamine) are effective but can cause drowsiness in some people. Newer types are much less likely to cause drowsiness and need only be taken once daily.

Additional treatments include nasal sprays and eye drops, which are also available without prescription from pharmacies. Severe symptoms can be helped by prescription medicines but these are often only suitable for short periods of treatment.

Immunotherapy (dесensitization) is available but only through hospital specialists. Availability is likely to be very limited and only for those with severe symptoms that have not responded to other treatments.



**Contraception** - our experienced practice nurse team provides a comprehensive contraceptive service. Specialised procedures such as IUCD (coil fitting and insertion of contraceptive implants are available at Southbank medical centre with Dr Alexander.

**A**t present your computer **medical records** are held at the practice and are only accessible by us. At some time in the future the government plan to have your medical records downloaded to a central NHS database. This would make some information available to a much wider range of persons. If you do not wish to have this information downloaded please let us know in writing and we will mark your records accordingly.

**Who is my doctor?** - a question we are often asked. In effect any and all of us! Although you will be allocated a named doctor on your medical card, the practice does not run personal doctor lists. You are free to request appointments with any doctor, although we cannot always guarantee seeing him/her on any particular day.

### Correcting some misinformation about general practice

***Following the recent media coverage which many of you will have seen, we thought you might find it useful to be aware of the following facts:***

- There are approximately 36,000 GPs in the UK and it takes 6 years to train as a doctor and then a further 3 years to train to become a GP.
- Each patient on average sees their GP 4 times per year – this means, there are over 250,000,000 GP/patient consultations per year; 15% of the entire population see a GP in a two week period.
- The average practice in the UK has about 6,000 registered patients and 3 - 4 GPs. The average full time GP looks after 1,700 – 1,800 patients.
- The average face to face contact with a GP costs £20, compared to £24 in a Walk in Centre, £27 for a telephone contact with NHS Direct, £75 for an attendance at A&E and between £100 – £300 for each attendance at a hospital Out Patient Department.
- GPs are paid LESS than 20 pence per patient per day to provide all the day to day care that is required. This is less than the cost of a daily newspaper.
- GPs refer about 10% of patients seen to hospital specialities, which means that nearly 90% of all health needs of the British population are managed entirely in general practice.
- In a recent Government survey it was found that patients were more satisfied with their GPs than they were with the hospital service. General Practice in the NHS was the most popular of all public services.
- In a recent Government White Paper, they stated that “by international standards general practice in England is efficient and of high quality. Indeed many countries view with envy our system of list based general practice”.
- GPs are now paid differently in that nearly 50% of their income is via quality performance-related pay.
- The Government has transferred responsibility for funding its part of GPs' pensions to the GPs themselves and then claimed this was a part of a pay rise.

Thanks to all of you who completed the practice survey questionnaires. The survey is something we are obliged to do under the terms of our contract. We are delighted that the results are generally very positive, although we accept the limitations of such a survey. We will look at the points you have made and endeavour to address problem areas.

The second meeting of our patient forum group took place recently. Communication was the main area of discussion and we explored ways of improving distributing information to our patients.

## JORVIK MEDICAL PRACTICE

01904 724343

[www.jorvikmedical.gpsurgery.net](http://www.jorvikmedical.gpsurgery.net)

Woolpack House  
The Stonebow  
YORK  
YO1 7NP

**E**arly morning and early afternoon doctor appointments can be booked up to 2 weeks in advance. Other appointments are booked on the day. We aim to ensure that all patients that need to see a doctor will. If all appointments are full a doctor will be able to call you back and arrange for you to be seen if necessary.

Southbank Medical Centre  
175 Bishopthorpe Road  
Southbank  
YORK  
YO23 1PD