



Swine Flu (Pandemic Flu)

At present a flu-like illness is prevalent in the community, please be aware that there is the National Flu Line on **0800 151 3100** or **www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk**. Patients with the presenting symptoms should ring the Flu Line for advice and not attend the surgery to prevent further spread of the virus. People with (pandemic) swine flu typically have a fever or high temperature over 38°C or a history of a high temperature and may also have aching muscles, sore throat and/or a dry cough, runny nose. Most people recover within a week, even without treatment. The diagnosis is currently made on the basis of a temperature **greater than 38°C** (or a history of such a temperature) and **two** or more of the following symptoms: **(It makes sense to have a working thermometer at home).**

- unusual tiredness
- loss of appetite
- aching muscles
- runny nose
- shortness of breath or cough
- sore throat
- headache
- diarrhoea or vomiting

Call your GP at Datchet Health Centre directly only if:

- you have a serious existing illness or are taking medication that weakens your immune system
- you are pregnant,
- you have a sick child under one,
- your condition is still getting worse after seven days (five for a child).

For most people, swine flu is a mild illness. Most people will get better by staying in bed, drinking plenty of water and taking over-the-counter flu medication. However, some groups of people are more at risk of serious illness if they catch swine flu, and will need to start taking antiviral medication as soon as it is confirmed that they have it. It is already known that you are particularly at risk if you have chronic lung disease, chronic heart disease, chronic kidney or chronic liver disease, chronic neurological disease (including motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease), suppression of the immune system (whether caused by disease or treatment) or diabetes mellitus.

Also at risk are:

- patients who have had drug treatment for asthma within the past three years,
- pregnant women,
- people aged 65 and older, and
- young children under five.

It is vital that people in these higher-risk groups who catch swine flu get anti-virals (Tamiflu) and start taking them as soon as possible.

Swine Flu Vaccination

There is an effective vaccine against the H1N1 virus which is now being made available to those patients in at risk groups. The groups of people who are most vulnerable to serious illness from swine flu are now being offered the vaccine. These are:

Adults and children over six months of age who have a long-term health condition, including:

- Chronic lung disease (including patients with asthma who use steroid inhalers)

- Chronic heart disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Diabetes mellitus
- Chronic neurological diseases
- All pregnant ladies
- Immunosuppression caused by a disease or treatment (people who do not have a spleen or people who are on immunosuppressant treatment or are taking steroids).
- People who live with someone whose immune system is compromised.

Children under the age of 10 will need two half dose vaccinations at least three weeks apart and patients who are immunosuppressed will need two vaccinations at least 3 weeks apart.

The surgery is currently offering swine flu vaccination to patients in all the above “at risk” groups. We are awaiting government advice around vaccination of all children under the age of 5. Please telephone the practice on **01753 541268/546088** to make your appointment.

In order to help the surgery cope with the level of demand this winter please make good use of all the other sources of medical advice as listed in this article as well as the information contained in the Out of Hours article. Only make essential appointments and please cancel any unwanted appointments in good time.

Dr Mick Watts

Eat, Drink and be Healthy at Christmas

On average at Christmas people gain about 5lbs (2kg), consuming about 6000 calories on Christmas day. This is about 3 times as much as is needed and would take roughly 780 minutes of running to burn off those calories

Here are some simple tips to help you eat, drink and be healthy:

- Try to eat breakfast on Christmas day as this will fill you up and you will be less likely to snack on Christmas choccies
- Serve Christmas dinner with heaps of veg, which helps towards the target of at least five fruit and vegetables a day. Fruit and veggies are a good source of nutrients; they contain hardly any fat and help bulk out the meal
- Turkey is a lower fat choice, but don't eat the skin
- Cut potatoes for roasting into larger chunks – they will absorb less fat. Roast in a small amount of unsaturated (e.g. sunflower) oil for a healthier choice
- For traditional Christmas pudding, instead of serving it with brandy butter, try some natural yogurt, crème fraiche, low fat custard or even some fresh fruit
- For healthy snacks, go for a handful of unsalted nuts, dried fruit or satsumas
- Choose reduced fat crisps, plain popcorn, pretzels or raw veg and low fat dips as snacks
- Avoid feeling uncomfortably full by eating more slowly
- Get active rather than slump on the sofa – take a brisk walk, play an indoor game or maybe just crank up the music and dance away those calories

Printed with the kind permission of Alison Brook, student dietitian on behalf of Ashford and St Peter's Hospital Dietetic Department

Our Out of Hours Service

Some of you may have read in the national newspapers recently about patients being unhappy with their out of hours GP service. Rest assured those complaints were not aimed at our local service. We thought it would be a good idea to explain to you how the service works.

Our Out of Hours services provide care to our patients between 6.30pm and 8am weekdays and 6.30pm Friday to 8am Mondays. This service is intended for our patients who have a medical condition that cannot wait until The Datchet Health Centre is open.

Out of Hours services for this practice is run by East Berkshire Primary Care. This is a mutual company, originally formed by local doctors to share responsibility for out of hours services. In this area we are very lucky to have a really well organised service, where the vast majority of doctors you might see are local GP's. The latest satisfaction survey shows more than 80% of respondents are satisfied with the service they receive, which is well above national average for this type of service.

- a) To contact Out of Hours services simply ring the surgery during the Out of Hours period and your call will be diverted directly to them. Alternatively phone them direct on **0118 936 5390**.
- b) The call centre will ask for basic patient details and brief details of the medical condition.
- c) You will be contacted shortly afterwards by a family doctor to discuss the condition and plan further action. This can either be advice to enable you to look after the condition at home, an appointment for attendance at our local primary care centre in Slough (currently The Herschel Medical Centre, Osborne Street SL1 1TT), or, for those who are elderly, frail or with severe medical condition making it unsafe to travel, a home visit can be requested at the discretion of the doctor. Occasionally, where there is great concern, the doctor may arrange for you to be seen at Accident and Emergency at Wexham Park Hospital.
- d) Your doctor at Datchet Health Centre is informed the following working day about any consultation.

In the out of hours period there are also several other sources of help available to you. NHS Direct allows you to speak with a nurse by ringing 0845 4647. The NHS walk-in-centre in the grounds of Upton Hospital is open 7am to 10pm. The Minor Injuries Unit at Heatherwood Hospital Ascot is open from 8am to 10pm. The Ashford Health Centre based at Ashford Hospital is open 8am to 10pm each day. Always remember that our local pharmacies are sources of great help and advice for minor ailments.

Dr Mick Watts

Staff Training Days

I know that many patients are curious as to what happens when the practice is closed for training - we appreciate that this may cause some inconvenience for patients, but it is important that our clinical and administrative staff have time available for statutory and enhanced training.

The practice closes once a month for staff training, with the exception of August and December. This is generally for a 3 hour training session in-house (1.30 – 4.30pm), although once every quarter it is for a full afternoon (12.30 – 6.30pm), when our clinicians join other local doctors and nurses for an area-wide clinical training event.

We use our in-house training events to address ongoing clinical training needs for our doctors and nurses, such as resuscitation, child protection and cervical cytology. We also invite local consultants to come in to do talks and demonstrations to clinical staff in order to extend and update their knowledge. Administration staff receive extended training in areas such as customer service skills, IT, resuscitation and fire safety to name but a few. There are some areas of training and development that are compulsory for us to address in order to offer primary care services to the local community and, indeed, to fulfil the partners' role as employers. We do try to look carefully at our appointments system to make sure that adequate provision is made for patients both before and after a closure for training. Agendas for our training events are provided to East Berkshire Primary Care Trust, which is responsible for ensuring that the time is used appropriately.

Our training dates for 2010 are as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Tuesday 12 th January | 1.30 – 4.30 pm |
| Wednesday 10 th February | 12.30 – 6.30 pm |
| Thursday 18 th March | 1.30 – 4.30 pm |

When the practice is closed the local out of hours service – East Berkshire Out of Hours – takes all incoming phone calls and advises and responds to patients needs and requests. They employ doctors who effectively address the clinical issues that arise when we are not open (*see previous article*). Whilst we appreciate that closure for training affects the service that we offer to our patients, we trust that they understand the need for all our staff to have their skills maintained and updated for the benefit of the community that we serve.

Karen Holmes, Practice Manager

Planning a Pregnancy next year?

Planning to start a family next year? Here is some good advice from Dr. Nicola Wallbank which aims to reduce the risk of harm to the baby and to reduce the risk of complications during pregnancy.

- You should start taking folic acid 400 mcg daily (which is prescribable) as soon as you decide to start trying for a baby. This helps reduce the risk of the baby being born with spinal problems e.g. spina bifida, heart problems or cleft lip and palate. Some women need a higher dose of 5 mg e.g. if you have diabetes or take medication for epilepsy or have a previously affected child in the family. You can start taking folic acid well before you plan to become pregnant as one study has also shown a reduced risk of premature labour if folic acid is taken for one year prior to pregnancy.
- Advice from the Department of Health is that you should not drink alcohol at all if you are trying to become pregnant as the exact amount of alcohol that is safe in pregnancy is unknown.
- If you smoke it is strongly advised that you stop before falling pregnant to reduce the risk of harm to your baby before and after birth and to prevent complications in pregnancy for example haemorrhage and premature labour. Our practice nurse Jackie Gumme has a special interest in supporting ladies in stopping smoking who are planning a pregnancy.
- If you are overweight, try to lose weight before falling pregnant by eating a healthy balanced diet and exercising regularly. Don't 'eat for two' or over eat in pregnancy.
- Include a diet rich in iron, calcium and folic acid. Iron is mainly found in red meat, pulses, dried fruit, green vegetables and fortified cereals. Calcium is mainly found in dairy products and folic acid is mainly in green vegetables, brown rice and fortified cereals. Avoid certain types of fish e.g. shark, marlin or swordfish and eat tuna in moderation. Shellfish, unpasteurised foods, pates, liver, undercooked meat and eggs, soft cheeses and blue-veined cheeses should be avoided. Limit your caffeine intake to 200 mg/day.
- Wear gloves when you are gardening and avoid sheep during lambing, cat's faeces and cat litter trays.
- Have a general check up with your doctor, especially if you are taking medication and have any pre-existing medical conditions so we can tailor pre-pregnancy advice to you individual case. You may be advised to have a blood test to check that you are immune to rubella and to check that you don't have a blood problem which is hereditary. We have lots of leaflets and information we can provide you with before you start trying for a baby.

Dr Nicola Wallbank

Stop Press

Make a note in your diaries! On the evening of **Tuesday 27 April 2010** we are holding another one of our very successful health education evenings at Wraysbury Village Hall. This time the subject matter will be **Asthma - unfortunately David Beckham probably won't be able to make it!** More information will be provided at a later date.

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) and the doctors and staff of the Datchet Health Centre wish you all a very happy and healthy Christmas and NewYear.