

THE NEWSLETTER

December 2011

How to find medical help over Christmas and New Year

The health centre (DHC) will be closed on the Bank Holidays over the festive season. It will also close early on 23rd and 30th December. The DHC opening times will be as follows.

Friday	23 December 2011	open from 08.30 to 14.00 hours and then closed
Monday	26 December 2011	closed
Tuesday	27 December 2011	closed
Wednesday	28 December 2011	open normal hours
Thursday	29 December 2011	open normal hours
Friday	30 December 2011	open from 08.30 to 14.00 hours and then closed
Monday	02 January 2012	closed
Tuesday	03 January 2012	open normal hours and normal hours thereafter

If you need to speak to a GP when the health centre is closed, please call 01753 541268 and your call will be transferred to the Out of Hours GP service. Alternative services include:

Slough NHS Walk-in-Centre , Upton Hospital	open 08.00 to 20.00 hours every day	01753 860441
Ashford NHS Walk-in-Centre , Ashford Hospital	open 08.00 to 19.30 hours every day	01784 884000
Minor Injuries Unit , Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot	open 08.00 to 20.00 hours every day	01344 877805
Wexham Park Hospital A&E Unit , Slough	open all day every day for emergencies	01753 633909
St. Peters Hospital A&E Unit , Chertsey	open all day every day for emergencies	01932 722321
NHS Direct for telephone advice	available all day every day	0845 4647

Useful health information and advice can be obtained on www.patient.co.uk and don't forget that the **local pharmacist** can also help at Datchet Village Pharmacy, Wraysbury Village Pharmacy and Friary Pharmacy in Old Windsor.

Please arrange your repeat prescriptions in good time

If you are prescribed regular medication, please ensure that you do not run out of your medicines over the festive period. Request your repeat prescriptions in good time before the Christmas weekend so that the health centre and the pharmacist have time to process your request.

Monitoring of stable prostate cancer in the community

The health centre has signed up to a programme of monitoring people with stable prostate cancer in the community. This means that of the 71 men recorded as having prostate cancer on the practice list, about half will receive follow-up appointments at the health centre instead of having to go to the hospital. The practice will only take on this responsibility for those men whose cancer has been treated and is considered to be stable by their specialist. The follow-up will consist of a blood test, to include Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) and then an appointment with the GP. Checks will normally occur every 6 months to a year as agreed between the GP and the patient. Patients will be reminded by letter if their check is overdue. Monitoring in the community will continue for these men unless new symptoms develop or the PSA shows significant rise, in which case the patient will be referred back to the specialist. This new service should be a more efficient and convenient service for patients.

Patient survey to help us to improve

This month, a survey has been distributed to each member of the Patient Reference Group (PRG) based on issues regarded by the Patient Participation Group (PPG) as being the most important to patients who use the DHC services and facilities. The PRG consists of all those patients who have provided the practice with their email address, in addition to some people from each of the sections of the patient community identified by the PPG as being important not to miss. The results of the survey will be considered by the PPG in the New Year and the practice will be asked to respond. The PPG will then work with the practice to agree an action plan. We hope to publish the results in a report by the end of March 2012. The process will be repeated the following year when the outcomes from the previous action plan will be published.

May we have your **email** address, please?

So far, we have collected about 700 email addresses. The target is 1000. By creating an email community of patients, we can better keep in touch with them. If you are willing for us to contact you by email, please complete the form available at reception. Even better, contact us by email at be-pct.dhcpatient@nhs.net or use the link on the practice website. We shall ensure that your email address is not shared and that it remains confidential. Anybody who has given their email address is automatically a member of the PRG (see above).

Goodbye to Dr. Iris Kwok and welcome to Dr. Mary Clements

Dr Iris Kwok completed her stay with The Datchet Health Centre this month and continues her studies at Wexham Park Hospital. We thank her for her contribution over the last 4 months and we wish her well in her future career as a surgeon. We welcome Dr Mary Clements, who joined the health centre team this month and who will work with us for the next 4 months as an F2 doctor (foundation year two).

Winter coughs and colds in children and when to seek help

The vast majority of coughs and colds are caused by viruses and are self-limiting. The symptoms usually last for a week or two and, although unpleasant, they are not serious. These infections are common and a child may have numerous episodes during the year, sometimes one after the other. The causative viruses are contagious so the condition spreads readily from person to person, mainly by droplet infection from coughing and sneezing. Children are prone to these viral infections as they build up their immunity and they are often in close contact with each other, e.g. at school or at nursery.

Viral upper respiratory infections (URTIs), like the common cold, do not require an antibiotic. It is important to maintain a good fluid intake and to treat any fever with Paracetamol or Ibuprofen. Other cough and cold remedies available over-the-counter are no longer recommended for children under 6 years of age and should be used with caution for older children. Nasal congestion in babies can sometimes be helped by the administration of saline nasal drops. Most children are well enough to attend school with a viral URTI, but are better kept at home if feeling unwell or feverish.

Occasionally, a child can become more unwell than expected with a viral URTI or can develop a secondary bacterial infection e.g. an ear or chest infection. Sometimes it can be difficult to know when to seek medical help, but in general a parent knows their child best of all and should use their common sense when deciding what to do. Symptoms that may suggest that further advice is required include:

Difficulty in breathing
Noisy or fast breathing
Wheeziness
Persistent earache

Cough for more than 3-4 weeks
Persistent high fevers (> 38°C)
Drowsiness
Chest pains

Unusual irritability or crying in a baby
Any symptom that you cannot explain

If in doubt, seek advice from **NHS Direct** by telephoning 0845 4647