



**Editor's note**

Last March, in my first newsletter, I said that comments or questions will be welcomed if left, in writing, at Reception. Although there have been none, I have been asked if letters to the editor, intended for publication, are acceptable. My reply is "Of course", provided that my decision to reproduce all or part of the letter is final. Pen names will be allowed, but correspondents must provide me with their name and address.

**Bill Joy, Meetings Chair**

**Missed Appointments – Patients who do not arrive for booked appointments**

Last year, **706 patients did not arrive (DNA) for booked appointments with doctors** (which equates to 8 full weeks of doctor time) and **415 did not arrive for nurse appointments**. This year's figures are as follows:

Month	Doctors	Nurses
January	62	43
February	59	37
March	55	31
April	35	34
May	93	51

The practice sends text reminders the day before a booked appointment to remind patients who have provided their mobile phone details in an attempt to minimise non-attendance. For some patients, even this does not work; 41 of the 93 who failed to arrive or cancel their appointments were sent text reminders! The facility for booking GP appointments two weeks ahead was withdrawn because audit showed that the further ahead an appointment was booked, the higher the DNA rate. The practice also offers a text cancellation service as an alternative means of cancelling appointments (**07815 006 990**). Please give your name, appointment time and details of who the appointment was booked with.

The PPG continues to be concerned about the ongoing problem of patients not attending the surgery and the impact on access to doctors and nurses for other patients. We would like to understand the reasons for DNAs and to reduce their numbers, but have only anecdotal evidence at the moment that the primary cause is forgetfulness. We are therefore collecting data about DNAs (no personal or clinical details) to better understand the factors that may influence their occurrence.

The practice is reluctant to consider the imposition of penalties, but it is felt that something more must be done than to send a reminder letter to those patients who have offended three times in less than 12 months. DNAs are a problem for hospitals and dental practices too, but their reactions are somewhat harsher. Those who attend out-patient clinics at hospital will be familiar with the warning that patients not attending without having cancelled their appointments, or without sufficient cause, may be discharged from the clinic and their GP will be informed. This also has an impact on the doctor, who may need to re-refer a patient, causing additional administration. Some dental practices impose fines.

***Statistics from RM***

**Bank Holiday and training Closures June to September**

Tuesday 19 June 1:30 - 4:30	Staff Training
Thursday 5 July 12:30 - 6:30	Staff Training
Monday 27 August	Late Summer Bank Holiday
Weds 26 September 1:30-4:30	Staff Training

Please ensure that you have adequate supplies of your repeat medication to cover the Bank Holiday weekend in August and place your orders in good time. We prefer to process requests a little early to avoid an influx of urgent requests. Requests are processed within 2 working days of receipt and should be made in writing or on-line via the DHC website and PatientUK for patients who are registered to use this service.

**KH**

**“Ageing Positively – Keeping Well and Active in the Datchet and Wraysbury Areas”**  
**Health Education Evening – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

Following our very successful health education evening held in Datchet last year on “Living with Arthritis”, the Datchet Health Centre Patient Participation Group will be holding another health education event on **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at Wraysbury Village Hall from 7.30 – 9.30pm**. Doors will open at 7.00 and although admission is free, it will be by ticket only. Tickets will be available from reception after 20 August 2012. If you would like to have them posted, please provide a stamped addressed envelope.

Our subject this time, ageing positively, will focus on keeping as well and active as possible in the future. There will be three main speakers, including Dr Mick Watts, followed by a questions and answers session and general discussion. Refreshments will be available at the end of the evening. We will be inviting local groups to come along and run information stalls throughout the evening. More information about this event will be displayed at the Health Centre and posted on the practice website ([www.datchetdoctor.co.uk](http://www.datchetdoctor.co.uk)). A collection will be made at the end of the evening for Age Concern, Slough and Berkshire East. **KH**

**Ordering Repeat Prescriptions**

We receive a lot of telephone requests for prescriptions to be processed urgently the same day. Whilst we appreciate that ordering a prescription can be overlooked, it is difficult for us to guarantee a same day service because of patient safety and clinical governance issues. We therefore seek your co-operation in ensuring a continuous supply of your regular medication.

Many of our patients are on regular medication, which the doctors put onto repeat prescription lists. The prescribing policy, issued by Berkshire East Primary Care Trust to doctors, stipulates that they should prescribe only one month's supply of medication at a time. This is to avoid wastage, since a patient's prescriptions may be changed at any point and to prevent stock-piling of medication at home, which is also wasteful since medicines may go out of date or be withdrawn from circulation.

Telephone requests for repeat prescriptions can lead to administrative errors and are not considered best practice. Many local surgeries do not accept telephone requests for repeat prescriptions for those reasons. Ideally, prescriptions should not be requested by telephone except in exceptional circumstances, for example if a patient is housebound. Routine telephone requests from the housebound should be made after 2pm.

Please make your requests in good time. Repeat prescriptions can be requested by using the repeat request slips attached to your prescription. They can be dropped off either at Datchet or Wraysbury pharmacies or at the surgery. A letterbox is available when the practice is closed. Please allow 2 working days for your prescription to be processed as the doctors have to check and sign all prescriptions and not all doctors work every session. If you are overdue a blood test or clinic appointment this may delay the processing of your prescription because it will be processed in a different way. If you are going on holiday or we are approaching a bank holiday you can request your prescription earlier.

Repeat prescriptions can also be requested on-line via Patient Access on the practice website ([www.datchetdoctor.co.uk](http://www.datchetdoctor.co.uk)). You will need to register each individual family member to use this service, which can also be used to book some appointments. Your repeat prescription list will appear on your screen and you simply have to tick the box alongside the items you need. Please type in where you would like to collect your prescription (Datchet/Wraysbury/Friary pharmacies or the surgery) so that it can be sent to the appropriate place.

If you attend a hospital outpatient clinic your consultant may change the medication that you are taking. When the doctor receives a letter from the hospital he/she will add the new item to your repeat prescription list, but you will need to request it when your supply from the hospital is running short. **KH**

**A Calendar of Walks**

Dr Dalton has been busy in his retirement and has written a small book entitled 'A Calendar of Walks'. The book gives instructions for 12 walks (with small maps) available in the local area. Each walk is within a 30 minute drive of Datchet and is 5 - 6 miles in length. Copies of the book are on sale for £5 and all monies raised will be donated to The Friends of Datchet Health Centre charity. Please ask at Reception or e-mail [be-pct.datchetreceptionist@nhs.net](mailto:be-pct.datchetreceptionist@nhs.net) if you would like a copy. Payment can be by cash or cheque made payable to The Friends of Datchet Health Centre. **KH**

## Parking at the Health Centre

There are two disabled parking spaces at the back of the health centre that are solely for the use of patients who are blue badge holders; the badge should be clearly displayed in the windscreen. The spaces are larger to facilitate the use of mobility aids and wheelchairs and are closer to the building to make access as straightforward as possible. In recent weeks these spaces have been occupied by cars not displaying a blue badge and patients using wheelchairs have had to use spaces further away from the building, causing them considerable inconvenience and difficulty. We ask that everyone is considerate towards patients who have limited mobility and that the disabled parking spaces are left clear for those entitled to use them.

Also, doctors' reserved parking spaces at the side of the building are being used by patients. We ask those concerned to desist because, in the event of an emergency home visit, the doctors need to have rapid and easy access to their vehicles. We are fortunate to have good parking provision for patients – please use spaces appropriately and with consideration for others. Bicycle racks are also available for patients who wish to cycle to the surgery.

**KH**

## Partners' Action Plan and the Patient Survey

A patient survey was conducted electronically and by hard copy in December 2011 and in March of this year the partners produced an action plan in response to it. This contains target dates for addressing concerns. The PPG is assisting the practice in prioritising the items in the plan. **All time scales given are guidelines only and any changes will be implemented as soon as they have been carefully planned and are safe. Analysis of cost implications remains essential before any change is implemented.**

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|----|--|----------|
| 1) | Agree 2012/13 action plan and publish with response to survey` | 31.3.12  |
| 2) | Repeat patient survey  | 31.03.13 |

### **Telephone access**

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|----|---|----------|
| 3) | Audit incoming calls at peak times                      | 30.6.12  |
|    | Use information to improve systems                      | 31.12.12 |
| 4) | Seek specialist advice regarding switchboard            | 30.6.12  |
|    | Use information to improve system                       | 31.3.13  |
| 5) | Review admin staffing levels in relation to peak demand | 31.7.12  |
|    | Use information to improve systems                      | 31.12.12 |

### **Appointment system**

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|----|---|----------|
| 6) | Review other ways of working  | 31.7.12  |
|    | a) Telephone triage   |          |
|    | b) Duty doctor system   |          |
|    | c) Re-organisation of appointment system including telephone slots                  |          |
|    | d) Review access to on-line appointments  |          |
| 7) | Use information to establish new ways of working.                                   | 31.12.12 |
| 8) | Review clinical staffing levels including ways of increasing number of appointments | 31.7.12  |
|    | Implement changes   | 31.12.12 |

### **Follow up and test results**

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|----|---|---------|
| 9) | Review the system for obtaining results and ensure it is well understood and safe | 31.8.12 |
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### **Tannoy**

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| 11) | Clinicians to be reminded to speak clearly and slowly via tannoy | 31.5.12 |
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### **Information for patients (PPG can assist with these points):**

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|-----|---|----------|
| 12) | Work with PPG to get message across about how appointment system works (Including any changes resulting from this plan) | 31.12.12 |
| 13) | Explanation of opening hours and appropriate use of extended hours appts  | 31.12.12 |
| 14) | Ensure patients are fully informed about the use of appointment system  | 31.12.12 |
| 15) | Ensure patients are fully informed about alternative healthcare providers   | 31.12.12 |
| 16) | Ensure both staff and patients are aware that rudeness will not be tolerated  | 31.12.12 |

## **Hay fever (also called Seasonal Allergic Rhinitis)**

About a quarter of the UK population is affected by hay fever and it's becoming more common

### **Causes**

- it's an allergic reaction to pollen from grasses, weeds or trees and also possibly to moulds that are carried in the air, usually during the spring and summer
- hay fever is a result of your immune system overreacting to pollen (harmless to most people) because it mistakes it for a harmful invader
- hay fever, asthma, food allergy and eczema are related allergic conditions you are more likely to develop on of them if they run in your family. This is called 'atopy'.

### **Symptoms of hay fever**

- sneezing
- a blocked or runny nose (rhinitis)
- itchy eyes, nose, throat and roof of the mouth (palate)
- headaches
- in some people hay fever may trigger asthma

### **Treatment of hay fever**

A large range of products is available to buy from supermarkets and pharmacies - your pharmacist can help you with the options. Please read the information leaflet that comes with the medicine. You can see your GP if you are not getting enough help with these 'over the counter' medicines.

Antihistamine tablets – usually reduce sneezing and a runny nose. Many are one a day tablets and non-sedating (eg cetirizine and loratadine). Benadryl and piriton (chlorphenamine) may need to be taken several times a day to control symptoms. Piriton makes some people drowsy and unsafe to drive.

Eye drops – allergy eye drops such as sodium cromoglycate will help with itchy or sore eyes. There are others available from your GP.

### Nasal sprays

- antihistamine nasal sprays – if you only get hay fever symptoms now and again and they only affect the nose
- steroid nasal sprays - good at preventing symptoms, especially a blocked nose, but not so good at treating symptoms quickly once they have started. They often work best if you take it before your symptoms start and they through the hay fever season. Take it even if you have no symptoms when the pollen count is high. You can buy several of these from a pharmacy (beclomethasone and fluticasone); others are on prescription only from a GP.

### Steroid tablets

- A short one-off course (under 1 week) may be rarely prescribed by your GP if hay fever is seriously interfering with your life. However they are not to be taken continuously for hay fever as there may be long term side effects.

### **Pollen count**

- the average number of pollen grains in one cubic metre of air over 24 hours. It is calculated daily for grass, tree and weed pollen. Pollen forecasts predict how high the pollen count will be and can be useful in helping you decide when will be the best times to start and stop treatment.
- The weather can affect the pollen count and it's generally higher on sunny days and lower on rainy days.

### **Prevention of hay fever**

- keep doors and windows closed when the pollen count is high
- avoid areas with more pollen such as parks with grass, especially in early morning and evening wear wrap around sunglasses to keep pollen out of your eyes
- take a shower and wash your hair after going outside
- do not dry washing outside (pollen can get trapped in clothes and bed linen fibres)
- put Vaseline on the inside of your nostrils to reduce the amount of pollen that gets up your nose