

# Practice Newsletter Summer 2017

## **Hay Fever : Advice from the doctors**

In the hay fever season (Spring/Summer) many patients present with red watery eyes, sneezing, runny nose and sore throats. These symptoms are usually due to hay fever (allergic rhinitis). Since



June the incidence of hay fever has been 50% higher in comparison with this time in 2016 and many people who have never had this problem before are now experiencing symptoms. We recommend that patients obtain treatment from a pharmacist in the first instance. There are lots of anti-histamines available as well as nasal sprays eg Beconase. Please discuss this with your pharmacist.

## **Patient Consent**

If you would like members of your family to be able to discuss your healthcare with the practice, we will be happy to do this if you provide your consent in writing. Just provide a signed letter to Reception including details of the relation/s you want to give consent for. We will then make a note of this on your medical records for future reference.



## **Staff News**

- Farewell to Dr Daniel Osigbe who finishes his one year placement at this surgery in August.

## **Requesting a repeat prescription**

Please note requests for repeat prescriptions are not taken over the telephone as errors can occur in verbal communications.



Requests should be made in writing – either

using the prescription slip, by letter or by using on-line EMIS Access. Please ask Reception for details of our on-line services if you would like to do these but are not already registered to use them.

## **Ear care**

Ear wax is made up of oil and sweat secreted from glands in your outer ear canal. Ear wax helps to keep your ears healthy; it is anti-fungal and anti-bacterial. Some people think that they should have their ears cleared regularly, but there is usually no need for ear wax to be cleared. You do not need to wash, scrape or poke wax out of your ears because the wax, along with the skin, usually falls out without you noticing it. Poking or scraping your ear canal can push wax further down your ear canal and actually encourages your wax glands to produce more wax.

Current best practice advice from ENT consultants is that due to the high risk of infections, perforated ear drum, tinnitus etc, ear syringing should not be carried out. Thus the surgery is planning to phase the service out.

If you have a wax problem causing deafness and your ear is healthy, you can start treatment yourself. You put 2-3 drops of ordinary olive oil down the ear 2 or 3 times a day for at least 3 weeks. This softens the wax so that it then runs out of its own accord. An alternative softener is sodium bicarbonate 5% ear drops which can be obtained from a chemist. For more detailed advice, pick up an ear care leaflet from reception.

## **Coughing for 3 weeks? Get out of breath easily?**

Around 28,700 people die from lung cancer each year.



Everyone gets a cough now and then, but a cough that doesn't go away could be a sign of lung cancer or other lung disease. If you've had a cough for three weeks or more, tell your doctor. It's probably nothing serious, but if it is a lung disease, such as lung cancer or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), finding it early makes it more treatable.

We all get short of breath sometimes, especially if we've done something energetic that we're not used to, like running up a hill.

But if you get out of breath doing everyday things that you used to be able to do such as vacuuming or lawn mowing, it could be a sign of lung disease or heart disease. Breathlessness can also be a symptom of other conditions such as anxiety or anaemia. It is important to see your doctor if your breathing is difficult or uncomfortable, or if it feels like you can't get enough air.

Take the British Lung Foundation's online breath test to see if you should get checked out. Visit [blf.org.uk/breath-test](http://blf.org.uk/breath-test) or telephone 03000 030 555.

### Carers Coffee Afternoon



A coffee afternoon was held on 5<sup>th</sup> July for patients and others who are carers for our patients. A talk was given by Lorraine Porter of the charity, Carers Bromley, on the many services that they provide to carers. If you look after a friend, neighbour or relative who needs help because of frailty, physical or mental illness or disability, do speak to Reception to ensure this is recorded on your records.

### Bromley MyLife

Bromley Council has a social care website which provides information and advice should someone who may not be eligible for assistance from the council need help due to illness, age or disability. It provides information on a range of areas including dementia, adoption, living healthily and carers.

Visit <https://bromley.mylifeportal.co.uk> to see this useful website.

### GP Hub appointments

If you would prefer to see a GP in the evening or at the weekend because it is difficult for you to get to the doctors during the normal working day, tell Reception and they may be able to book you a "Hub" appointment. These appointments are held at one of three hubs in the Borough of Bromley: Beckenham Beacon, Croydon

Road, Beckenham, Crown Medical Centre, Crown Lane, Bromley and Poverest Medical Centre in St Mary Cray. Appointments are available 4pm-7.40pm on weekdays and 8am-8pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

### Shortage of Hepatitis A vaccine

There is a global shortage of Hepatitis A vaccine. Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by a virus which is uncommon in the UK but can be encountered when travelling abroad. While the shortage continues we may have difficulty in sourcing this vaccine.

### ~~Top Tip~~



### Sun burn

*In the sun we all need to be aware of the risk of sunburn.*

- *Be aware of your sunburn risk. Some people are more at risk of developing skin cancer than others. The most common risk factors include:*
  - Pale skin that burns easily.*
  - One or more cases of severe sunburn in the past.*
  - A close relative who's had a melanoma*
  - More than 50 ordinary moles.*
  - Many large or unusual moles.*
  - A history of sunbed use.*
  - A suppressed immune system.*
  - Regular sunbathing (now or previously)*
  - Age (the risk increases with age).*
- *Choose sunscreen with at least SPF (sun protection factor) 15 but if you want high protection, choose a product with SPF30-50.*
- *Apply sunscreen correctly: An average sized adult needs around 6-8 teaspoons of lotion to protect their body. Apply sun screen 30 minutes before going out and again just before or after going out, as it takes time for sunscreen to be fully absorbed.*