

August 2018 – Surgery Newsletter



I hope you are all enjoying the summer and that the weather is still as hot as it is as I write this at the beginning of July. Of course with hot weather to enjoy, I need to remind everyone to wear sunscreen to avoid any damaging sunburn!

Prescriptions

As many of you will know we issue around 30,000 prescription items each month which is a mammoth task for an average size GP practice such as ours. One issue recently identified is that we can often receive requests for repeat medication too early to be issued. This may be just one, or all of the medication received in the request. Due to this and the sheer volume of processing we do, it's not possible to communicate this back to patients, which can cause problems for patients, the pharmacy and ourselves. We are going to introduce an internal system to help with this, but we also need our patients to help us too. **Due to the restrictions on medication being issued too early, we need patients to request their medications or drop off their requests no earlier than TWO WEEKS before they are due wherever possible.** For example, some patients may put in their request for the following month as soon as they collect this month's meds which can be up to 1 month early and we cannot process the request that early.

If patients can help us by putting in their requests in a timely manner, the system will work much better and everyone will benefit. Please also remember that we need a minimum of 3 full working days to process your request and your pharmacy will also need a couple of days' notice to prepare your medication.

New Texting (SMS) service

Most patients will already be aware that we send text/SMS reminders out to patients the day before their appointments are due and also at times to remind them to book their annual flu vaccinations etc. This will be continuing in exactly the same way, but we are looking to make use of a brand new service called ChainSMS provided by a company called accuRx which has become available to practices. This service allows us to send one off text messages to individual patients about their care rather than having to keep trying to make contact by telephone voice call or by sending a letter. It also automatically places a copy of the message in the patient's record. It's incredibly quick and easy for doctors, nurses and admin staff to use and can be used for many things. It's also completely safe and secure and has formal NHS Digital approval. We will need to develop how we use this new service and will be trying it out for various things. It will not be used for communicating anything urgent, as that's still best done by making a voice call to ensure that the patient has got the message/information. We will be using it for more routine messages to save us all time.

The messages will appear on your mobile phones as from "**accuRX**" and will be signed off from Great Bentley Surgery. If anyone ever has any concerns about any message they receive, please call and let us know as we will always be happy to reassure you.

Patient Participation Group

This month the **patient participation group will NOT be meeting** due to the August break.

**Richard P Miller
Practice Manager**