



***Cervical Screening*** - This has been in the news a lot recently. You may remember several years ago now when cervical cancer was very much in the headlines when Jade Goody of Big Brother fame, unfortunately died from cervical cancer. This created enormous awareness of the important of cervical screening (smear tests) and as a result many thousands of women more than usual were having regular smear tests as a result. I'm sure this saved many, many lives. However in recent years the emphasis on smear tests has reduced and as a result fewer and fewer women have been attending screening. We've noticed it here at Great Bentley as in the rest of the country. We cannot stress how important it is to be screened, so encourage all of our female patients to attend for their smear tests when they receive their invitation. We are of course aware that it's not a pleasant experience, but believe us when we say that this is nothing compared with the effects of having cervical cancer. It's only every 3 years from age 25 to 49 and then only every 5 years from 50 to 64. **A smear test is a small amount of discomfort in return for peace of mind lasting years.**

***Did you know you can refer yourself to the following services:***

**Health in Mind** provides access to a wide range of talking therapy treatments for adults with common mental health problems in and around Colchester and Tendring. You can contact them directly without a referral from a GP. They can be contacted by phone on 0300 330 5455, email: [healthinmind@hpft.nhs.uk](mailto:healthinmind@hpft.nhs.uk) or on their website: [www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk](http://www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk)

The **Essex Lifestyle Service** covers smoking cessation and healthy lifestyle support (diet and exercise). They can be contacted on 0300 303 9988, using email: [provide.essexlifestyles@nhs.net](mailto:provide.essexlifestyles@nhs.net) or at [www.essexlifestyleservice.org.uk](http://www.essexlifestyleservice.org.uk)

**Local pharmacies** can give great advice on minor ailments and we would encourage all of our patients to get and follow advice from any of the local pharmacies for minor conditions before seeking a GP appointment.

**Age Concern** provides access to many services that most people are not aware of. From a toenail cutting to a befriending service and a sitting service (giving respite for carers) to home help services. You can call them on 01245 346106 or visit their website for more information at [www.ageuk.org.uk/essex](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/essex)

***Non-NHS Work Requests*** – The government's contract with GPs covers medical services to NHS patients. However, in recent years more and more organisations have been involving doctors in a wide range of non NHS work as well as patients requesting things that the NHS does not pay for. GPs have to charge a fee to cover their time and other expenses. If in doubt please ask us, but we will of course always try to tell patients whenever a fee will be payable. More information about non-NHS/Private fees can be found on our website.

**The next meeting of the Patient Participation Group will take place at 6.30pm on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at the Great Bentley Village Hall.**

**Richard P Miller – Practice Manager**