

December 2014 – Surgery Newsletter



Here we are again with Christmas creeping up on us very quickly! We were very lucky this year having a very pleasant (and long!) summer and an unseasonably mild autumn too, but winter is once again upon us. Despite the usual tabloid news stories warning us of long bouts of extreme icy weather (as we see every year) I'm hoping and expecting these stories to have absolutely no substance whatsoever. Bad winter weather can affect NHS services extremely badly and it's a critical time of the year, particularly for hospitals. All parts of the NHS need patients to be sensible and use its services appropriately and this is never more important than during the winter months. Here is a brief guide to local services and how you can help:

A&E – Please remember that A&E is for **emergencies only**. I have heard stories of people turning up with sore fingers, infected ear piercing's and even to have a cold treated! Before going to A&E please consider if another service might be better.

Minor Injuries Unit in Clacton – This service is to help with minor accidents, like wounds, sprains, strains, minor dislocations, suspected fractures, removal of foreign bodies, burns, scalds, bites and stings. This is not exhaustive but gives you an idea of what NOT to attend A&E for.

Colchester Walk in Centre – This service can be used for the same things as the minor injuries unit in Clacton (and now have x-ray facilities over the winter), but also minor ailments such as rashes & minor skin infections, ear & throat infections and coughs and colds. You should only use this service for minor ailments if Great Bentley Surgery is closed.

NHS 111 – This new service can be used 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can provide telephone advice out of hours when we are not available. They can also advise you of the best place to go if you do need to see someone face to face.

Community Pharmacies – Most people are not aware, but your local pharmacy can provide a wide range of help and advice. They offer advice on common problems such as coughs, colds, aches and pains, as well as healthy eating and stopping smoking. They can also help you decide whether you really need to see a doctor.



“The Friends & Family Test”

The Friends and Family Test (FFT) is a new NHS feedback tool that supports the principle that patients should have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience. All GP surgeries will be starting this from 1st December including us here at Great Bentley Surgery. It will ask patients if they would recommend the services they have used and offers the opportunity to explain why they feel that way in a follow up question.

The aim is that this will provide a way to highlight both good and poor patient experience and this feedback will be published for all to see. We will try to make this as accessible as possible so that all of our patients can participate. We welcome your feedback as always, but hopefully this will make it much easier for you all.

Richard P Miller – Practice Manager