

Surgery News

Well, everyone here survived Christmas and we are all now looking forward to longer daylight hours. I have to admit that walking the dogs is no fun during the week at the moment – always in the dark, not to mention the ever-present mud. The dogs don't seem to mind, but for me lighter mornings and evenings can't come soon enough.

Apologies to anyone who found getting their prescriptions around Christmas time a bit slow. For some reason it was frantically busy, and whilst we are now getting used to the new computer system, it still slowed us down. Maybe we will get better at it when we have a bit more experience of it.

On the subject of prescriptions, please may I remind everyone that we don't take prescription requests over the telephone. This is for two very good reasons, both of them basically to do with patient safety.

Firstly, when we did deal with things over the 'phone we used to get far too many wrong items issued. This was very wasteful, as once medication has left a pharmacy it can't be recycled if it is returned unwanted; it has to be destroyed. It was also potentially unsafe if patients didn't spot that they had received the wrong medication, as well as being very frustrating for the victims of errors who could end up without a supply of their regular medication for a day or two whilst things were put right.

Secondly, we simply can't cope with the number of calls involved. We do prescriptions for some 16,000 items per month these days and you can probably imagine the time that would be taken up dealing with telephone requests for even a small proportion of that number. We would be overwhelmed and sick people, perhaps needing rapid attention, would have problems getting through on the 'phone.

We do offer a number of other ways of putting in prescription requests, so please do use them.

- By e-mail to holliesprescriptions@nhs.net
- By fax to 01206 252496
- By post or delivery to the surgery
- Via the "Patient Access" system, which you can sign up for at the surgery then log into through the www.patient.co.uk website. (You can also make appointments via that site.)
- If you live in Little Clacton, there is a collection box in the Post Office on The Street.

If you are on the Repeat Dispensing scheme, you can get your next month's supply of medication simply by letting your pharmacy know when you want it – there is no need to contact the surgery unless a new batch of prescriptions is required or we have asked you to come for review.

We are nearly at the end of the flu jab season now and this year have given a record number. If you qualify for one, it's not too late to have it done as there is a bit of stock still available. Please ring to book an appointment soon though, because once the spare jabs have gone, that will be it for this winter.

The other vaccination which is well worth considering if you are aged 65 or over, or if you qualify for a free flu jab, is against pneumonia. We are about to start writing to people who really should have the jab, offering the chance to come in for one. Don't forget that pneumonia doesn't only strike during winter, and it can be a killer. For most people the jab is a "one off", no booster being required, which is always good news. If you know that you are entitled to the vaccination there is no need to wait for your invitation. Either ring and request an appointment, or ask about it next time you are in the surgery.

Finally for this month, if you have been trying to make 2013 the year in which you stop smoking but are finding it hard going, don't forget that we can help. We have a specially trained Smoking Cessation Adviser who works at the surgery each week, and she can organise access to the many really effective

aids that there now are to help you quit. For many people, these can come free. Do give us a call if this is to be your year for kicking the habit. We can help you be healthier and wealthier – as well as stopping you smelling like an old ash-tray.

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