

## Surgery News

I promised months ago that I would introduce you properly to Dr Sirisha Rokkam, one of the two Salaried GPs who started with us early this year. (The other was Dr Cavenagh and I don't think anyone needs any introduction to him.) Anyway, I have finally managed to spend a few minutes with her, talking about things other than work, so can at last fill in a few of the details that I know many of you like to have.

Dr Rokkam qualified as a doctor in India in 1999, so she is already very experienced. Originally, she was keen on Gynaecology as a career, but like many young doctors found that the flexibility of working in a surgery and its compatibility with family life more attractive than hospital work. She now says that she loves general practice and is extremely happy in what she is doing. She is currently developing her interest in diabetes, which fits in really well with our needs at "The Hollies".

She came to live in Colchester about ten years ago and it was there that she undertook her GP training, completing it in 2008. She worked at practices in and around the town until we were lucky enough to entice her to Great Bentley in January.

Dr Rokkam still lives in Colchester with her three children, aged 9, 6 and 3, and of course her husband. How she finds time for other things besides medicine and family, I don't know, but she tells me that in her spare time she loves keeping fit, she reads, cooks for pleasure and she's a painter.

I'm quite sure that Dr Rokkam will develop her own following before long, and having got her here, we hope that she will be happy with us for many years to come.

Summer is here – or so people keep trying to convince me – so it's time for a couple of seasonal topics.

Firstly, don't forget your sun-screen when you are spending a day outdoors – especially if you have young children. The dangers of sunburn are well documented, so I'm not going to bore you with them. What is easy to forget though, is that the sun doesn't have to be shining brightly to burn you. Even on a hazy or a fairly grey day the harmful radiation still gets through as anyone with fair skin (like me) will probably confirm, so it's best to be prepared.

Next, if you are heading off abroad for that special holiday, please check early what jabs or medication you need for the trip. Vaccinations often need a few weeks to give you proper protection, so don't leave them until the last minute. Also, in your budgeting, please bear in mind that many holiday jabs and medicines are not provided free by the NHS – they have to be paid for. The cost will be fairly small in relation to whatever you pay for an exotic holiday, but it needs taking into account.

Thirdly, as we've seen in the news, hayfever sufferers have been having a tough time of it lately as the pollen season has been squashed into a shorter than usual period due to the cold spring. It's worth remembering that you don't necessarily need to see your GP if you think pollen might be affecting you. Your pharmacist is probably the best person to advise on protection and preventatives. Not only that, but he or she will be able to guide you towards the cheaper generic versions that are available of many of the more expensive drugs which are so heavily advertised at this time of year. They have the same active ingredients, and whilst the packaging might not be as flashy and colourful, they will do just as good a job of stopping itchy eyes, runny noses etc.

Lastly on the summer theme, as far as I know there is no such offence as "drunk in charge of a barbecue" – if there was, the prisons would surely be full to overflowing from now until Christmas – but do be careful if you are donning your pinny and topping up your pint/wine glass over the next few weeks. Most serious barbecue accidents happen under the influence, but even if you haven't been imbibing – keep your eye on the kids and the

dog, and make sure you cook everything through properly, as poisoning neighbours and friends is very antisocial. Oh – and if it's a nice day don't forget your sun-screen and your hayfever tablets .....

I really don't understand why some people, Zoe included, accuse me of being anti-summer.

Hugh Cronin

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