

Surgery News

Firstly this month, an apology. We appreciate that it has not been easy to get an appointment in recent weeks and all of us here want to say how sorry we are about that. We know how frustrating and irritating it is for you as patients when you can't get in to see someone quickly, and I'm sure you realise that it puts a lot of extra pressure on reception staff, doctors and nurses when they have to struggle to accommodate people who need seeing urgently, on top of surgery sessions that are already fully booked well in advance. Thank you for being patient with us. This has been one of the longest difficult spells any of us can remember here and we have been working really hard to keep our heads (and yours) above water.

The good news is that we have now found someone who can help us out for a while. By the time you read this, Dr Jonathan Gatland a very experienced GP who recently retired from a practice in Colchester will have started doing regular surgery sessions to ease the pressure on the partners. He will be working part-time with us throughout the summer while the other doctors squeeze in their hard-earned breaks, and we hope that this will ensure that all of you can be looked after more easily and with fewer delays.

Apart from Dr Gatland's rescue mission, there are other bits of news about doctors coming and going this month. It'll be pretty manic for us here until we get used to the changes, especially with Dr Letton leaving and the holiday absences, so please bear with us while we get our heads around who is and isn't here.

Sadly, Dr AnnMarie Hilton will be leaving us at the end of July. Many of you have got to know her well since she started here as a Registrar two years ago. After she had finished her training last summer, she gave us some important continuity when Dr Slawson left by staying with us as a Salaried GP. She is now moving on to take up a similar position at Brightlingsea surgery so that she can gain more experience and continue her professional development. We all wish AnnMarie the best of luck in her new job. I know that many of you will miss her.

Now this is where it gets a bit confusing for us – never mind you.

Dr Hilton's exit means a very welcome return for Dr Nambi. No, not Dr Subha Nambi, who spent six months with us last year as Registrar, but Dr Arul Nambi, her husband, who was Registrar here back in 2008. He was a really popular member of the team while he was with us and I'm sure that many of you who remember him will be glad to have him back. He will be starting at the beginning of September, working full-time, and we are expecting him to be a permanent addition to the team. Anyone who doesn't know him yet will find that he is an excellent GP who already knows our systems and the area, which always helps.

We have a new screening service starting here in the next few weeks, specifically aimed at men aged 65 and above. For some reason, men in this age group are most at risk from a problem called abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), which is an enlargement of the main blood vessel in the abdomen. If it isn't spotted and goes untreated, it can be fatal.

The problem can be detected by a simple ultrasound scan which takes just a few minutes, and to make this as accessible as possible, the Five Rivers AAA Screening team are bringing a portable scanner to use at the surgery on a few dates over the summer.

Men reaching their 65th birthday this year will automatically be sent an invitation to be screened. Men aged 66 or over won't get an invitation, but can self-refer for screening simply by completing

and sending in a Self Referral Form and sending it in to the AAA Screening office. We have a supply of the forms here at the surgery for anyone who wants one. Don't worry, by the way, if you cannot make any of the screening dates that are initially offered. Others will be arranged later.

Ladies – please don't feel left out. You aren't included in the screening programme simply because women generally don't suffer from this problem, which makes a change.

Finally for this month, a request for help from both us and the Green Pharmacy. If you ask for medication to be delivered to your home, please would you show on your repeat prescription request the day (or date) that you want the delivery to happen. Also, please avoid if you possibly can their busiest delivery days which are Thursday and Friday, when they sometimes struggle to cope. These two simple things will help the pharmacy prioritise their work and ensure that your order arrives on time and when you are there to receive it.

Hugh Cronin
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