

## November 2017 – Surgery Newsletter



**Self-Check in screen** – As we get busier at reception, it can at busy times create queues of patients waiting to speak to a member of staff. There is something everyone can do to help reduce queues and improve overall service. We had a new check in machine installed earlier this year which is much easier to use than the old one and is also much more reliable. If you've not tried it yet, please do! It's very straight forward and our receptionists are always happy to help you learn how to use it. All you have to do is press the screen on the big start button and then answer simple questions like are you male or female? What month were you born in? and what date in that month were you born on? Just these three questions will tell the screen who you are and it will display your name asking you to confirm it's correct. Clicking yes will then display a message telling you that you've been 'arrived' for your appointment. *Why not give it a go?*

**With winter fast approaching we would like to give you some hints and tips to help yourself (and the surgery) during this winter season. It's likely to be our busiest winter yet, so it's essential that where appropriate our patients self-care. Remember there's no cure for the common cold which is something that we don't seem to hear as much as we used to!**

**Colds:** You can prevent colds by washing your hands regularly. This destroys the bugs you may have picked up from touching surfaces used by other people. **TIP:** use disposable tissues instead of cloth handkerchiefs to avoid constantly re-infecting your own hands

**Sore throats:** Sore throats are common in winter and are almost always caused by viral infections. **TIP:** Gargle with warm, salty water. It won't heal the infection, but its anti-inflammatory properties will have a soothing effect. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of part-cooled boiled water.

**Asthma:** Cold air is a major trigger of asthma symptoms, such as wheezing and shortness of breath. **TIP:** Stay indoors on very cold, windy days. If you do go out, wear a scarf over your mouth and nose.

**Norovirus:** Also known as winter vomiting bug. It's unpleasant but normally over within a couple of days. **TIP:** Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration

**Painful joints:** Many people with arthritis say their joints become more painful in winter. **TIP:** Some people get a little depressed during winter and this can make everything feel worse. Daily exercise can boost your mental and physical state, and swimming is ideal as it's easy on the joints.

**Cold hands:** Fingers can go white, then blue, then red and throb and tingle. It's a sign of poor circulation in the small blood vessels in the hands and feet. **TIP:** Don't smoke or drink caffeine as they can both worsen the symptoms. Always wrap up well in the cold.

**Dry skin:** Is a common condition and often worse during the winter, when environmental humidity is low. **TIP:** have warm, rather than hot, showers. Water that is too hot make skin feel more dry and itchy.

**Flu:** Is a major killer of the elderly and people with long term health problems, such as diabetes and kidney disease. **TIP:** Find out if you're in a high risk group by asking your GP and have a vaccination if you are. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is one of the most common reasons for people being admitted to hospital during the winter.

**The Patient Participation Group will be holding its monthly meeting at 6.30pm on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Great Bentley Village Hall.**

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**Richard P Miller - Practice Manager**