

Surgery News

There is some really sad news to start with this month. Lorraine Simpson, who had been one of the mainstays of our reception team for almost seven years, finally lost her battle with cancer and died on 8th August. Our deepest sympathy goes to her husband Gordon and her two sons, Shane and Callum.

Lorraine was one of those amazing people who always seemed to be positive, cheerful and full of life, even when she knew she was ill and was having to endure chemotherapy. As well as being a lovely personality, she was an excellent worker and a terrific team member – always wanting to learn and do different things, and often volunteering to help out with extra hours when we were short of staff. She made a huge impact on the practice and, going by the number of people who have asked why she hasn't been around over the last few months, it is clear that a lot of you had got to know her too. We will miss her dreadfully.

Deadline dates for the various local magazines are usually pretty early, so as I write this, the Paralympics have just finished, Andy Murray might or might not win the US Open final, and the Indian summer seems to have lost its hold. What better subject to move onto then than flu jabs?

Our supply is going to arrive a little later than usual this year as the Department of Health decided very late in proceedings that an extra strain of flu needed to be added to the formulation. Nonetheless, we are booking appointments already and, judging by last year, demand will be high, so if you think you are one of the lucky ones who qualifies for a free jab, please don't hang about – book soon and avoid disappointment. Jabbing will start late in September. Flu could strike at any time. (I always look on the bright side.)

The question that inevitably arises at this point is – Who is entitled to a free flu jab? Broadly speaking, the guidelines are as follows:

- Anyone aged 65 or over at 31st March 2013.
- People (including children and babies over 6 months) with chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart, liver, kidney or spleen disease, COPD or other chest complaints that cause breathing difficulties, a neurological condition such as MS, or anyone who has suffered a stroke.
- Pregnant women.
- People living in a long stay care or nursing home.
- Main carers for elderly or handicapped people who would suffer if their carer was incapacitated.
- Anyone whose immunity is lowered by disease or medication (such as steroids or cancer treatment), and people who live with them.
- Health or social care workers.

Despite recent publicity, children without a chronic problem are still **not** included. We anticipate that from 2014 they will get free immunisation via a nasal spray, but that entitlement is not yet in place.

If all this leaves you unsure, there is a useful website you can visit to view a good, comprehensive leaflet – https://www.wp.dh.gov.uk/immunisation/files/2012/08/2900359-Seasonal-Flu-A5_v1_0A.pdf. Failing that, please ask at your surgery.

As usual, we hope that there will be enough flu jabs available for people who don't get a free one to buy one privately. You could always ask at your pharmacy.

Much better news from the surgery is that Dr Arul Nambi is now back with us in place of Dr Hilton. Many of you will remember him from his registrar days here not so many years ago. He has been working at various other surgeries, expanding his knowledge and experience, since he completed his GP training and we are delighted that he has now decided to join us on a permanent basis. He brings a lot of fresh ideas which will keep us on our toes for a while. I'll tell you a bit more about him next month when I have more space.

Finally for this month, I have some lovely personal news to balance things out. Zoe and I have a new grandson, Archie, who weighed in at 9lbs 5oz (ouch!) on 5th September. He and his Mum, Zoe's daughter Stacey, are both doing well and getting lots of love and attention from big sister Maia. The only slight complication is that for the last few months he has been known as either "Baby Jacob" or "Trevor" and some of the family (me included) are having a bit of a problem getting to grips with the final choice of name. Just goes to show the danger of naming the bump, I suppose. Never mind, I'm sure we'll get used to it.

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