



Winter 2016

HAWTHORN MEDICAL PRACTICE

PATIENT NEWSLETTER

TIPS FOR KEEPING WARM THIS WINTER

Wear warm clothes. Wrap up warm, inside and out. Wear lots of thin layers - clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and help to maintain body heat. Fleece material is excellent at insulating body heat as it traps in warm air. It's very lightweight and ideal for people with sensitive skin. Fleece blankets, throws and even pyjamas are perfect for keeping warm and fairly inexpensive to buy. Wear shoes with a good grip to prevent slips and falls when walking outside. If possible, stay inside during a cold period if you have heart or respiratory problems.

Keep your feet warm. We lose heat most from our heads, finger and toes. Whilst you may feel a bit daft wearing a hat and gloves round the house, make sure you have cosy slippers to keep your feet warm. Even two pairs of socks make a difference. You could even pop on slipper socks or thick socks in bed too.

Eat well Food is a vital source of energy, which helps keep your body warm. Soup, stews and casseroles are ideal. Try to make sure that you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day and keep active in the home if you can.

Stay active We all know that exercise is good for your overall health - and it can keep you warm in winter. If you can stay active, even moderate exercise can bring health benefits. If possible, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so.

Head for bed. Sounds a bit drastic but often bed is the cosiest place to be when it is really cold. Head to bed early with a hot water bottle, some warm pyjamas, thick socks and enjoy reading or listen to the radio.

Draw the curtains. Keep doors and curtains closed in the evenings. You can even hang curtains over doors to add an extra layer of insulation.



Did you know.....cholesterol is only one risk factor in heart disease and stroke – there remains a lot of emphasis on the actual cholesterol value these days but it really is only one risk factor in a whole sea of others, such as age, sex, ethnic origin, family history, smoking, alcohol intake, weight, diet, exercise, blood pressure and diabetes. We urge all patients not to concentrate purely on cholesterol values and instead to do all they can to address other treatable risk factors within their lifestyle.

New GP Partner & Receptionists

We are delighted to welcome Dr Zakir Gatta to our Practice. Dr Gatta commenced in October. Dr Gatta replaces Dr Baird who has retired but may be back to help cover holidays etc We have also recruited a full time and part time Receptionist to our team. Both ladies are well on with their training - there is much to learn within a Medical Practice and we all continually learn

We hope they all have a long and happy association with us.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

(examples only)



SELF-CARE - minor grazes, coughs and colds, sore throat, hangover



PHARMACIST - diarrhoea, runny nose, headache, sinusitis



GP Surgery – fever, ear ache, stomach ache vomiting



DENTIST - toothache, abscess, gum disease



A & E or 999 - chest pain, stroke, head injuries, severe shortness of breath, broken bones, severe bleeding, deep wounds



NHS 111 – advice, medical help, not sure who to call

Over usage of Antibiotics

There is new guidance as how we should be using antibiotics; this is from NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). The main points are:

- Antibiotics, such as penicillin, only work on bacterial infections and are useless to treat viruses
- Virus infections are far more common and 9 out of 10 sore throats, colds etc. are caused by them and don't need any treatment other than fluids and Paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Beating the Winter Blues

Top tips for feeling brighter when you feel down.

- Seek help. Many people think no-one will understand, or no-one can help, but nothing could be further from the truth. Discussing how you feel with family or friends is often the first step.
- Make an appointment to see your doctor to discuss how you are feeling and what options to help are available.
- Depression can be caused by stressful life events, however often there is no obvious trigger. Counselling may help you to deal with these issues.
- Depression can also be due to a lack of serotonin (the “happy hormone”). This can be improved by getting plenty of daylight and taking daily exercise.
- Keep alcohol to a minimum – many people drink more alcohol when they feel low, but alcohol is a depressant so will cause your mood to be worse in the long run.
- Talk it over with someone who may understand, you are not alone as depression is one of the most commonly treated medical conditions of the 21st century.
- If you are still struggling despite trying lifestyle changes there are various different anti-depressant medicines which your doctor will discuss with you as part of your treatment options.





HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR PROSTATE?

As men get older the prostate gland which sits at the base of the bladder gradually gets larger. This is due to the effect of testosterone on the gland and in most cases the enlargement is benign in nature. As a result of the prostate getting bigger men often feel they can not pass urine as easily as they used to be able to, they have to get up in the night to pass urine and when they need to go it takes a while to get going. All of this can affect the bladder often with an associated feeling of urgency to pass urine but when you do go you only pass a small amount. These symptoms are known collectively as lower urinary tract symptoms (or LUTS for short) and can be improved by lifestyle changes or medication.

Reducing your fluid intake especially in the evening can help with night time symptoms. Caffeine and alcohol are both bladder irritants and lowering your consumption of these will often result in an improvement in symptoms. Medicines can be prescribed to help relax the muscle in the prostate or to help shrink the size of the prostate and improve the flow. If these do not work then the prostate can be surgically trimmed to help with symptoms. In the UK there are approximately 30,000 cases of prostate cancer per year; most men will die with prostate cancer rather than of it. Early diagnosis and treatment will help slow its progression.

LUTS do not distinguish between a benign or cancerous enlargement of the prostate but a blood test called the PSA (prostate specific antigen) combined with examination of the prostate can give a good indication as to the cause of your symptoms. If you are a male over 50 with lower urinary tract symptoms consider speaking with your GP to be screened for prostate cancer but be reassured in the vast majority of cases your symptoms will be due to age related enlargement of the prostate gland.



Five tips for preventing cold weather asthma symptoms:

1. Keep taking your regular preventer medicines as prescribed by your doctor.
2. Keep your blue reliever inhaler with you at all times.
3. If you find you are using your inhaler more often than usual, ask for a medication review.
4. Wrap up well and wear a scarf over your nose and mouth – this will help to warm up the air before you breathe it in.
5. Take extra care when exercising in cold weather. Warm up for 10-15 minutes and ask your GP if they suggest taking one or two puffs of your reliever inhaler before you start.

PLEASE CANCEL YOUR APPOINTMENT

With winter upon us, appointments are even more in demand and we would ask you to remember the following:

- Please cancel if you no longer need your appointment
- Don't make an appointment 'just in case you need it'
- Sign up for our text messaging service to remind you of your appointment.
- Someone else may be in desperate need of an appointment.

You wouldn't dream of not turning up to have your hair done or not take your car for its MOT test so why just ignore your GP appointment – someone else may be in desperate need – if you don't need it, cancel it. Thank you

At our recent CQC inspection the Surgery was rated as "Good". The Inspectors looked at all our policies and procedures, interviewed staff and patients, inspected the building and found that we were performing well and meeting all expectations of a safe and caring Practice. It was a long, tiring day but we are delighted with the result.