



Manor View Practice

Patient Group Newsletter December 2015

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THE BALLAD OF TOM AND JIM

Mum sent young Tom to call on Jim
She didn't know if he was in.
She knew that Jim lived all alone
But he wasn't picking up the phone.

Tom was not a happy lad.
It's not that he was really bad
But Jim would always shout and call
When all the boys were playing ball
(especially if it went in his garden!)

So off he went as he was told,
At a fair lick, 'cos it was cold.
He knocked and rang and called Jim's name.
But the house stayed quiet – just the same.

Now there was a cat flap fitted in
And Tom was small and very thin.
He pushed in his head – which of course got stuck.
"Oh no" he thought "That's just my luck".

Policeman Plod came strolling by
And a headless body caught his eye..
He called for back-up "999"
The Fire Brigade got there just in time.

They released young Tom, but behind a door
Found Jim unconscious – on the floor.
No fire, no heating – freezing cold
Alone and hungry, very old.

It took a while, but Jim came home
& was never again left all alone.

The morals of this tale are three:
1. Make sure a neighbour has your key
2. If you know someone lives all alone
Don't rely solely on the phone.

&

3. However little you are, you won't get through a cat flap!

Then and Now

Are you aware that more than 8 million people aged over 16 are living alone in the UK? Many are quite happy to do so and have a good network of family and friends to support them. But then again, there are those who have no-one. In the “old days” we didn’t move around so much. Aunties and cousins lived around the corner. Most of the neighbours knew each other. Elderly parents and relatives were taken care of. It was assumed that children would stay at home until they were married – usually in their early twenties!

Today our life-style is often very different – families move away from each other, children aim to leave home and ‘have a life’ before settling down, communication may be by face-book, whatsapp, Instagram, e-mail etc. Everyone is busy, busy – working – gym – children’s activities, social, not social. This is just how it is.

But unless we have a good community network there are so many people who really are “all alone” and in times of need or crisis are too invisible to be helped. The milkman no longer does his daily rounds (In the ‘old days’ if the milk was not taken in in the morning, we all knew that was the first sign of a problem). Doors are kept locked – if not bolted. (I won’t mention that no-one ever locked their doors when I was a child – few would believe me). And because we didn’t even have telephones our only communication was a knock on the door, or a cheery “Halloo”.

This is just a little plea – not just for Christmas or for the winter months. If you do know someone who lives alone, please keep in physical contact with them regularly. If they are struggling or having difficulties there are many services which can help them. Contact the GP if you think they are unwell. In Hertfordshire we have a team of **Community Navigators** – trained people who have a detailed knowledge of health and social care - who can help a person access any support that will make their lives easier and happier. **Community Navigators** can be accessed via the GP, voluntary sector organisations or social care professionals. Herts Help is the main directory for social services in this area (Tel 0300 123 4044, e.mail: info@hertshelp.net).

ARE YOUR RESTLESS LEGS KEEPING YOU AWAKE?

Restless legs (RLS) can be a most debilitating and upsetting neurological condition which is thought to affect up to 10% of adults. It can cause various symptoms including the feelings of prickling, crawling and pain – but is diagnosed because of the intense urge to move your limbs, usually at night or when at rest. Although called ‘restless legs’ it can affect your arms, hands, trunk, neck or face.

There are a number of causes but sometimes the condition is inherited – you will find someone else within your family has the same problem as you. It may last for only two or three weeks at a time, but sometimes it is a permanent problem.

If this describes you, please do not think this is a minor affliction. It may amuse some but it is a major cause of **insomnia**. The urge to move is so powerful that sufferers walk around their homes for hours during the night just to relieve the sensation, eventually falling into a deep sleep in the hours before dawn.

Sleep, however, is very important to our health and being deprived of it can make you very unwell, affect your memory and judgement and be mood altering. If you have a problem please speak with your GP; in a number of instances there are medications which can be prescribed to help you. **Although there is no local support group, I found helpline@rls-org.uk to be an excellent source of information.**

JoanM

WHY CAN'T I HAVE MY ANTIBIOTICS?

Nearly 90 years ago, in 1928, Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin – the first known antibiotic. It took some years for its full potential to be utilised as it was very difficult to produce in any quantity. In 1942 mass production began in the United States of America and by 1945, 650 billion units of the “wonder drug” were being manufactured and death from infection – which had been the major killer in previous wars – dropped to less than 1 per cent. Other potential fatal infections such as TB, scarlet fever & diphtheria became treatable as new antibiotics were developed, and these miracle drugs were prescribed with great and joyful abandon.

However, those bugs that were being killed (bacteria) have been around on this earth a lot longer than us mere mortals and over millions of years have learned to adapt and change in order to exist. As we are discovering at high cost to our population’s health, we cannot carry on prescribing antibiotics as we did during those ‘wonder years’ because the bacteria are becoming ‘resistant’ to our drugs and are again winning the battle to survive.

Now, alongside bacteria we can suffer severe *viral* infections – such as polio, HIV/Aids, measles, mumps, rubella, ‘flu and shingles. More usually, though, it will be minor infections such as coughs, colds, sore throats and general malaise which will trouble us – but viruses CANNOT be treated with antibiotics because they will not respond. Why?

Well you have to understand that bacteria and viruses are as different as slugs and bindweed (both damage gardens but killing one won’t have any effect on the other).

Bacteria are independent single celled living organisms that can grow and reproduce almost anywhere – in us or on us, in or on plants, in the soil etc. etc. They have a cell wall around them for protection.

To kill bacteria you either damage their cell walls, or stop them multiplying. This is what antibiotics do.

Viruses on the other hand are usually just bits of DNA wrapped in a protein coat. They are like parasites as they cannot survive or replicate independently so have to invade your body cells and infect your cell ‘machinery’ in order to make more viruses. Many scientists do not even credit them with the term ‘living’.

To stop viruses you prevent them from entering your cells, or from reprogramming the cell’s contents This is what Anti-viral medicines do.

As you can see – antibiotics would have no effect on viruses!

I hope you understand now why you may not be routinely offered an antibiotic for minor infections or illnesses which should – in the course of a couple of weeks – resolve themselves. It is sensible to keep antibiotics for more serious bacterial infections which will not get better without them. For coughs, colds or sore throats (or minor infections) we recommend you initially consult with your pharmacist for some over the counter medicines which may help to relieve your symptoms. **Of course, if those symptoms persist it is then important that you see your GP.**

You will find more information about antibiotic use on the posters in the surgery, or you can look at the following NHS website: www.nhs.uk/antibiotics.

Joan Manning B.Sc.,M.Sc.,R.Nutr (Public Health)

ARE YOU HOARDING MEDICINES?

(or how would you spend an extra **£300million** in the NHS?)

It happens so easily. You collect your repeat prescription, check off everything on the list, and although you may have plenty at home tell yourself that you will keep more in the cupboard 'just in case'. But what are we finding in people's cupboards when the time comes to do a 'spring clean'? Pills, creams, powders, ointments, dressings, tubs, boxes, bottles. In date, out of date. Used once. Never used.

It has been estimated that £300 million is wasted every year on unused or partly used medication – and if you are a hoarder you are contributing to this.

Do your part – help contribute to saving some of that £300million by only ordering what you need. If you are not sure you can ask your GP for a medicines review.

You should return all unused medicines and dressings to your pharmacy. **NEVER** give your medicines to someone else.

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APPOINTMENTS

At the moment we get more correspondence about appointments than anything else. Here are some of the questions, together with answers, which we hope will clarify our current situation.

Q. Why is it getting more difficult to get a routine appointment?

A. Firstly, over the past year Manor View Practice has absorbed more than 900 extra patients. As thousands of new homes are being built in the area, with no apparent plans for more infrastructure (school, doctors' surgeries, dentists etc) an additional load is being placed on your existing local services including your Practice. They are doing their best.

Secondly, a number of people make appointments and don't keep them. In September more than 285 patients did not attend pre-arranged appointments. This meant that 285 other patients could not be seen. This was caused **ENTIRELY BY PATIENTS**. Please, if you are not able to attend, let the Practice know so your time slot can be given to someone else.

Q. Why am I not automatically given an appointment to discuss my test results?

A. Everyone who has a test arranged by Manor View Practice should be told what to do about the result – either to make a follow up appointment with the appropriate clinician, or to ring for the result one week later. Make sure you are clear about what to do before leaving the consulting room. Every result is looked at by a Doctor and a message is added to it that can be relayed to you when you ring. Most tests results are normal and will not need another appointment.

Also see our note above about patients not turning up – this happens with follow-ups too. And sometimes you change your address or phone number and the Practice cannot contact you.

Q. Why can't I book a nurse appointment on line?

A. At present nurses' appointments are too complex to be booked either on line or by automated telephone system. There are too many variables in the type of appointment, length of appointment and which member of the nursing team should see the patient so they all have to be booked in person. The reception team will help you with this.

Please help us to help you. Make sure The Practice has your up to date contact details. Keep the appointments which are made for you or advise Reception if there is a problem.

Remember – emergency appointments will always be seen by a doctor on the day – but please don't abuse this by making every problem an emergency!

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999/111/A&E/URGENT CARE/WALK-IN CENTRES/OOH etc. etc. etc.
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

We have had a request to explain what is the difference in all the above. We will attempt to, so here goes:

999 – this is the number you will dial for an emergency, where a life is at risk or when you need an ambulance asap. (as well as for police and fire, but we are not dealing with that here).

111 – (a) this is the number you call when you have a medical situation for which you need advice, but the call is not as urgent as 999.

111 – (b) We also use this number to cover our Out of Hours (OOH) service- when the practice is closed. The person who answers your call can connect you immediately to a clinician for advice or can arrange for a doctor to call back or visit if necessary. In some circumstances they can make an appointment for you to visit a clinician.

A&E – This is the department in the hospital which specialises in the most serious and life threatening emergencies (heart attacks, strokes, major accidents etc). Our nearest 24/7 A&E department is In Watford Hospital where we also have a specialist Children's Emergency Department.

Urgent Care – These are Hospital departments which deal with less serious emergencies. Our 24/7 Urgent Care Centre is located at Hemel Hempstead Hospital.

Minor Injuries – These are also hospital departments which deal with less serious injuries. There is a minor injuries unit at St Albans Hospital – open from 9am – 8pm every day.

Walk In Centre – There is a 24/7 walk in GP centre located at Hemel Hempstead Hospital. You may attend even if you are not registered with a GP.

Hope that helps a bit.

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A BRIEF ROUND UP OF WHAT WE'VE DONE IN OUR FIRST YEAR.

As well as forming your MVPPG committee, we have attended some meetings with other groups in the area, to share notes and see what we can do better.

Richard & Joan (Chair & Vice Chair) have meetings with Dr Davis (lead GP) and Liz Webb (Practice Manager). We are advised of any changes or important events; we pass on any concerns or niggles that you forward to us; we offer our help when required and try to act as a conduit between Practice & Patients.

We have established our own email address (mvppg1@gmail.com) but please be clear, if you have a medical matter it will not access the Practice or a Doctor.

Colin, our IT man, ensures that information is posted on the Website, including notices of meetings, write-ups of presentations and anything that is deemed IMPORTANT.

We have arranged Guest Speakers on: Dementia, Caring and Diabetes (all on the web-site).

We produce this newsletter.

As the Committee now has eight members, hopefully in the next year we will continue to inform and entertain you.

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HERE IS SOME GOOD NEWS & CONGRATULATIONS

Both of our younger committee members passed their exams in the summer with flying colours. **Radhika** is now studying Medicine at Imperial College, London, and **Jesse** has entered 6h Form with similar ambitions. Well done both of you.

Colin meanwhile was honoured with a 'Points of Light' award from the Prime Minister. This award recognises outstanding individual volunteers – people who make a change in their community and inspire others.

Well done all of you – we are proud to have you on board.

..... SO NOW, HOW ABOUT SOME CHOCOLATE?

Chocolate & Chestnut Log (no cooking required)

This is grain free and egg free. You can make it dairy free by using dairy free spread & soy milk. If required, reduce the sugar by using diabetic chocolate and a sugar substitute.

Chestnut Puree	2 x 400g tins
Plain Dark Chocolate	350 g
Milk	2 tablespoons
Instant Coffee	15g (1 tablespoon)
Castor Sugar	150g
Softened butter	150g

1. Melt the chocolate and milk in a bowl over a pan of simmering water.
2. Remove from the heat and whisk in the coffee and sugar and butter.
3. Empty the chestnut puree into another bowl and pour the melted chocolate mixture over it. Beat well. This will give you a dense, chocolaty mix which you can set in a mould as follows:

To make a Yule Log: Line either a swiss-roll pan or a log-shaped mould with cling film. Spoon in the mixture. Cover & chill over-night (or at least for a few hours.) When very firm either turn out of the log shaped mould on to a dish & peel off the cling film, or if using the swiss-roll pan lift the long edges of the cling film to roll & shape into a log, lift carefully onto your serving dish & then peel off the cling film. Run a fork along it to make wavy lines like bark, sprinkle with icing sugar and decorate with some holly.

OR you can set it in two cake tins & when firm turn out & sandwich together with whipped cream & raspberries.

This is very, very rich, so is best served with something sharp like cranberries, raspberries etc. Enjoy.



..... FUTURE EVENTS.

THURSDAY 10TH DECEMBER

Join us for our Winter talk on "Booze & Drugs" (or can I drink & take meds?)

Special guest speaker Jyoti Hadani M.Sc (Pharmacist)

Mince pies at 7.00pm at the Practice. All welcome, please advise the PPG or Reception if you attending.

FOR 2016:

We are delighted to be offering **free CPR training** with Danny Phillips, HeartStart Training Supervisor for the British Heart Foundation. If enough people sign up this will become a regular feature. Dates will be announced shortly. Please register your interest with the PPG or with Reception.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

This is a list of useful contact numbers & email addresses:

→111:

This number is our Out of Hours service for when you want medical help or advice and the situation is not 'life threatening' – when of course you should dial 999 or attend A&E. For any medical need during our opening hours please phone the surgery.

→HERTS HELP:

If you need help and don't know where to turn, if you have a question or a problem – medical or social – you can contact **HERTS HELP:**

Telephone number is: 0300 123 4044

Email address is: info@hertshelp.net

Post: HertsHelp, Hertlands House, Primett Road, Stevenage, Herts SG1 3EE

→CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE:

Gives support and information to unpaid family & friends who look after someone*.

Contact **CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE:**

Telephone number is: 01992 586 959

Email address is: contact@carersinherts.org.uk

Post: The Red House, 119 Fore Street, Hertford, Herts. SG14 1AY

***IF THIS IS YOU PLEASE LET THE RECEPTIONIST OR YOUR DOCTOR KNOW YOU ARE A CARER BECAUSE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE LOOK AFTER YOU TOO.**

→RED CROSS MOBILITY AIDS:

Located at the back of the Health Centre.

Provides short term loans (free) of mobility aids, such as walking frames & wheelchairs.

Phone: 01923 804 283 for opening hours.

→HERTFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE:

Free Home Fire Safety visit – including free fire detectors:

Telephone: 0300 123 4046 e all contributions.

→A1 OPTICIANS:

If you need an eye test but can't get out to an optician, A1 Opticians in Hemel Hempstead is providing free eye tests to all elderly and housebound residents in Hertfordshire.

Telephone number is: 0800 023 4964

Email: info@A1optician.co.uk

→HERTFORDSHIRE NEUROLOGICAL SERVICE:

If you have been diagnosed with a neurological problem, you can self-refer into the above service for help with self management or physiotherapy. For more information:

Telephone: 01923 299 100

Address: Hertfordshire Neurological Service, Jacketts Field Rehabilitation Unit, Jacketts Field, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire. WD5 0PA

Email: www.hertsdirect.org/fire

→LUPUS UK (HERTS & BEDS LUPUS GROUP):

If you are interested in attending 3-monthly meetings:

Telephone: 01923 801 107

Email: hazel.wood1@gmail.com

→RESTLESS LEGS SUPPORT GROUP:

This is a National Group – but for information contact:

Email: www.rls-uk.org

→KIDS (West Hub)

Independent support for parents/carers of disabled children with additional needs.

Includes a free toy library. For more information:

Telephone number is: 01923 676 549

Email: hub.herts@kids.org.uk

→HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTH WALKS:

Offers great walks around Hertfordshire – free – with trained walking leaders. All levels of fitness and ability catered for. For more information:

Telephone number is: 01992 588 433

Email: healthwalks.cms@hertfordshire.gov.uk

→WEIGHT MANAGEMENT/FITNESS/LIFESTYLE – MEN ONLY!

Watford Football Club are offering FREE weight/fitness/lifestyle courses for men only. Initially 12 sessions – either referred by your GP or you can contact them personally. Give it a go! For more information:

Telephone number is: 01923 496 391

Email: andrew.garlick@watfordfc.com

Address: Watford Football Club, Vicarage Road, Watford.

→PATIENT TRANSPORT:

- **WATFORD COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME:**

For the elderly or disabled who have to attend hospital/doctor's appointments.

It costs 45p a mile to cover expenses and they appreciate one week's notice of journey details.

Telephone: 01923 216 955

- **BARBARA BUS FUND:**

Set up to help people who cannot get out or use public transport because they cannot transfer from a wheelchair. There is a fleet of specially adapted vehicles which can be hired. Based at Stanmore.

For more information:

Telephone: 020 8416 0733

Email: office@barbarabus.com

Address: The Barbara Bus Fund, Louis Fleischmann Building, RNOHT, Brockley Hill, Stanmore, HA7 4LP

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