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NHS Friends and Family Test.  
(use code ACI)

## Introduction

This will be the third of our six-monthly newsletters which aim to let our patients and their families know a little bit more about the Practice.

It's always good to get feedback on the newsletter. If there is something you find useful or if there is something you think we should include in future, please let us know.

This is a good time to offer a warm welcome to the 700 patients who have joined the practice in the last 12 months. That's three new patients every working day. Whether you are a new or existing patient our staff are here to signpost you to services at the surgery or in the wider Southport and Formby area. Ask at reception, call us or visit our practice website.

## Who Cares?



Over the last few weeks we have been working with Sefton Carers Centre to make space available at the surgery for them to meet with their clients at a location that is close to their home.

Sometimes it can be difficult for carers to get away from their responsibilities in order to get advice and support that can really help them. On the first and third Tuesdays of each month you can speak privately at the surgery with the staff from the Trust. No appointment is needed for the session which is held between 2-4pm.

If you do provide unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without your help then let us know. As a carer it's important that you stay as healthy and stress-free as possible and there's a lot we can do to help you.



May we wish all our patients and their families a happy and peaceful Christmas.

We know that Christmas can be a difficult time for some people. If there's something troubling you, you can contact the Samaritans on 116 123 or by emailing Jo@samaritans.org

## Well Being Event

Ainsdale Community Care ran two hugely successful Well-Being events alongside our recent flu vaccination clinics at the Methodist Church in Ainsdale.

The event brought together under one roof over twenty organisations who provide care and support to our elderly population. Over 2200 patients attended the flu clinic and as well as receiving practical advice, patients could have their pulses checked and speak to representatives of our Patient Reference Group.

Free tea and coffee was provided by Ainsdale Community Care and the choir from Macmillan provided lunchtime entertainment.

Thanks are due to all the staff at Ainsdale Community Care who worked so hard to make the event a success. We are already planning how to make the event bigger and better next year.



You can complete an NHS Friends and Family test survey at the surgery or on-line via our website. Forms are available next to the check-in screen.

## A Long Walk to the Doctors



As part of a World Expeditions group, Dr Richard Wood and Dr Rob Russell will be climbing up Kilimanjaro in January 2016. This is the highest mountain in Africa and walking to the glacial summit is a significant challenge. The group they are going with is a mixture of GPs and members of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and they are raising money for the Royal College of General Practitioners charity programmes.

All the money raised will go towards RCGP's work to support primary healthcare in the developing world. This is essential life-saving work with vaccination programmes; fluid replacement and the prevention of many unnecessary deaths from infectious illnesses amongst the projects undertaken. The RCGP has programmes in Sierra Leone, India and Myanmar to improve the primary care received by many of the world's poorest people.

They have set up donation pages with JustGiving.com. Dr Wood's page can be found by searching **Richard-Wood25** and Dr Russell's is **RobertRussell106**. They are very appreciative of any donations and everyone at the Practice wishes them well on their incredible adventure.

## Family and Friends Test

Members of the Patient Reference Group collected 145 Friends and Family Test responses from patients at the recent well-being events.

122 of the patients said they would be extremely likely to recommend our Practice to a Friend/relative who wanted to use a GP service. A further 22 said they would be likely to recommend. One other patient said they would be neither likely nor unlikely to recommend. Ainsdale Medical Centre.

## Repeat Medication.

We always ask for two clear working days to process your request for repeat medication.

The GPs issue prescriptions to about 350 patients every day and while the vast majority are done without a problem, sometimes things have to be checked and clarified and this can cause it to take longer.

Help us to make sure you never run out of your important medication by re-ordering a full week before you will take your last ones. This is especially true if you order via the pharmacist as this adds extra time into the ordering process.



## Dementia Friends



We continue to support the Dementia Friends initiative.

Look out for our signature board in the ground floor waiting room which is signed by all the members of staff who have become Dementia Friends this year. Jill, one of our Dementia Friends Champions, recently ran a training course for ten GP receptionists from elsewhere in Southport to help them learn more about how to help people living with dementia and their families when they visit their own practices.

### Missed Appointments

In the last month alone there have been 220 appointments where the patient did not attend and didn't tell us ahead of time that they weren't coming. This equates to ten appointments each and every working day which could have been given to another patient.

Please phone the surgery as early as possible to cancel your appointment if you are unable to attend. It is also possible to cancel any appointment online via Patient Access even if you didn't originally book the appointment on-line.

Also, if you re-arrange an appointment or re-book with another clinician please remember to ask the receptionist to cancel the unwanted appointment.

## Patient Facilities



We have recently completed the refurbishment of our toilet facilities on the ground floor of the surgery. We have introduced enhanced features for disabled patients and also baby changing facilities. This is part of our rolling programme of upgrading and modernising the practice to provide a safe and comfortable environment

Remember that our phone lines are open throughout the working day from 8.00am – 6.30pm. We no longer close through lunch.

## Appointments



One of the hardest things about running the surgery is making sure there are enough appointments available for people needing to see the doctors with problems that can't wait. We currently ring-fence two thirds of GP appointments for patients calling on the day. The other third are released ahead of time. Some are released 3-4 weeks in advance for planned follow-ups and non-urgent conditions; others are made available on the next working day to assist people who need to book time off work.

When you call for an appointment don't be surprised or offended if the Receptionist asks you why you need to see a doctor. This is to help us allocate the most appropriate clinical resource and this won't always be to see a GP. Our nurse practitioner, can prescribe medication and treat a wide range of minor conditions in patients who are aged 16+.

You can now book GP appointments on-line via Patient Access. If you haven't yet registered to use Patient Access you just need to complete an application form and provide two forms of ID – one must have a photograph of you on it and the other must contain your current address. We follow government guidance on identity checking which is important as your privacy is at risk if we don't do this thoroughly.

## AF Awareness



Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a heart condition that causes an irregular and often abnormally fast heart beat.

People with atrial fibrillation are at increased risk of having a stroke. In extreme cases, atrial fibrillation can also lead to heart failure. We have been working hard to identify patients who may be at risk of AF and following the flu clinic pulse checks we have picked up 3 new cases opportunistically. During AF awareness week we ran a further campaign to do pulse checks at the surgery in conjunction with the local Stroke team who spent the day at our surgery promoting awareness of this condition.

## NHS Choose Well

At this time of year it is especially important to be aware of the range of NHS services that are available if you feel unwell.

- Self-care

A lot of illnesses or symptoms, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, upset stomachs and aches & pains can be treated in your home, using a well-stocked medicine chest and getting plenty of rest.

- Pharmacist (Chemist)

Community pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals, and can give you advice on common illnesses and the medicines you need to treat them. Most now have a quiet area where you can speak to the pharmacist more privately and many have extended opening hours.

To find your nearest pharmacy visit NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or call NHS 111.

- NHS 111

NHS 111 is the NHS non-emergency number which you can call to speak to a trained adviser, supported by healthcare professionals. They will ask you a series of questions to assess your symptoms and immediately direct you to the best medical care for you. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones

Call 111 if:-

- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
  - you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
  - you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
  - you need health information or reassurance about what to do next
  - when your GP is closed and you need urgent care.
- GP (Doctor)

If you have an illness or injury that won't go away, make an appointment with your GP. They provide a range of services by appointment, including medical advice, examinations and prescriptions. **For urgent GP requirements out-of-hours ring NHS 111 ( see above)**

- A&E or 999

Accident and emergency departments and the 999 ambulance service should only be used in a serious or life-threatening situation. A&E provides immediate emergency care for people who show the symptoms of serious illness or are badly injured. Emergency services are very busy. **They should only be used in very serious or life-threatening situations.**

### NORMAL OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday 8.00am to 6:30pm

On the day appointments available from 8.30am each day.

### CLOSURES OVER THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PERIOD

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Holiday Monday

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January – New Year's Day