



Spring 2019

Bridge Medical Centre Newsletter



Staff News

We welcome Mary Chipling as our new Practice Paramedic Practitioner. She has recently moved to West Sussex after spending her entire life living and working in London. Mary loves working with people in the community, and has over 7 years experience working frontline for the London Ambulance; along with 2 years working in the busy Urgent Care Centre at Charing Cross Hospital. She will be doing minor ailments - ENT complaints like coughs, respiratory issues, backache and UTI's. Mary will also be doing home visits. Mary enjoys cooking, hosting parties and eating good food! She also loves singing, good music and dancing... For many years she has been a part of the procession for the Notting Hill Carnival in London!

We welcome Kerry Carusone to our reception administration team. Kerry has previously worked as cabin crew for XL Airways prior to having her 2 boys aged 13 and 8. Recently Kerry worked as a carer and nursery assistant. In her spare time Kerry likes reading and walking her dog. She loves working with people and is really enjoying working here at Bridge Medical Centre.

Sadly after many years with the Practice, we said a fond farewell to Janice, our Practice Nurse, who has recently retired. She has worked as a Practice Nurse for the NHS for 50 years. She has kindly provided us with a photo of her carving a turkey for Christmas lunch in 1969 inside one of the hospital wards. Thank you for your long commitment to the Practice and we wish you an enjoyable retirement.



In addition, a new reception administrator will be starting soon and we will have more about her in the next issue.

CAKE SALE/TOMBOLA

Monday 18th March

Cake sale

Wednesday 20th March

Tombola

Please come and support us



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Travel Clinic Service

**Are you thinking
of travelling
aboard?**

Download from our website or collect from the reception a travel questionnaire at least 4 weeks before you intend to travel.

Once you have completed the questionnaire please book an appointment to see one of our travel nurses.



PRACTICE CLOSURE

Bridge Medical Centre will be closed on the **27th March 2019** from **12:00** for the remainder of the day for training.

HAY FEVER

What is hay fever?

Hay fever is an allergy caused by pollen grains released during the pollen season which normally runs between March and November in the UK.

Symptoms of hay fever include:

- sneezing and coughing
- a runny or blocked nose
- itchy, red or watery eyes
- itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears
- loss of smell
- pain around your temples and forehead
- headache
- earache
- feeling tired



If you have asthma, you might also:

- have a tight feeling in your chest
- be short of breath
- wheeze and cough

Hay fever will last for weeks or months, unlike a cold, which usually goes away after 1 to 2 weeks.

How to treat hay fever yourself

There's currently no cure for hay fever and you can't prevent it. But you can do things to ease your symptoms when the pollen count is high.

DO:

- wear wraparound sunglasses to stop pollen getting into your eyes
- shower and change your clothes after you've been outside to wash pollen off
- stay indoors whenever possible
- keep windows and doors shut as much as possible
- vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth

DON'T

- do not cut grass or walk on grass
- do not keep fresh flowers in the house
- do not smoke or be around smoke – it makes your symptoms worse
- do not dry clothes outside – they can catch pollen

Hay fever sufferers can benefit from a wide range of medication which can be prescribed by your GP or alternatively purchased over the counter from your local pharmacy.



LONELINESS IN OLDER PEOPLE

Older people are especially vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation – and it can have a serious effect on health. But there are ways to overcome loneliness, even if you live alone and find it hard to get out.

Hundreds of thousands of elderly people are lonely and cut off from society in this country, especially those over the age of 75.

According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.

People can become socially isolated for a variety of reasons, such as getting older or weaker, no longer being the hub of their family, leaving the workplace, the deaths of spouses and friends, or through disability or illness.

Whatever the cause, it's shockingly easy to be left feeling alone and vulnerable, which can lead to depression and a serious decline in physical health and wellbeing.

Someone who's lonely probably also finds it hard to reach out. There's a stigma surrounding loneliness, and older people tend not to ask for help because they have too much pride.

It's important to remember loneliness can – and does – affect anyone, of any age.

Here are ways for older people to connect with others, and feel useful and appreciated again.

Smile, even if it feels hard

Grab every chance to smile at others or begin a conversation – for instance, with the cashier at the shop or the person next to you in the GP waiting room.

Invite friends for tea

If you're feeling down and alone, it's tempting to think nobody wants to visit you. But often friends, family and neighbours will appreciate receiving an invitation to come and spend some time with you.

Keep in touch by phone

Having a chat with a friend or relative over the phone can be the next best thing to being with them. You can also call Independent Age on 0800 319 6789, Age UK on 0800 055 6112, or Friends of the Elderly on 0300 332 1110 to receive a weekly or fortnightly friendship call from a volunteer who enjoys talking to older people.

Learn to love computers

If your friends and family live far away, a good way to stay in touch, especially with grandchildren, is by using a personal computer or tablet (a handheld computer).

Get involved in local community activities

These will vary according to where you live, but the chances are you'll have access to a singing or walking group, book clubs, bridge, bingo, quiz nights and faith groups.

**ACTIVE SIGNPOSTING**

What is active signposting?

We have all seen the recent Campaigns on TV encouraging us to consider using our Pharmacy as the first point of contact for minor ailments such as coughs and colds, sore throats along with rashes and eye infections etc. The purpose of this is to utilise the pharmacist expert knowledge on all of these issues and more which consequently makes more GP appointments available for more acute conditions. It also decreases the number of calls made to the GP which may make getting connected a little easier.

The pharmacy is not the only option readily available that could be more appropriate in the first instance. Our admin team have been trained to suggest these alternatives and "signpost" you to alternative options to avoid delay in you getting essential treatment for your condition, especially when we have used our appointments on the day. This will avoid the frustration of having to call back again the following day and ensure you are getting advice or treatment as quickly as possible.

It is understandable that you may have reservations taking advice from an administrative member of staff as we are not clinically trained, however, it is important to remember that these staff have guidelines to work within and you will be directed to a medically trained professional to deal with your problem. We will not refuse an appointment if available but will be suggesting alternative options for you. This is working very effectively in other practices.

In due course we will be adding more information of this service to our website.

In the meantime, please be aware that when answering your calls, the series of questions asked are in the interest of offering the best options available at that time for your condition. We are endeavouring to improve our patient experience so that everyone gets the treatment they require within an appropriate time frame.

OPENING HOURS

Normal opening hours are 08:30 to 18:30 Monday to Friday.

Closed during the lunch period 13:00 to 14:00.

We offer pre-bookable evening appointments on most Tuesdays between 18:30 and 19:30, and pre-bookable telephone appointments on other evenings.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Are you interested in finding out more about your surgery?

Would you like to influence or change how your surgery operates? Why not join our PPG and have your say. We hold meetings on alternate months, at lunch times in our waiting room.

Our **next meeting** will be **Tuesday 21st May 2019.**



MESSAGE FROM JO BENDER OUR PRACTICE NURSE

Between 26th - 31st March 2020, I have an amazing opportunity to trek 50km across the Sahara desert in aid of St Catherine's Hospice. It will be a challenging yet exciting adventure for me and I would very much like your support.

If you would like to donate to this cause, please let me know.

I will gladly take any donations.

You can also donate on my Just Giving page below:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/joanne-bender

I have started training and will keep you up to date with my progress.

Thank you for your support

JO

