



Theale Medical Centre Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2018 ISSUE

Message from the Practice Manager

We are listening to you but what are we doing!

Recently we have had feedback that you feel you wait too long in the queue for your phone call to be answered, you find it difficult to speak to dispensary due to the phone line opening times, that the appointment wait time to see a GP is too long and that sometimes you have a long wait in the waiting room for your GP.

I have now repositioned the telephone call monitor so that senior staff in reception can view it at all times and allocate additional staff at busy times or help out themselves. Our aim is to answer within 3 minutes and all staff are working towards this. At very busy times this may not be manageable but it is what we are actively working to achieve.

Now we are fully staffed in dispensary and our new member of staff is settled we have amended the telephone hours to match the dispensary opening hours so the phones will now be on from 8.45am to 6.15pm Monday to Friday.

We understand that you are frustrated with availability of appointments; this is a national problem whereby demand

outweighs capacity. However we have tweaked our system again which will come in to effect early November and we now have some availability early morning, as well as evening and weekends.

Our GPs are conscious that when appointments are running late you are experiencing delays in being seen and having to wait in the waiting area and this is frustrating and annoying to you. Everyone is working to ensure that you are seen on time as far as possible but unfortunately if there is an emergency and an ambulance is needed this can result in delays.

We do value your feedback so please keep completing our surveys and using our suggestion box so that we can continue to improve.

Thank you

CHARITIES

Breast Cancer Awareness Month



In October our receptionists and dispensers bought their own breast cancer tops to wear on Monday's and Friday's throughout the month in support of this cause. Staff will donate to the charity for wearing their tops.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

Thank you for everyone who supported our MacMillan Coffee morning. We raised £218.92.



Don't forget we donate all proceeds from the sale of books to support the Duchess of Kent Hospice.

How can you help us?

Every year, millions of us visit our GP with minor health problems that a local pharmacy could help with. By visiting your pharmacy instead of your GP, you could save yourself time and trouble - no need to book an appointment, just walk in. This also means your GP can focus on treating people who are sicker than you.

Pharmacists can help recognise and treat many common illnesses. They can give advice and where appropriate, recommend over-the-counter medicines that could help clear up the problem.

If they think you need to see a GP for your illness, they will advise you to do that.

Your pharmacy may be able to help with:

- mild skin conditions, such as acne, eczema, psoriasis, impetigo, athlete's foot
- coughs and colds, including blocked nose (nasal congestion), and sore throats
- bruises, sunburn, and minor burns and scalds
- constipation and piles (hemorrhoids)
- hay fever, dry eyes and allergies (including rashes, bites and stings)
- aches and pains, including earache, headache, migraine, back pain and toothache
- vomiting, heartburn, indigestion, diarrhoea and threadworms
- period pain, thrush and cystitis
- head lice (nits)
- conjunctivitis, cold sores and mouth ulcers
- warts and verruca's
- nappy rash and teething

Visiting your pharmacy about common health problems frees up time for GPs and A&E departments, which are already stretched, especially during the winter months



IS YOUR MEDICINE CABINET FIT FOR THE WINTER?



Most common winter ailments, such as colds, sore throat, cough, sinusitis or painful middle ear infection (earache) can't be treated with antibiotics.

What works instead?

Rest, drink plenty of fluids, take pain relievers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, and talk to your pharmacist for advice on getting the relief you need.

How long can I expect to suffer?

Middle ear infection – 4 days
Sore throat – 1 week
Cold -1.5 weeks
Sinusitis – 2.5 weeks
Cough – 3 weeks

What should I do now?

Ask your pharmacist what medicines should be in your cabinet to help get you and your family through the winter season.

FACEBOOK

Please like and follow our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Thealemedicalcentre>



We have set this up so that we can keep you informed of future events, topical or important information promptly. For instance if we have a power cut and our phone lines are not working.

EXTENDED HOURS

Reading GP surgeries started offering extended hours from 1st October 2018, to meet a government pledge to give the public access to bookable appointments from 8am-8pm. However, the appointments might not be at your own GP surgery – you might instead be offered one at a neighbouring surgery, or at the Westcall consulting rooms based at Royal Berkshire Hospital.

The current shortage of GPs means most Reading practices are unable to open seven days a week, 8am-8pm. Instead, five new 'clusters' have been set up, involving between three and eight GP surgeries joining together to share a joint appointment booking system that their own receptionists can access, so they offer appointments to each other's patients where

needed, during the extra hours on most weekdays.

At weekends, most of the extra appointment times will be delivered by Westcall (which also covers urgent GP appointments outside of core hours).

All you need to do is speak to our receptionists as normal.

SURVEYS

Friends & Family Test

Thank you to all the patients that complete the friends and family test. We have had many positive comments such as:

What you say you like:

"Having been registered with Theale Medical Centre virtually all my life I have experienced the highs and lows of its administration. Currently the practice is running extremely well and efficiently with a good quality staff of practitioners and admin"

"Professional approach but friendly and caring"

"Seen very quickly and service very good"

"Very friendly and efficient staff, Nothing is too much trouble! Pleasant experience!"

"Friendly competent"

"I like all the doctors that I've seen. They seem very caring and competent"

"Nothing to add it was all good service"

"I don't visit the practice that often but when I do I always find Doctors & staff helpful & friendly"

"Fast and good service": "On time, efficient, pleasant experience"

"Very friendly surgery"

"Seen promptly at appointment time, very courteous staff"

"Very prompt service, friendly staff"

"Receptionists really helpful. Doctors that listen"

"The nurses are very efficient."

"I have always had good treatment"

"Again today the doctor I saw was on time and very caring and attentive"

"Lovely staff and usually don't have to wait long"

"Wonderful experience got the time wrong two hours late cross wires with time however receptionist had a word with Phlebotomist no trouble got me in . There was no fuss no panic good team work. Thank you ladies"

"The phlebotomist is so friendly and cheerful didn't feel a thing on this re-test likewise the original visit"

"Easy to get appointments"

"Efficient, polite and accommodating"

"My daughter's appointment was her 1st adult consultation and her needs were met very well "

What you say we need to improve:

"Not always easy to get through on the phone and get an appointment"

"Shorter waiting time"

"Fairly long wait time"

"Happy with staff but can be difficult to get appointments. Telephone appointment system did not work for me."

"Keep to designated appointment times please." Please see the article on the front page to see how the 'improvements required' are being addressed.

Dispensary & Phlebotomy Surveys

We are currently undertaking 2 further surveys to gather your thoughts on our dispensary and phlebotomy services.

If you are handed a survey please help us by completing and returning it so that we can continue to improve the services we offer to you.



INITIATIVES & DEVELOPMENTS

We have recently introduced text messaging to remind you that your medication review is due. When you receive a text please follow the instructions to complete your review.

We have introduced the facility for you, when you collect your prescription from our dispensary, you can tick the medications on the right hand side of your prescription and hand it in to dispensary who will process your order

for the following month and give you a date for collection. All you have to do then is put the date in your diary and pop down the following month to collect your prescription.

We are looking to train staff so that we will have a 'Dementia Champion' and a 'Carer Champion' in the practice that will be able to advise patients on resources and services in the area.

WEBSITE

Please don't forget to visit our website regularly. It gives lots of information, self-help and guidance and often saves you having to call or visit the surgery.

You can:

- book appointments
- cancel appointments
- request medication
- complete reviews such as medication, contraception and asthma reviews
- complete travel assessments
- enrol as a new patient
- ask the GP, Nurse or Receptionist a question
- chase a referral
- request a sick note

If you can't keep your appointment please remember to cancel it. Demand outweighs capacity at the moment and we need to ensure every appointment is used appropriately. Please don't just 'not turn up', please cancel it and give another patient the opportunity to use it.
Thank you

ARTWORK DISPLAY

One of our Patient Participation Group members, Joe Lally, has kindly lent us some of his artwork to display in the waiting room at Theale.

Joe lives in Calcot, he works with a range of media including oil, acrylic and watercolour. His work is sometimes partly representative and sometimes based on a combination of what he has recorded either by photos or sketches. He loves the sea, water and sky, which are the main topics of his paintings.

The artwork is for sale

- A – Mountains, Strand Boat £50
- B – Before the Voyage £100.00
- C – Companionship £150.00
- D – Menai Bridge, N Wales £75.00
- E – Conway Castle, N Wales £120

If you are interested in purchasing any please ask at Reception.