 THORNDIKE SURGERY NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2018

Did you know that the surgery provides hundreds of prescriptions every week so don’t forget to order your regular medications in good time to avoid any last minute panic, particularly as the winter and Christmas are fast approaching

APPOINTMENTS UPDATE FROM YOUR SURGERY

When allocating appointments we try to offer a variety of appointments to ensure we cater for all patients.

1. One third of appointments are face to face and telephone consultations for on the day booking are released at 8.15am when the telephone lines open and the doors open at 8.30am.
2. One third is bookable in advance. These appointments are bookable 5 weeks in advance both online and on the telephone or face to face and they are usually taken with a few days of being released.
3. One third are bookable via Patient Access on the surgery website or mobile phone app. Both pre-bookable or on the day appointments become available at 7am and via myGP application (appointments bookable on your smartphone 2 weeks in advance).

Unfortunately as we are currently having to use more locum doctors to fill sessions which means that the number of on the day appointments are going up and the numbers of pre-bookable appointments are reducing to less than one third. This is purely a safeguard due to the fact that Locums can cancel at very short notice and are not under contract to the surgery. Locums can choose where and when they will work. Therefore, in order to avoid cancelling pre-booked appointments (with the Locums) at short notice we only make their appointments available as book on the day. You can book 5 weeks in advance when there is availability, we place appointments on the system every month for 5 weeks in the future.

We acknowledge the difficulty getting through on the phone and we now have a state-of-the-art phone system which can handle the volume of calls optimally. The system works on 8 incoming lines – if we have 5 receptionists answering the phones that takes up 5 lines which means the system will store the other 3 incoming until a line is free. Similarly if 4 people are answering the phones 4 lines would store the incoming calls that have reached a free line. The phone computer system tells you where you are being held. If you get an engaged tone it is because all 8 lines are busy. If you are using a mobile phone to call the surgery and redial it may continually redial until you get a free line. It will not show an engaged line.

On an average day the receptionists will answer 49 calls between 08:15 and 08:45 the shortest call being 50 seconds and the longest 4.52 minutes – that is an average of just over 12 calls per receptionist in 30 minutes – an average of 2.5 minutes a call. The total number of calls between 08:15 and 10:00 is approximately 220, the phones are very busy every day, and the appointments are almost invariably all taken shortly after 08:30am. The phones are busy again between 13:30 and 14:30.

CHANGES AT THORNDIKE SURGERY

In case you have not seen any information in the surgery or the local media.

The Partners of the Thorndike Surgery are very pleased to announce a merger with College Health, this will secure the long term future of the practice, care for the patients and security for the staff.

It is expected that the merger will complete by the end of 2018.

MINOR ILLNESS CLINIC AT ROCHESTER HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE

When you make an appointment you may be referred to clinics running at Rochester Healthy Living Centre, Delce Road. These clinics, which are run by the Medway Practice Alliance, do not run every day and will depend on the condition for which you require an appointment. It is staffed by a doctor and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner who are employed by the Medway Practice Alliance.

BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

Three blood pressure monitoring machines have been donated to the surgery by a grateful patient, Mr Ken Berry. These will be extremely useful in the future and will greatly benefit other patients who need to undertake home blood pressure monitoring for a period of time. If you do benefit from this please ensure that you return the equipment promptly once finished with so that other patients may gain the same benefit.

BLOCKED DRAINS AT THE SURGERY

On several occasions the surgery have had to have emergency call-outs from Dynarod to clear the patient WCs in the reception area which have become blocked by incontinence pads or disposable nappies –please put these items in the bins provided and do not try to flush them away to ensure that the WCs remain in use for all patients.

ARE YOU CORRECT PERSONAL DETAILS HELD BY THE SURGERY?

There are times when the surgery may need to contact you – have they got the correct details for you?

* **Name** – have you changed your name?
* **Address** – have you moved house?
* **Telephone number / mobile number** – has this changed? With a correct mobile number you can use the MyGP app and also receive text message reminders for your appointment
* **E-mail address** – you will be able to receive message, information and newsletters by email

THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP NEEDS NEW MEMBERS AND YOUR IDEAS TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS FOR ALL PATIENTS

The Patient Participation Group is a group of patients from Thorndike Surgery who work collaboratively with the surgery staff to improve services and facilities for all patients of the surgery and who act as a sounding board on issues affecting patients as well as communicating with other patients about their experience, interests and concerns and providing feedback to the surgery.

We are a friendly group and would welcome new members from a cross section of all ages to ensure that we represent all groups of patients. If you are interested in joining us please ask at Reception for an expression of interest form and one of our group will contact you with further information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

**APPOINTMENTS**

**On Line:**

Appointments may be booked on line from 7am via the surgery website or via the myGP app on your smart phone. If you do not already have a User ID please contact the Reception Desk.

**By Telephone:**

Appointment lines are open between 8.15am & 6.30pm (Monday – Friday). Tel: 01634 817217

Please note you can no longer make an appointment for the same day by queuing at the door first thing in the morning.

***If you call to cancel your appointment please choose option 2 and make sure that you clearly state your name and date of birth.***

Out of hours emergency calls are covered by the NHS 111 Advice service.

**Home Visits**

These are ***strictly reserved*** for housebound patients. If you think you need a visit please telephone the surgery before 10.30am – a doctor will phone back before visiting to ensure a visit is appropriate.

**Phlebotomy services (Blood tests)**

* Main surgery – by appointment only : Monday – Friday 7.10am – 9.30am
* Rochester Healthy Living Centre – Walk in and wait service : Monday – Friday 8.15am – 11.30am (tickets from 8am)

**Test Results**

These are only available after 3pm. The surgery will contact you if the doctor wishes to speak to you about your results.

**Insurance or General Queries**

Requests for information and queries can only be dealt with after 11.30am daily. This helps to reduce the pressure on the telephone system first thing in the morning.

**Repeat Prescriptions**

* A leaflet is now available from Reception explaining how to obtain your repeat prescription
* Prescriptions can only be collected after 10.00am
* Please allow at least one week for repeat prescriptions
* Please note that if you are using the on-line prescription system, the status ‘issued’ only means that the doctor has signed the prescription. Time is still needed for the script to go to the chemist to be filled out

**Travel vaccinations**

The surgery offers travel vaccinations subject to availability, including Yellow Fever. Download or collect a form from Reception. Please note that there may be a charge for this service. Details are available from Reception.

SURGERY CLOSURES

All the surgeries across Medway close one afternoon a month in the afternoon for GP training. The surgery will close at 12 noon and re-open at 8.30am the following morning on the following dates:

* Tuesday 20th November
* Tuesday 18th December

The surgery will also be closed on the following Bank Holidays:

* Tuesday 25th December
* Wednesday 26th December
* Tuesday 1st January 2019

During these closures please contact 111 (the NHS Advice line) for assistance

SURGERY STAFFING

It has been well documented both at the surgery and in the local media that there has been a lack of available appointments due to a lack of staffing resources which the surgery is working hard to address through recruitment and innovative ways of working in the surgery and with Medway Clinical Commissioning Group.

Elvis Sanwu, Practice Pharmacist, is available to carry out any medication reviews. Do ask at Reception if you feel you would like this advice.

Sarah Cotton, Clinical Paramedic, has recently joined the surgery team and is now undertaking the home visits to housebound patients.

APPOINTMENT AVAILABILITY

If you make an appointment and no longer need it or you cannot attend for any reason please make sure that you contact the surgery and cancel the appointment so that it can be offered to another patient – the surgery has approximately 14,500 registered patients.

You can easily cancel your appointment by choosing Option 2 when you telephone the surgery or on line if you have access.

The surgery is reviewing its policy regarding those patients who frequently make appointments and fail to turn up.