



FEBRUARY 2024 – SURGERY NEWSLETTER

SURGERY NEWS

I am very pleased to let you know that Dr Hannah Howard-Franks will be joining the Practice as a Salaried GP from the 19 February 2024.

PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

With over 6,500 patients on regular medication requiring monthly prescriptions, we would ask our patients to help us by putting in their medication requests in writing at least 3 working days in advance. This will ensure that the prescription is sent to the nominated pharmacy within 72 hours. We are getting an increasing number of urgent requests for medication, where patients have not ordered their medication in advance and this is putting additional pressure on both our very busy clinicians and prescription clerks.

Please remember that our reception staff on the front desk are not able to deal with prescription requests or enquiries, as they are too busy dealing with the high number of incoming telephone calls and patients attending the Surgery. All medication requests should be made in writing as we are unable to take requests over the telephone. If you have a medication enquiry you can send in an email to holliesprescriptions@nhs.net or contact the prescription clerk by ringing 01206 250691 and pressing Option 2. If you go into the call queue and do not wish to wait, then you can press 1 and leave your name and number for the prescription clerk to call you back. If you phone before 3 pm on a working day, you will be called back the same day. If you call after 3 pm then you will be called back on the next working day.

FEBRUARY IS OESOPHAGEAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

What is oesophageal cancer?

The oesophagus (gullet) is part of the digestive system, which is sometimes called the gastro-intestinal tract (GI tract). The oesophagus is a muscular tube. It connects your mouth to your stomach.

In the UK, around 9,000 people are diagnosed with oesophageal cancer each year.

Symptoms of oesophageal cancer

The most common symptoms of oesophageal cancer include:

- Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- Indigestion or heartburn that doesn't go away
- Unexplained weight loss
- Pain in your throat or behind your breastbone

There are many other conditions that cause these symptoms. Most of them are much more common than oesophageal cancer.

Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)

You may feel pain or a burning sensation when you swallow, or your food may stick in your throat or chest. This is the most common symptom of oesophageal cancer. A harmless narrowing of the oesophagus called a stricture can also make it difficult for you to swallow. It is important to get this symptom checked by your doctor.

Indigestion or heartburn that doesn't go away

You can get indigestion when acid from your stomach goes back up (refluxes) into the oesophagus, or when the stomach is inflamed or irritated.

The valve between the stomach and oesophagus normally stops this from happening. A tumour that develops here can stop the valve working, causing indigestion.

Remember that indigestion is common, and it's not usually caused by cancer. It can be very painful, even when there's nothing seriously wrong.

Weight loss

You may be put off eating if you find it hard to swallow or have pain when you swallow your food. This can make you lose weight.

Pain in your throat or behind your breastbone

You may feel pain in the centre of your chest, or more rarely in your back or between your shoulder blades. This can get worse when you swallow or have indigestion.

If you feel you have any of the above symptoms, please contact the Surgery on 01206 250691.

PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

We now have 6,500 patients on regular medication requiring monthly prescriptions. In order to help us manage this heavy workload, can patients please remember to put in requests for their medication at least three working days in advance. We are getting a large number of requests for prescriptions to be issued on the day

SURGERY TRAINING AFTERNOON

Along with all other surgeries in the area we will be shut from 12.00 noon on Thursday, 22 February 2024 for staff training. If you need urgent medical attention on this afternoon, please contact NHS 111.

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MEETING

There isn't a meeting of the PPG in February. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 28 March 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Mitchell Room at Great Bentley Village Hall.

Sue Mitson – Operations Manager