

# The Surgery

Amersham Health Centre



Telephone

01494 434344

[www.amershamhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.amershamhealthcentre.co.uk)

## Patient Information Booklet The Surgery

Amersham Health Centre, Chiltern Avenue, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5AY

**Tel: 01494 434344**

**Fax: 01494 733711**

### Introduction

Welcome to The Surgery, Amersham Health Centre. We hope that you will find this booklet useful. We aim to provide a high standard of medical and nursing care for all our patients, with a strong emphasis on disease prevention, health education and self-help. There is much that you, the patient, can do to maintain your own good health and the aim of this booklet is:

- To help you - by giving useful information about the services we offer and advice on how to manage minor illness in the home.
- To help us - by making clear how our services can best be used.
- To help us to help you - by encouraging a team approach between the practice and the patients.

Please keep this booklet handy and make use of all the information it contains. In particular, we would advise you to follow the suggestions in the booklet about keeping a family medicine chest.

### Opening Hours

The surgery is open from 8.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and for a limited number of pre-booked appointments on a Saturday morning from 8.30am to 12.00pm. Phone calls are not taken on a Saturday morning.

### Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group (Chiltern CCG)

The practice is part of Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Whielden Street, Amersham HP7 0JD.

Telephone 01494 586600

### Out-Of-Hours Cover

The doctors work as a partnership and cover one another's absence on holiday or study leave. Occasionally a locum is employed to cover absences. Out-of-hours and night cover is provided by Buckinghamshire Urgent Care and not by our doctors. Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group are responsible for commissioning out-of-hours services.

### Access For The Disabled

There is full access for the disabled, including access to the toilet.

### Medical Education

In addition to receiving medical students, the practice helps to train future general practitioners by working with "GP Registrars". These doctors already have considerable hospital experience before joining us for one year in preparation for finding their own practices.

The practice also trains Foundation Year Doctors. A Foundation Year Doctor will have completed one year of general hospital experience after qualifying. They are employed at the practice for four months, closely supported by the General Practitioners.

**For the latest information click to: [www.amershamhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.amershamhealthcentre.co.uk)**

### Foot problems?



Due to the high demand for podiatry services, NHS provision is often reserved for those with long term conditions. Even if you qualify for an NHS appointment, waiting lists can be long.

**Why wait? Contact a local podiatrist today for more details.**



**Whatever your foot and ankle problem we can help**

**01494 629 599**

The Orchard Clinic 4 Orchard Lane Amersham HP6 5AB  
enquiries@walkthiswaypodiatry.co.uk  
www.walkthiswaypodiatry.co.uk

### Would talking help?

**Why wait for an appointment on the NHS?**

There may be a qualified local counsellor that could see you today and help you get back to the real you more quickly.

**Call a private counsellor for more details now!**



**Need medical help but it's not an emergency?**

Call 111 for fast access to the right care for you

**www.nhs.uk/111**



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NHS Organ Donor  
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**www.organdonation.nhs.uk**

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## The Primary Health Care Team

### The Doctors

#### Senior Partner

**Dr Clare Gabe** BSc MB BS (London 1988) FRCGP DRCOG

#### Partners

**Dr Paul Layng** BSc MB BS MRCGP (London 1995)

**Dr James Murphy** BSc MB ChB DCH DRCOG (Warwick 2007)

#### Salaried Doctors

**Dr Andrea Wood** MB BCh DRCOG (Leicester 1985)

**Dr Keen Wei Hui** MBBS DRCOG DCH DFFP MRCGP (London 1998)

**Dr Dushan Hettiarachchi** MBChB MRCGP DFRSH DCH (Part 1) (Sheffield 2001)

**Dr Suneetha Siripurapu** MBBS DRCOG MRCGP (Bangalore 2003)

**Dr Rangah Niranchanan** MBBS (London 2008) MRCGP MRCP (Part 1 & 2)

**Dr Vandana Pathak** MBBS (India 2003) MRCGP

#### Practice Manager

**Alan Sykes** BA (Hons)

#### Deputy Practice Manager

**Meeta Jobanputra**

#### Reception, Admin and Secretarial Staff

Sarah Tomlin - Computer Manager  
Maureen Tadman - Senior Medical Secretary  
Lynne Jones - Medical Secretary  
Caren Biddle - Medical Secretary  
Clare Flynn - Medical Secretary  
Katie McCarty - Prescribing Clerk  
Nina Adolpho - Receptionist & Care Navigator/Prescribing Clerk  
Fiona Bingham - Senior Receptionist  
Jackie Davies - Receptionist  
Madeleine Murray - Receptionist  
Niro Gallacher - Receptionist & Care Navigator  
Michelle White - Receptionist  
Sarah Buttfeld - Receptionist  
Karen Conboy - Receptionist  
Lynda Lindon - Receptionist  
Melissa Nunn - Medical Records Assistant  
Rani Jacobs - Medical Records Summariser  
Ruth Simpson - Medical Records Summariser  
Sapna Patel - Medical Records Assistant  
Tracy Heffron - Medical Records Assistant

#### Phlebotomist/HCA

Zainab Mirza  
Jane Dersley

#### Practice Nurses

Joyce Fletcher RN Certificate of Diabetes  
Clare Pitcher RGN DN Asthma and COPD Nurse Specialist  
Sue Humphreys  
Beth Tilsley

#### Community Midwife

Julie Fasth RN RM

#### Practice Manager

Our practice manager is available to answer any queries regarding the running of the practice. Should you have any complaints please do not hesitate to let him know. Likewise, we are glad to receive any suggestions you have for improvement in the service we offer. A suggestion box is available at reception for your use.

#### Receptionists

Our reception team are here to help you. Their job is difficult and they often work under considerable pressure. We would appreciate your patience and understanding, and also your constructive comments and suggestions.

## How To Make An Appointment

### Routine Appointments - Tel: 01494 434344

Appointments can be made in person or by telephone. The reception desk is open from 8.30am - 6.00pm each weekday.

**Morning Surgery 8.30 - 11.20am**

**Evening Surgery 3.30 - 5.40pm**

**Saturday Surgery 8.30am - 12.30pm**

We also run a Sunrise Clinic every Monday morning from 7.20 - 8.20am with a doctor and a phlebotomist.

**We have an automated telephone answering system. When you call you will be asked to:**

**Press 1 To book a GP or nurse appointment**

**Press 2 For prescription queries or test results after 9.00am - 5.00pm**

**Press 3 To speak to a secretary or arrange a home visit**

If you do not have a touch-tone phone, the system will automatically put you through to the appointment desk. All calls are held in a queue until a receptionist is free to take the call. Please be patient at busy surgery times - your call will be answered as soon as possible.

When you telephone for an appointment we would be grateful if you could provide the receptionist with brief details of your problem. Our receptionists have been carefully trained by the doctors and may ask questions about what you need. Please help them to help you by answering their questions as more often than not, they will be able to find you the soonest appointment. You can politely decline.

If you need to see a doctor we aim to be able to offer you an appointment on the day that you phone the surgery, but as patients are now registered with the practice rather than with an individual GP, it may not always be possible for you to see your preferred doctor. We do have some appointments that can be booked in advance, mostly early and late in the day. Please call as early in the morning as possible for an appointment on the day.

We try to run to time as far as possible. Inevitably an appointment can run over time, so please bear with us if you have to wait. To keep the surgeries running as smoothly as possible, please remember the following points:

- 1. Please arrive on time for your appointment and allow time to park your car. There is very limited parking on site.**
- 2. Please let us know if you cannot keep your appointment.**
- 3. Please don't 'squeeze in' other people to your slot.**
- 4. Please let us know if you need more than the allocated 10 minutes so that we can give you a longer appointment.**

# Let our practice publications promote your business for you!

To place an eye-catching advertising feature in our vitally important Practice Booklets, indispensable Appointment Cards & Website

simply phone  
Veronica Smith  
now on  
0800 612 1516



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OPG - HELPING THE SMALL BUSINESS GROW FOR OVER 40 YEARS

## Why your business needs a website

WITHOUT a website, your business or practice is invisible to the two thirds of prospective clients that use the Internet to locate products and services, and this figure grows daily.

Worse still, if your competitors have a website and you don't, then they are picking up your share of the prospects for your type of business when they search online.

Pay As You Go websites are proving to be a godsend to small and medium-sized businesses across the UK and Ireland.

Introduced by OPG Ltd, who have been building websites for more than eight years, and who have been helping businesses grow and prosper for over 40 years, they provide businesses and professional practices with 24/7 access to their targeted market.

Uniquely, the Pay - Monthly service comes with Web Partner support. This 'phone-a-friend' facility will provide answers to your queries and help you develop your site.

So if you don't yet have a website, or are unhappy with the one you have, call today for a chat on 0800 612 1408. You'll be glad you did!

Advertising Feature

## Canceling Appointments - using our automated telephone system when the surgery is closed

If you have an appointment that you need to cancel, you don't need to wait until the surgery next opens to let us know. Please call on 01494 434344 and select 'Option 2' and cancel your appointment using the automated system. You will be asked the following questions:

- Please say your full name after the tone.

Answer - just say your first name and last name

- Please say the date and time of your appointment after the tone.

Answer - just say the date and time e.g. 1st March at 11.00am

- Please say the name of the doctor or nurse you have your appointment with after the tone.

Answer - Just say the name of the doctor/nurse who you are due to see

This is particularly helpful if you have an early morning appointment and will save you from queuing on the phone when the surgery re-opens. We will then have time to offer the appointment to another patient.

## Express Appointments - Tel: 01494 434344

Express appointments are available daily for one, uncomplicated problem such as a sore throat, earache or rash that can be dealt with in a 10-minute appointment.

Express clinics are run by specialist nurses with doctor back-up. Our receptionists will be pleased to advise you if you think that an Express Clinic appointment might be suitable to deal with a problem.

## Special Appointments - Tel: 01494 434344

These are available via your doctor, the practice nurse or health visitor, for such things as:

- Contraception advice • Antenatal care • Cervical smear • Foreign travel advice and immunisation • Baby clinics • Parentcraft • Medical examinations for fitness to drive, insurance, sports etc. Please ask at reception for further details.

## Telephone Advice - Tel: 01494 434344

Your doctor will usually be available to give advice over the telephone at 11.30am and 3.00pm.

## Home Visit Requests During Surgery Hours - Tel: 01494 434344

These are available to patients who are too ill, disabled or immobile to come to the surgery. Please do not request a home visit for reasons of transport or convenience. **It is important that requests for home visits are made if possible before 10.30am, when the doctors plan their rounds.** It is safe to bring children with temperatures to the surgery. They will be seen more quickly and, if infectious, can be accommodated in a separate room.

## Urgent Visits During Surgery Hours - Tel: 01494 434344

In cases of emergency contact the health centre at once and your doctor or the doctor on call will be informed and will respond.

## When The Health Centre Is Closed - Tel: 01494 434344

A doctor (a member of Buckinghamshire Urgent Care) is always on call outside normal working hours, at weekends and on public holidays. You can call Bucks Urgent Care on 0300 033 984.

**Please only use the out-of-hours service if your problem really cannot wait until the next working day. Alternatively call 111 for advice.**

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Attract more business by placing your advert here. Simply call 0800 0234 196.

## Online Services

The amount of things you can do online is increasing all the time. By signing up to our online services you can make your life easier at the same time making us more efficient. You can use this via a computer or if you have a smartphone or tablet you can use the Patient Access App. To register, please download a form from the website or contact reception.

## Booking GP Appointments

Using Patient Access you can book non-urgent GP appointments anytime. Of course this service will only be able to offer you those that are available and if you cannot find one suitable, you can always call our helpful receptionists who will try their best to find a suitable one for you.

## Access to Medical Records

If requested patients can also have access to their medical records which includes: test results, coded consultations and problems, immunisation history and documents. Patients do not automatically get access to this and must apply separately. Access is subject to the authority of the GP.

## Medication Reviews

If you are on repeat medication then a review is required every 6 or 12 months. You need to take action when we or the pharmacy ask you to. We will always allow 1-2 months leeway as **BOOKING THESE APPOINTMENTS CAN BE DIFFICULT**. We will not leave you without your medication.

## Repeat Prescriptions

Patients who need regular repeat medication and have had this approved by their doctor can order a repeat prescription in the following ways:

1. By sending us your computer slip with a stamped, addressed envelope and ticking the items required. Correct use of this slip is a great help to our staff.
2. By leaving your computer slip at reception after ticking the items required and picking up the prescription 48 hours later. Extra time should be allowed for weekends and bank holidays.
3. Online. Please go to our website [www.amershamhealthcentre.co.uk](http://www.amershamhealthcentre.co.uk) and complete a repeat prescription request form. Please allow 48 hours before picking up your prescription. Extra time should be allowed for weekends and bank holidays.
4. By signing up for Patient Access on-line services. You will be set up with a user number and password which will enable you to order repeat medication and book some appointments via the internet. An application form is available to download from our website or pick up at reception.

**Always order your prescription in good time - don't wait until your tablets have gone. We regret that we do not allow our staff to take prescription requests over the telephone, to avoid the possibility of dangerous mistakes.**

## Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)

We strongly encourage all of our patients to use this service. Just tell us which pharmacy you would like to use for all your prescriptions and your record will be noted. All prescriptions will be sent electronically to your pharmacy for you to collect. This is a much quicker, safer and a reliable system and can be used in conjunction with Patient Access website or smartphone app.

## Sickness Certificates

Under current legislation a patient 'self certificate' is used for the first six working days (ie one week including Sunday) of any illness. The self certificate (form SC1) is available from the health centre, your employer or the Post Office.

After the first week, certificates are obtained as part of a consultation with your doctor. If you are under the care of a hospital doctor either as an inpatient or outpatient, you should ask the doctor in the hospital for your certificate.

Some employers insist on sickness certificates for illness lasting less than seven days. As this is not a statutory requirement, it is considered a private arrangement and a charge will be made for issuing a certificate.

## Test Results

Specimen results are received from the hospital laboratories every morning and then need to be checked by the doctors. Please telephone for any results after 9.00am and **press option 2**. There is a voice message service for this option so please leave a message clearly stating your name and telephone number to return your call.

Please allow at least five working days before phoning for your test result.

## Change Of Personal Details

If you change your name, address or telephone number, please complete a change of address form giving all relevant details including your postcode and please provide proof of the new address. If you move out of the practice area, please do not assume that we can continue to care for you.

## Chaperones

We appreciate that some patients may feel more comfortable having a chaperone present during an examination by a doctor or nurse. If you would like to have someone else with you during an examination, please tell your doctor or nurse or, if possible, advise the receptionist before your appointment.

## Practice Bulletin

This is produced monthly and informs patients on medical issues, general information and seasonal medical help. If you wish to write a short article for inclusion in our bulletin, please hand your suggestion to the receptionist.

## Violent Or Abusive Patients

Violent or abusive behaviour towards our doctors or any staff will not be tolerated. Any patient who verbally or physically assaults a doctor or member of staff will be removed from our list of patients.

## Freedom Of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 obliges the practice to produce a Publication Scheme. A Publication Scheme is a guide to the classes of information the practice intends to routinely make available. This scheme is available on request.

## Data Protection

All information held about patients is completely confidential. The practice is registered under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The Act protects data held on the computer system.

## Additional Services

A wide range of additional services is available. Please ask at reception for details.

### **New Patient Registration**

When you register as a new patient it will inevitably take some weeks before we have your records. We ask all new patients registering with the practice to complete a new patient questionnaire so that we may obtain details of your past medical history, your current needs and your medication. All patients are registered with a named GP. However, in line with many other practices, our doctors are happy to see any registered patient, not just those that are formally registered under their care. This means patients can benefit from being seen quicker, or can use the specialist knowledge that a particular GP provides. When it is important that you should be seen by the same doctor throughout a period of illness, the system will be flexible enough to allow this. You will also have the choice of seeing a nurse practitioner, specialist nurse or clinic nurse, extending the range of options available to you for seeking medical help. We ask all new patients registering with the practice to provide the following:

- A completed family doctor services registration form
- A completed new patient questionnaire
- Proof of identity, for example passport or driving license
- Proof of address, for example a utility bill or bank statement
- Signed agreement to the terms of the patient/practice agreement

### **Family Planning**

The health centre offers a full range of contraceptive services during normal surgery hours. Ask at reception. We have a family planning nurse who can be contacted by telephone, if necessary, for advice. The practice offers contraceptive coil fitting, annual coil checks (a National Enhanced Service) and contraceptive implants.

### **Maternity Care**

The midwife's clinic is held on Tuesdays from 10.00am - 12.20pm and on Thursdays from 1.30 - 3.50pm. Your doctor will see you in ordinary surgery for antenatal checks. If you are planning to start a family we recommend that you mention this to your doctor who can advise you about nutrition and medication, ideally before you conceive. It is currently recommended that you should take folic acid supplements, available from the chemist, before you conceive, to reduce the risk of spina bifida. It is advisable to be re-checked for immunity to German measles before getting pregnant.

### **Well Child Health Clinics**

Clinics are held every Tuesday from 1.00 - 3.00pm. The health visitors are available for advice and support. Child immunisation sessions are held every Tuesday from 2.00 - 3.50pm.

### **Asthma Clinic**

Our asthma clinic is run by a nurse trained in asthma and allergies. Asthma treatment is constantly advancing. We aim to keep you up to date, improve your understanding and minimise the effect your asthma has on you. We strongly recommend all patients with asthma should attend at least annually.

### **Diabetic Clinic**

Long-term complications of diabetes are minimised or avoided by good diabetic care and control. We have a doctor with a special interest in diabetics and our nurses have special training. We like all our diabetic patients to register with this clinic in the interests of their long-term health and to attend for regular review appointments.

### **Healthy Heart Clinic**

Patients with a history of heart problems are sent invitations to attend this clinic. The clinic is run by a doctor and a nurse with an interest in heart disease. Patients will be advised how they can maintain a healthy lifestyle and an invitation will be sent annually.

### **Hypertension Clinic**

Patients with high blood pressure should attend the hypertension clinic for an annual review, to be offered advice and treatment to promote long-term health. The clinic is run by a doctor and nurse with an interest in hypertension.

### **Phlebotomy Clinic**

Appointments are available for blood tests with a phlebotomist from 7.20am on a Monday morning and from 8.30am on Tuesday to Friday mornings. Tel: 01494 434344.

### **Minor Surgery - Cryotherapy**

Cryotherapy, freezing with liquid nitrogen, is carried out by a practice nurse or a doctor. Speak to your doctor about this.

### **Practice Nurse Clinic**

Our practice nurses offer a wide range of nursing services by appointment through reception (Tel: 01494 434344). These include dressings, removal of sutures, treatment of leg ulcers, injections, ear syringing, cardiographs etc.

### **Health Promotion**

In addition, our nurses are experienced in offering advice and supervision in the following:

- **Well Woman** Including cervical smear, family planning and menopause advice
- **Well Man** Assess your health risks and take action to keep healthy
- **Stop Smoking** We strongly advise all smokers to STOP SMOKING. Seek advice from Live Well Stay Well re smoking cessation on 01628 857311.
- **Diet Advice** Constructive dietary advice for all ages. Slimming advice
- **Travel Advice** See later in booklet
- **Blood Pressure** Routine checks and follow-up of patients with high blood pressure

### **Cervical Smears**

Women between the ages of 25 and 50 are strongly recommended to have a routine smear test every three years; after the age of 50 it is every five years if previous smears have been negative. This is normally done by the practice nurses and regular checks offer you over 90% protection against developing cancer of the cervix (neck of the womb).  
Appointments: 01494 434344

### **Health Visiting and School Nursing Team**

The Health Visiting and School Nursing Team offer advice and support to children and families. The Health Visiting Team can be contacted on 01494 433112. The School Nursing Team can be contacted on 01494 728317.

### **Adult Community Healthcare Team**

The Adult Community Healthcare Team (AHT) are part of the Primary Health Care Team. They assess the needs of patients in the home environment. They implement a high standard of nursing care according to identified needs and refer to other specialist nurses and agencies as appropriate. They also provide health promotion advice, support and teaching to all age groups. The AHT is not based at Amersham Health Centre but can be contacted on 01494 734724.

### **Community Midwife**

A midwife joins the Primary Health Care Team on rotation. She helps to run the antenatal clinic, is in close contact with the hospital maternity unit and visits expectant mothers and those who have just had their baby in their own homes.

Newly pregnant women should contact the surgery on 01494 434344 to leave their contact details so that the midwife can contact them regarding their booking appointment. For any other queries or to contact the midwife, call the surgery to leave a message or call:

01494 734233 Monday to Sunday 8.30 - 9.30am (not for urgent messages)

01296 316103 Stoke Mandeville Hospital Labour Ward (from 20 weeks only)

### **Casualty**

The nearest accident & emergency department is at Stoke Mandeville Hospital - telephone 01296 315664. There is a Minor Injuries and Illness Unit at Wycombe Hospital - telephone 01494 526161. There is no casualty department at the health centre or at Amersham Hospital.

### **Immunisations**

We are committed to preventative medicine. Several dangerous infections can be avoided by keeping immunity up to date. This is achieved by vaccinations, which take a few seconds, but give protection for many years. We strongly advise all patients to make sure that they and their children all have their immunisations up to date, according to the following schedule, and that they keep their own records.

#### **Children**

The children's immunisation clinic is run jointly by health visitors, doctors and the nurses by appointment. Please let us know in advance if you cannot attend an immunisation appointment on 01494 434344.

The immunisations as detailed below will also be given at the times shown.

#### **Two months old**

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Polio, Hib, Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal Infection and Rotavirus, Meningitis B

#### **Three months old**

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Polio, Hib, Hepatitis B and Rotavirus

#### **Four months old**

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Polio, Hib, Hepatitis B and Pneumococcal Infection, Meningitis B

#### **Around 12 to 13 months**

Hib, Meningitis C, Measles, Mumps and Rubella and Pneumococcal Infection

#### **Three years four months to five years old**

Pre-school Booster - Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough and Polio  
Measles, Mumps and Rubella

#### **13 to 18 years**

Tetanus, Diphtheria, Polio and Meningitis & ACWY

### **Adults**

#### **Diphtheria and Tetanus Booster**

Every 10 years, to a maximum of five doses. If you have never had a full course of tetanus immunisation please make an appointment now with the practice nurse.

#### **Polio Booster**

A Polio booster is required every 10 years for travel and will be given with combined Diphtheria and Tetanus.

### **Pneumovax Immunisation**

Anyone who suffers from chronic heart, lung or kidney disease, liver problems, diabetes, has had their spleen removed or is over 65 years of age should be vaccinated. This is a single vaccination against one form of pneumonia and lasts for at least 10 years.

### **Flu Vaccinations**

These are held every October/November. We recommend flu vaccination for:

- Anyone over 65 years old and **all patients with:**

- Chronic respiratory disease

- Heart disease

- A history of stroke

- Diabetes

- Liver or kidney disease

- Pregnant women

- Most chronic debilitating illnesses, as well as for those living in residential homes or taking drugs to suppress the immune system or those who have had their spleen removed.

- Main carers of elderly or disabled people whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.

Make appointments in mid September.

Please contact the surgery in September to make an appointment for your flu vaccination.

### **Flu Vaccination for Children**

A programme started in September 2013 to offer Fluenz® nasal flu vaccine to children starting with children aged 2 to 3 years on 1 September 2013. The programme will be extended to all pre-school and primary school children in 2014 and in 2015 all children aged between 2 and 16 years will be offered the nasal flu vaccine. One dose of vaccine will be given.

Fluenz® nasal flu vaccine will also be offered to children aged 2 up to 17 years in clinical risk groups (e.g. children using steroid inhalers for asthma, children with diabetes), as it has been shown to provide a higher level of protection for children than the injected inactivated influenza vaccine. One dose of Fluenz® vaccine annually will be given to children in this group who have previously been given influenza vaccination. Children in a clinical risk group who have never had a flu vaccination will be given two doses of Fluenz® at least four weeks apart and after that will have one dose annually.

The only exception where Fluenz® cannot be administered is when they have previously required admission to intensive care unit for severe anaphylaxis to egg, which then will need a referral to a specialist to be administered under hospital environment. Fluenz® is a live vaccine, it cannot be given to children who are immuno-suppressed or those with an immuno-compromised family member.

### **Foreign Travel**

The practice nurses offer foreign travel advice and immunisations. Please make an appointment with the practice nurse approximately eight to ten weeks before departure. Please give details of your travel destination to the receptionist when making your appointment. The practice nurses will give you information leaflets relevant to your destination when you attend the clinic. Payment will be required for some travel vaccinations.

## Family Medicine Chest

Many conditions can be treated at home. These items will help with the many minor illnesses and injuries your family will have over the years. Keep them in a locked container or well out of reach of children.

### **Soluble Aspirin**

Use for headaches, fevers, sore throats and general pains in adults and children over 16 years old.

### **Paracetamol Tablets**

Use for headaches, fevers, sore throats and general pains in adults and children over 12 years old.

### **Paracetamol Mixture**

Use for the relief of fever and pain in young children.

### **Sedative Cough Linctus**

Suitable for troublesome dry coughs, but not when phlegm is present or a runny nose.

### **Menthol Crystals**

Inhale the vapour after adding hot water for catarrh or a dry cough.

### **Antiseptic Solution**

Dilute as directed and use for cleaning cuts and grazes.

### **Antiseptic Cream**

Apply to septic spots, sores and grazes.

### **Calamine Lotion**

Cooling relief for insect bites, blisters or chickenpox and sunburn.

### **Dressings**

For cuts.

### **Crepe Bandage**

To support sprained or bruised joints.

### **Thermometer**

To check for fever.

## Advice For Managing Common Illnesses At Home - Infections

### **Chickenpox**

The rash usually appears on the first day of the illness. It begins as small red patches scattered on the trunk, and within a few hours a small blister will appear in the centre of each patch. As the rash develops over the next few days it will spread to the limbs, head and neck. It may also involve the mouth and back of the throat causing pain on eating and swallowing.

Chickenpox has an incubation period of two to three weeks and is infectious until the spots have cleared (usually about 10 days).

As with all viral infections there is no cure and antibiotics do not help. Calpol will help with the temperature and calamine and cool bathing or sponging will help with the irritation.

Adults with chickenpox need to seek urgent attention.

### **Children With Temperatures**

Small children often have quite high temperatures with even minor illness such as colds and other viral infections. This is part of the normal development of natural immunity. It does not necessarily indicate serious illness. To help reduce the temperature, undress the child down to underwear. Give plenty of cool drinks. Sponge head and limbs with a cool flannel; if the child is fretful give paracetamol (eg Calpol). Do not give aspirin to children. Do not worry if the child does not eat for a few days, but do encourage fluids. If the child is very drowsy, has a stiff neck or a rash contact your doctor for advice at once.

### **Colds/Flu (Adults)**

There is no cure. Given time they always go away. Antibiotics will not help. If nothing is coughed up it is because the chest is not infected. No treatment is required to "bring it up".

Go to bed if feverish, keep your nose clear by blowing it often and inhaling steam and / or Friar's Balsam, Karvol etc. Suck soothing throat lozenges and take frequent drinks. Paracetamol or aspirin will help your temperature.

If you become breathless and wheezy or bring up green phlegm it is important to see a doctor or express nurse.

### **Croup**

This can be a frightening condition which usually occurs in small children and often begins at night. It is common in the winter months. It presents with a seal-like barking noise on coughing or breathing. It usually lasts for two or three days.

The vast majority - well over 90% - are caused by viruses and as with all viral infection antibiotics do not help. The most effective treatment for these is to put the child in a steamy atmosphere either from running hot taps in the kitchen or bathroom, or boiling a kettle in the bedroom (beware - this may bring the wallpaper down!).

### **Cystitis - Urine Infection**

Common symptoms include: passing urine frequently, burning and stinging on passing urine, pain in the back, passing blood, fever.

Drink as much water as possible. Take some bicarbonate of soda - one teaspoonful in a pint of water every three hours. Take mild painkillers. If symptoms do not settle quickly make an appointment to see the express clinic nurse.

### **Earache**

This is almost always caused by a viral infection, commonly occurring with a cold. Most cases will get better without treatment within 48 hours; paracetamol give pain relief. Sitting up will often relieve symptoms. If pain persists beyond 48 hours arrange to see a doctor or nurse.

### **Febrile Convulsions**

These are fits or convulsions associated with high temperature in children. This happens in only 3% of cases and is not usually serious. You may recognise a convulsion by limpness of the body, followed by convulsions or a sudden stiffness and rolling of the eyes. Stay with your child, lie him or her on the tummy or side with the head to one side. This way your child cannot fall or choke. Do not put anything in the mouth. Most convulsions are brief, lasting only a minute or two. Call the doctor as soon as you can for advice on what to do next.

### **Shingles**

This is caused by the chickenpox virus - you can't catch shingles from chickenpox, but you can catch chickenpox from shingles. You will only develop shingles if you have had chickenpox in the past. It presents as a painful rash. Occasionally the pain may be present for some time before the spots appear. The rash is confined to one side of the body only, but can appear virtually anywhere on the body.

It starts as small red blotches which soon become blistery. The blisters are often much larger than those of chickenpox but follows the same progression to crusts. This might take much longer - after two to three weeks. Treatment is helpful only if started very early.

If the eye is affected a doctor should always be consulted as soon as possible.

### **Sickness And Diarrhoea**

This is common, especially after a holiday and in children during the winter. Many cases are due to viral infections and may be associated with colds. Most people recover after a few days. It is best not to take medicines to stop diarrhoea as this may prolong the illness and slow the clearing of the virus. Dioralyte or a similar electrolyte solution can be obtained from the chemist without prescription. Drink plenty of this - at least enough to replace what is being lost - in place of all food and drink. Wash your hands carefully after using the toilet.

Come and see a doctor if not recovered after four or five days, or if symptoms recur after treatment. Tell your doctor if you have recently travelled abroad.

If your job involves handling unwrapped food you must stop work until you have recovered. Discuss with your employer or a doctor before returning to work.

Babies and very small children may become dehydrated and may need medical advice earlier.

### **Thrush**

This is a common condition and may be present in babies in the nappy region as a rash often with white curd-like plaques on the skin. This may also appear in the mouth. It is common in adult women in the form of whitish vaginal discharge and irritation. Thrush is more common after antibiotics, in diabetics, those taking the oral contraceptive pill and in pregnancy.

It is possible to infect a partner during intercourse, therefore treatment of both partners is often advised. Treatment may be obtained either from your doctor or from the chemist. Standard treatments are now available without prescription.

## **Other Common Conditions - Non-Infectious**

### **Back Pain**

This is extremely common and may be severe. Most attacks of severe back pain recover with painkillers and a period of rest and local heat. If this is a new symptom and lasts more than a few days without responding to the above measures it is wise to consult your doctor.

In certain cases manipulation may be highly effective.

### **Burns**

Immediately drench in cold water.

Do not waste time removing clothes or phoning a doctor at this stage. Continue cooling the burned part until it is comfortable - this may take 10-20 minutes or longer if clothing is thick. If there is no blistering or skin loss no further treatment is required. Telephone advice is available from the duty doctor if you are not sure what treatment is necessary. If there is blistering but the burn is small (less than the size of the palm of the burned patient's hand), cover with a dry dressing and arrange to see the practice nurse the next day. If there is skin loss or the burn is large you should see a doctor the same day. There is an Emergency Medical Centre at Wycombe General Hospital. There is no casualty department at the health centre.

### **Hayfever**

This is an allergy causing irritation of the nose, eyes and / or throat. It may be associated with seasonal asthma, or eczema. The symptoms may be controlled by antihistamine tablets or syrup, eye drops and nasal sprays. These may be obtained over the counter from the chemist or from the surgery on prescription.

If you have regular prescriptions for hayfever it is not necessary to see the doctor each year to ask for a new prescription, once you have a repeat prescription card.

### **Head Lice**

Contact the health visitor, school nurse or pharmacist for advice on the current treatment of head lice. These insects are very common and their presence does not mean your child is dirty.

### **Insect Bites/Stings**

These can be unpleasant but fortunately are rarely serious. Bee stings should be scraped away from the point of puncture with a blunt knife, to avoid squeezing the venom sac attached.

Cool the affected part immediately with cold water or ice. Repeat as often as required. Antihistamine tablets are available from the chemist, cheaply, without prescription and will relieve local itching and swelling.

### **Nosebleeds**

Squeeze the soft part of the nose immediately below the bony bridge, and hold even pressure for at least 10 minutes by the clock. Do not rub or blow the nose for at least 12 hours and try not to drink or eat anything hot for 24 hours. Most nosebleeds will stop with this treatment - persistent ones may need packing at Wycombe Hospital Minor Injuries and Illnesses Unit (Tel: 01494 526161).

### **Small Cuts And Grazes**

Wash well with soap and water. If bleeding, press firmly with a clean handkerchief or dressing for five minutes. Bleeding usually stops with pressure applied long enough. Cover with a clean dry dressing. Deep or gaping cuts may need stitching. Advice is available from us regarding appropriate action.

### **Sprains**

Initially apply a cold compress, eg a packet of frozen peas covered with a cloth, for 10-15 minutes. This reduces bruising, pain and swelling.

Firm bandaging should be applied with a clean crepe bandage and supported for at least a week (but not for more than a couple of days if it's the ankle). Gentle movements should be started as soon as possible but no active sport until fully recovered. A severe strain is greatly helped by physiotherapy, which should be started as soon as possible.

### **Sunburn**

Treat sunburn by cooling the affected skin with water and repeat frequently. Pain and discomfort may be relieved with Calpol and sunburn cream available from any chemist. Frequent drinks should be encouraged.

Sunburn increases the risk of skin cancers.

### **Threadworms**

These look like small pieces of white cotton thread in the stools or motions after going to the toilet to open the bowels. They are not important and rarely cause problems. Some children may complain of itchy bottoms - however, there are many other causes for this. Serious problems are very rare.

Avoid re-infection (hand to mouth) and spreading to others by careful hand-washing after using the lavatory, and keeping fingernails short and well scrubbed.

Treatment is available over the counter from the chemist and should be given to all members of the family.

### **Toothache**

If you have toothache you should consult your dentist. Doctors are not equipped to manage dental problems. You should ask your dentist how to contact him in an emergency.

### **Verrucae**

Treatment is rarely necessary. They are caused by viruses and will eventually disappear without treatment, although this may take a year or two.

## **Advice For Travellers**

Nobody wants to think about getting sick on holiday, but by packing a few essential items and taking some precautions, you can reduce the possibility of illness and minimise the inconvenience if minor problems do arise.

### **Before You Go**

Please make an appointment with the practice nurse at least eight weeks before departure giving details of your travel arrangements. The practice nurse will give advice about recommended immunisations, how soon they need to be given and if any further appointments are needed. Payment will be required for some travel vaccinations.

If you are taking regular medication, discuss with your doctor or practice nurse any special arrangements or precautions. If you have a condition such as asthma, which may occasionally require medication, be sure to take an emergency supply with you, and carry it in your hand luggage. Always make sure you have enough of any prescription medicines.

Pack a small first aid and holiday health kit containing:

- Travel sickness tablets
- Paracetamol, including paracetamol and/or ibuprofen syrups for children
- Sunscreen - SPF 15 or higher (SPF 16 or higher for small children)
- Sunburn treatment, eg calamine
- Plasters and antiseptic wipes
- Oral rehydration solution; anti-diarrhoea
- Indigestion remedy, eg antacid
- Insect repellent
- Water purification tablets
- Condoms/other contraceptives
- Antihistamine tablets
- In some developing countries or where medical supplies may not be reliable, it may be wise to include sterile needles and syringes, dressings and suture materials

All these items should be available from your chemist.

### When Abroad

Check on the quality of drinking water. Where there is a risk of food or water-borne disease, it is wise to eat food that is freshly cooked, or fruit that can be peeled. Avoid drinking the local water supply or raw food washed in it. Remember, this includes ice in drinks and cleaning your teeth. Bottled water is usually available in tourist areas; choose carbonated where possible as this cannot easily be filled from a tap! Water purification tablets can be used if you are 'roughing it'. Diarrhoea and vomiting can ruin a holiday. Apart from eating and drinking wisely, be prepared - take antidiarrhoeals with you. However, these are not suitable for children or if the diarrhoea contains any blood. Antidiarrhoeals will alleviate the symptoms and electrolyte solutions will replace essential salts. If you are afflicted, try to replace fluid loss with bottled water and remember, as children dehydrate more quickly than adults, it may be wise to call for help.

It is advisable to use effective insect repellents wherever there are mosquitoes. Apart from the irritating bites they can inflict, mosquitoes may also carry diseases - including malaria and yellow fever - in countries where contact with these diseases is a risk.

Beware of the sun! Use a high factor sun screen particularly in the first few days of exposure. Small children burn very easily and need adequate protection from a total sun block applied frequently. Keep children in the shade as much as possible and provide plenty of water. In hot climates drink plenty of non-alcoholic drinks. If you are not passing water regularly, you are not drinking enough.

### On Your Return

If you are ill and need to see your doctor, don't forget to mention that you have recently travelled abroad.

If you receive medical treatment abroad, tell your own doctor on your return.

If you donate blood, tell the transfusion service staff which countries you have visited.

## Useful Telephone Numbers

### Hospitals

Amersham Hospital .....	01494 434411
Wycombe Hospital .....	01494 526161
Stoke Mandeville Hospital .....	01296 315000
Chalfonts And Gerrards Cross Hospital .....	01753 883821

### Other Services

NHS 111 - Health Information Service .....	111
The Samaritans .....	08457 909090
MIND Information Line .....	08457 660163
Local number .....	01494 448279
Relate (Marriage Guidance).....	01494 791180
Depression Alliance.....	0845 123 2320
Cruse Bereavement Care (Chiltern And Beaconsfield) .....	01494 766455
Age Concern Buckinghamshire.....	01296 431127
Intermediate Care.....	01494 734724
Alcoholics Anonymous.....	0845 769 7555
Social Services District Office - Amersham .....	01494 475000
Social Services Emergency Duty Team - Out of Hours.....	01494 675802
Chiltern Dial-a-Ride.....	01494 766123
Age UK.....	0800 169 8787
Carers Bucks.....	01296 392711/01494 463536

### Useful Websites

Health Information Website .....	www.patient.co.uk
NHS Direct Online .....	www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
NHS Choices.....	www.nhs.uk

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# Map Of The Practice Area

