

SOUTH LEWISHAM GROUP PRACTICE



50 Conisborough Crescent
Catford
London
SE6 2SP

Telephone: (020) 3049 2580
Fax: (020) 3049 2581

Website: www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk

WELCOME TO SOUTH LEWISHAM GROUP PRACTICE

May we take this opportunity of welcoming you to our practice. We hope this booklet will make you aware of the services provided by the practice so you may use them to your best advantage. It also helps if you are familiar with the way the practice runs with regards to appointments, repeat prescriptions etc.

The practice is a partnership of doctors. Once fully registered you are free to see any doctor, however, we suggest it's a good idea to try and stay with the same doctor for a particular problem.

We have tried to ensure the information in this booklet is up to date, but there will inevitably be some changes which the practice will advertise as they happen and incorporate into the next edition of this booklet.

SURGERY OPENING TIMES

Monday 8.00am - 8.00pm

Tuesday 8.00am - 6.30pm

Wednesday 8.00am - 6.30pm

Thursday 8.00am - 8.00pm

Friday 8.00am - 6.30pm

Saturday morning - 9.00am - 12 noon every 4th Saturday.

OUR SERVICE TO YOU

We are a friendly team of professionals whose aim is to look after the health needs of you and your family. Our staff are trained to put your health needs first, so if you are worried or unsure about anything relating to your visit here please ask for assistance.

We regularly review the way we provide services and welcome comments and ideas on how to improve the 'patient experience'. If you feel there could be a better way to do something our Office Manager would like to hear about it.

PRACTICE AIMS

"HELP US TO HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY"

We aim to:

- Treat all patients with courtesy and respect.
- Maintain high standards of health promotion by helping patients to optimise their social, mental and physical health.
- Encourage patients to take an active interest and be more responsible for their own families' health.
- Provide a safe, accessible service responsive to our patients' needs.
- Identify healthcare needs of the practice population.
- Keep patients informed of the services provided by our practice.

For the latest information click to: www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk

MEMBERS OF THE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TEAM

YOUR DOCTORS

Dr Khalid Ismail	(Male)	MB ChB DRCOG MRCGP DCH	Edinburgh 1984
Dr Raymond O'Brien	(Male)	MB BCh BAO DCH DRCOG	Galway 1984
Dr Arun Gupta	(Male)	MB BCh BAO DCH LMCC	Belfast 1978
Dr Riaz Jetha	(Male)	BSc MBBS MRCGP DCH DFFP	London 1995
Dr Rishi Kanapathipillai	(Male)	BSc MBBS DRCOG MRCGP	London 1996
Dr Fiona Watson	(Female)	MB BS DFFP MRCGP	Newcastle 1992
Dr Simon Parton	(Male)	MBBS BSc MRCP DCH DRCOG	London 1995
Dr Ann-Marie Newbon	(Female)	BMed Sc DFFP DCH DRCOG nMRCGP	Nottingham 2004
Dr Kate Tebbs	(Female)	MBBS MRCGP DRCOG DFFP	Newcastle 2005
Dr Onuebuchi Nzekwue	(Female)	MBBS	London 2007
Dr Philip Wheeler	(Male)	MBBS	London 2006

The practice also employs other doctors to assist them and they form an essential part of the medical team. These doctors are fully qualified general practitioners and are usually with the practice for a number of years. In addition, as an accredited training practice there is usually a GP registrar attached to the practice. The registrars are fully qualified doctors who have been working in hospitals but are now gaining experience in general practice.

THE NURSING TEAM

The senior nurse, practice nurses, district nurses and health visitors aim to provide an integrated nursing service. They are caring professionals and highly experienced.

Practice Nursing Team

Suzanne Schofield	-	Registered General Nurse
Debbie Harrison	-	Registered General Nurse
Joanna Ross	-	Health Care Assistant

Our practice nurses are available to see you by appointment from Monday to Friday. The nurses can help with a wide range of health matters and look after certain illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease in conjunction with the doctors.

Visit our website: www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

TIMES ALLOCATED FOR NURSING APPOINTMENTS

10 MINUTES	20 MINUTES
Stop Smoking Clinic (Follow-up)	Stop Smoking Clinic 1st appt
Blood Pressure	Cervical Smear
Removal of Stitches	Travel Advice / Vaccination
Ear Syringe (one ear)	Asthma Check
Dressings	Diabetic Check
Routine Injections	

Nursing clinics run on an appointment only system.

If your need is urgent, reception staff will try and arrange for you to be seen at the end of the clinic, but please be prepared to wait.

BLOOD TEST CLINIC

Blood test clinics are held at the surgery each morning Monday to Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm run by Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust. No appointment is necessary. If, however, you need a glucose tolerance test you will need to contact the health centre reception to make an appointment.

Please remember to carry out any special instructions like fasting before the blood test (12 hours before a cholesterol test).

Please remember to bring your blood test form with you.

DISTRICT NURSES

The team of Lewisham based nurses provide care for our housebound patients. They can be contacted via the District Nursing Call Centre on 020 3049 3000.

COMMUNITY MATRON

Janice Farnworth our community matron provides care and support for patients who have multiple long term medical conditions. She can also be contacted via the District Nursing Call Centre on 020 3049 3000.

HEALTH VISITORS

Our health visiting team offers specialist advice on health care for children of all ages and expectant mothers. Should you need to speak to a health visitor please contact the Health Centre.

COMMUNITY MIDWIVES

Our community midwives are attached to Lewisham Hospital and provide antenatal care to expectant mothers and postnatal care at home after delivery. They hold antenatal clinics on Wednesdays 9.15am - 12.15pm and 1.30 - 4.00pm. Please book an appointment at reception for this clinic.

Visit our website: www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk

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

Do you or a family member need care and want to stay in your own home?



This type of decision can be difficult for families. **Contact a local care agency to discuss your needs today.**

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PHYSIOTHERAPY

This is provided on site by University Hospital Lewisham. Patients must be referred by their doctor.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

The practice supports the I.A.P.T. counselling service twice a week with appointment only consultants for patients with emotional problems. They operate on a brief interventional basis, offering up to six sessions to patients. Patients can self-refer. Those patients who require more intensive or longer term emotional support may be referred to more appropriate services. Patients are referred by doctors and other members of the primary health care team.

COMMUNITY DRUGS PROJECT (CRI)

The CRI Team offer assessment, support and advice on all aspects of drug use. They hold sessions at the surgery on a Wednesday by appointment only. Patients wishing to use the service will need to be seen by their doctor first. The medical staff and CDP work together closely and will always respect your confidentiality.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

A Citizens Advice worker holds a morning session 10.00am - 12 noon on a monthly basis. Appointments can be booked at reception. When booking your appointment, please let reception know if you need general advice or debt advice. This ensures you will see the right advisor.

THE PRACTICE MANAGEMENT AND RECEPTION TEAM

Practice Manager

Dawn Lait is responsible for the practice administration and efficient, smooth running of the practice. If you have any suggestions regarding the practice please contact her. There is also a suggestion box for your convenience located in the front entrance hall.

Reception and Secretarial Staff

Led by **Pat Medford**, IT and office manager, the secretarial staff can help and advise you with queries regarding hospital referrals, specific specialist treatment and waiting times.

The Reception Staff

Also led by **Pat Medford**, the reception team have a lot of information at their fingertips and can answer many of your queries.

Anything you tell them will be treated in absolute confidence (the practice complies with the Data Protection Act 1998). If you are unsure if you should see a doctor, nurse or health visitor etc, the receptionists can advise you.

TRAINING AND RESEARCH

We are an accredited training practice. Doctors training at the practice are called GP registrars. They are fully qualified doctors who have usually come from working in hospitals to gain experience before moving on to specialise in general practice. They are fully able to deal with all your problems. In addition the practice is linked to Guys, Kings and St Thomas' medical schools and supports the teaching of medical students. You will always be notified if a student is sitting in with your doctor and can always see the doctor alone if you prefer. The practice is committed to training medical students and doctors to provide a service for future generations and your co-operation is very much appreciated.

Visit our website: www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk

HOW TO REGISTER AS A PATIENT

Registering is easy. Either complete our online application form or visit the practice and collect a paper version from reception after 10.00am. You will need to provide confirmation of address ie utility bill, in your name within the last six weeks, bank statement or a driving license.

TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE

We encourage patients to make use of our online booking service as this frees up our phone lines for general enquiries and it is a much quicker way of booking an appointment.

Pre-bookable appointments – make up a large proportion of our daily appointments and can be booked up to four weeks in advance on a first come first served basis.

There are a limited number of appointments available each morning for patients who are very unwell, but be prepared to wait if the clinic is busy. Monday mornings are our busiest time, when appointments go extremely quickly and waiting times can be extended due to high demand.

Late clinics until 8.00pm - bookable up to four weeks in advance

Saturday mornings (one in four) - bookable up to four weeks in advance

We are committed to providing a convenient appointment to you but we need your help to do so. Many patients benefit from family home remedies and Your local pharmacist can offer good advice and treatment for many minor ailments. Please only book an appointment to see your GP if you really need to.

We also offer a **telephone consultation service** where a doctor will call you back on a number of your choosing to discuss a medical issue. It's a great service for people who prefer not to take time off work unnecessarily. To request this service you need to call from 8.00am on the morning you wish to receive the call back. As with all other appointments these are available on a first come first served basis.

APPOINTMENT TICKET MACHINE FOR PEAK TIMES

At peak times (between 8.00 - 9.00am every weekday) please take a ticket from our RED TICKET DISPENSER located in the waiting area and take a seat. Please approach the reception desk when your number appears on the electronic counter. We find this is the fairest way of allocating appointments at busy times as it ensures those who arrive earliest are offered the first appointments.

BOOKING-IN FACILITY

Once you have arranged your appointment to see any of our clinicians, please use our wall-mounted booking-in screen located in the waiting area to alert the doctor or nurse that you have arrived for your appointment. We encourage you to use this facility as it helps to prevent queuing at the reception desk. This helps free up staff to answer telephone callers.

NURSE APPOINTMENTS

Nurse appointments need to be pre-booked.

Advice and Information By Telephone

If you wish to leave a message for a GP or nurse please make this request before 12.00 noon so that they can call you back over the lunchtime period. Doctors provide home visits and afternoon and evening clinics later in the day and cannot respond to general messages.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Sadly, we lose hundreds of appointments because patients fail to keep them. We ask for your co-operation in letting us know in plenty of time if you are unable to attend an appointment so that we can offer it to another patient. The surgery monitors missed appointments as part of their efficiency measures and will withdraw the facility to pre-book appointments from any patient who persistently fails to attend.

HOME VISITS

Home visits are available only to housebound patients or those patients who are seriously unwell. Please telephone to request a home visit before 10.00am. A doctor or nurse will call you back to discuss the visit. Should you require a doctor as a matter of urgency contact the reception team who will be able to advise you.

Children with high temperatures will not be harmed by 'coming out into the cold' to the surgery and will be seen sooner. Please inform the reception staff if you feel you or your child would find it uncomfortable in the waiting area so we can try to fit you in earlier.

URGENT MEDICAL TREATMENT

At any time call the surgery on **020 3049 2580**. If the surgery is closed a recorded message will offer you contact details of our out-of-hours doctors service **SELDOC on 020 8693 9066**. If you are confronted by a serious problem such as severe chest pain, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, collapse or unconsciousness call an ambulance (999) before calling your doctor.

OUT-OF-HOURS MEDICAL TREATMENT

If you need medical advice when the surgery is closed, call 111 for the NHS England Advice Line. Visit our website: www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk

CHANGE OF DETAILS

It is essential that we have our patients' correct contact details. Please notify us as soon as possible if there has been a change to your address or contact numbers. Our surgery number is automatically withheld when dialling to protect patient confidentiality. We do have difficulty in contacting patients who do not accept calls from 'withheld numbers' and request that an alternative number be made available for us to contact you.

TEST RESULTS

If you are requesting your test results, please be sure to wait at least one week after the test before ringing us (some blood tests may take longer than a week to come back, X-rays can take up to three weeks). Remember there is no need to book an appointment for results unless the doctor has asked you to do so. Please call the surgery between 10.30 - 11.30am and 3.00 - 4.00pm for all results. For reasons of confidentiality, results can only be given to the specific patient to whom they apply.

Receptionists are instructed only to tell you the doctor's comment on the result. If any test is abnormal or you would like further discussion or interpretation, please make an appointment with your doctor.

REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

If you are on regular medication you may obtain repeat prescriptions with the doctor's agreement. Get your local pharmacist to order repeat medications for you. This is a free service and patients find it very convenient. Another easy way is to order repeat medications through our website (we will set you up with a password to access this service). You can still order repeat medications via our receptionists and by fax (020 3049 2581), but sorry, we do not take orders by telephone under any circumstances. You need to allow two clear working days (excluding Bank holidays and weekends) if collecting the prescription from our surgery and three working days if using the services of a local pharmacy, to allow for collection, dispensing and delivery.

ON-LINE REQUESTS

You can request your prescriptions on-line via EMIS ACCESS or surgery website (www.southlewishamgrouppractice.co.uk). If you wish to use EMIS ACCESS you will need to attend the surgery with photo ID i.e. passport, driving licence.

PHARMACIST-LED PRESCRIPTION SERVICE

You can present your repeat prescription request (the tear-off slip that comes with your prescription) to your local chosen pharmacy. They will request the repeat on your behalf, collect the prescription from our surgery and dispense your medication. You can arrange with them to either collect the medication yourself from their premises or have it delivered to your home. Their services are free of charge. REMEMBER TO ALLOW AT LEAST THREE WORKING DAYS FOR THIS SERVICE.

DO I NEED A SICK CERTIFICATE?

For employees, a sickness certificate completed and signed by the doctor is only required for a period of continuous absence from work due to ill health for eight days or longer. For an absence of up to three working days no certificate is required. Between three and seven days' absence due to illness is covered by a self-certification form (SC1 or SC2) provided by your employer. If you require a sick note for insurance purposes etc, the doctor will be able to issue a private certificate. The charge, for this service is £15. We do not issue private certificates for the benefit of employers for periods of absence less than a week.

OVERSEAS VISITORS

In line with current legislation we are happy to provide free primary care services to overseas patients living or visiting the United Kingdom. As this may change before the next booklet print run, please check with the UK Border Agency www.homeoffice.gov.uk

PATIENTS IN PARTICIPATION GROUP

The practice has a thriving Patient Participation Group or "P.P.G." and are actively seeking more members to help review services we already provide, explore new ideas, discuss problems and play a vital role in the decision making process. The group is a fully constituted voluntary group with clear aims and yearly targets. Any patient over the age of 16 are welcome to join and attend our regular quarterly meeting. If you would like to join this new team please contact the Practice Manager.

PRIVATE MEDICAL SERVICES

Some services fall outside the remit of the NHS and for these a charge may be made. Examples are passport application signings, private sickness certificates, insurance medicals and writing letters of support for housing etc. A list of services and fees is posted at the reception counter.

DISABLED ACCESS

The surgery has full disabled access as well as a disabled toilet.

PATIENT ADVICE & LIAISON SERVICE (P.A.L.S.)

You can talk to PALS who provide confidential advice and support to patients, families and their carers, and can provide information on the NHS and health related matters.

PALS email: pals@lewishampct.nhs.uk

Other contact information

If you are a textphone user, dial 18001 0800 58 77 027 for PALS.

You can also text (SMS) the PCT on 07781 472 854 (texts charged at standard rate).

FOR ADVICE OR COMPLAINTS

Lewisham Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can provide details of further medical services in your area. You can contact them on 0800 587 7024 or via the NHS England website. If you have a complaint, compliment or would like information about accessing local health services in South East London you can also write to:

NHS South East London

1 Lower Marsh

Waterloo

London

SE1 7NT

Main reception: 020 3049 4444 Office Hours Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

If you have any complaints about the service you have received from the doctors or staff working at the surgery, you are entitled to ask for an explanation. We operate an informal 'in-house' complaints procedure to deal with your complaints in the first instance. This procedure does not deal with matters of legal liability or compensation. In some cases, the 'in-house' procedures may not answer your complaint, in which case your complaint will be referred to NHS England. The 'in-house' procedure does not affect your right to make a formal complaint to the NHS England nor your right to seek compensation in law.

Your complaint should be addressed to the Practice Manager, Dawn Lait, who will acknowledge receipt within three working days, assess the complaint and contact/offer to arrange a meeting with the complainant. Most complaints are resolved satisfactorily within a day or so and the rest within 10 working days.

CLINICS

ROUTINE DOCTORS' CLINICS

Daily from 8.30 - 11.30am and 2.30 - 6.00pm weekdays

Late night Monday and Thursday open until 8.00pm

Saturday (every 4th Saturday) 9.00am - 12 noon

NURSES' CLINIC

Daily Monday to Friday 8.30 - 11.30am and 2.00 - 4.30pm

Late night Thursday and Friday until 6.00pm

ANTENATAL CLINIC

Wednesday midwife clinic 9.15am - 12.15pm and 1.30 - 4.00pm

POSTNATAL CLINIC

Thursday morning 10.00 - 11.30am

HEALTH CHECKS FOR PATIENTS AGED 17 TO 65 YEARS

If you are a patient who has not been seen by a doctor or nurse in the last three years and you are between the ages of 17 and 65, we would like to offer you the opportunity to book a health check. Please contact the surgery to make an appointment for your health check with our nurse on 020 3049 2580.

HEALTH CHECKS FOR PATIENTS OVER 75 YEARS

For patients aged 75 years and over our practice nurses offer annual health checks. Please call 020 3049 2580 to book this service.

DIABETIC/ASTHMA CHECKS

By appointment with the nurse, who will refer you to the doctor if necessary.

ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE CLINIC

By appointment with the nurse, who will refer you to the doctor if necessary.

DIET AND WEIGHT CLINIC

WOMEN'S HEALTH, MENOPAUSE AND CONTRACEPTION

SMOKING CESSATION

CHIROPODY

By appointment with the chiropody clerk based in the Health Centre on 020 3049 2503.

BLOOD TEST CLINIC

These clinics are run by Lewisham PCT and are held Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm; no appointment necessary. If you need a glucose tolerance test please ring 020 3049 2500 to make an appointment. Please remember to carry out any special instructions given to you by your doctor. If you do not bring your blood test form with you, your blood test might not be done. **For all other clinics** you will need to be referred by your doctor or other member of the health care team. Please enquire at reception for times.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU

Full confidentiality in respect of all aspects of your medical history.

We will try to answer the telephone promptly and to ensure that there is sufficient staff available to do this.

Patients will be treated as individuals and partners in their healthcare, irrespective of their ethnic origin or religious or cultural beliefs.

We will give you full information about the services we offer. Every effort will be made to ensure that you receive that information which directly affects your health and the care being offered.

The practice will offer patients advice and information on steps they can take to promote good health and avoid illness.

You have the right to see your health records, subject to limitations in the law. These will be kept confidential at all times.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO US

South Lewisham Group Practice is fully computerised. The practice is registered under the Data Protection Act and will never disclose your information to a third party without your written consent.

Our practice is required to submit patient information to governing bodies such as NHS Lewisham as part of our NHS contractual requirements. This information is transferred after patient identification details have been removed so that it can be used to monitor quality standards without compromise.

Help us to help you.

Please let us know if you change your name, address or telephone number.

Please do everything you can to keep appointments. Tell us as soon as possible if you cannot. Otherwise, other patients may have to wait longer.

Only ask for home visits by the doctor when the person is too ill to visit the surgery.

Please keep your phone calls brief and avoid calling during the peak morning time for non-urgent matters.

Enquiries about tests ordered by the hospital should be directed to the hospital, not the practice. We ask that you treat the doctors and practice staff with courtesy and respect.

Please read our practice booklet. This will help you to get the best out of the services we offer. It is important that you understand the information given to you. Please ask us questions if you are unsure of anything.

Remember, you are responsible for your own health and the health of your children. We will give you our professional help and advice. Please act upon it.

ABUSE TOWARDS MEMBERS OF STAFF

All members of the practice staff strive to provide the best service to its patients. We are entitled to work in a safe environment without fear of either physical or verbal aggression. The practice will not tolerate aggressive behaviour. Patients who are aggressive either verbally or physically will be removed from the list and the appropriate authorities notified.

DATA PROTECTION

Your medical data and personal information are used, stored and disposed of under strict regulations set out in the Data Protection Act 2003. As part of providing quality health care your medical information may need to be shared with allied health professionals (eg hospitals or district nurses). Information is never shared with third parties (eg outside organisations or insurance companies) without your full written consent.

Accessing your own medical records can be easily arranged once we receive your request in writing.

SELF TREATMENT OF COMMON ILLNESS

Often there is no specific cure for many common minor illnesses, such as infections, aches and sprains - they tend to get better by themselves. Many people treat these illnesses quite safely at home. The local pharmacist can often provide excellent advice and treatment. Treating these illnesses at home allows the practice staff to spend more time with patients with serious illnesses. In this section we have compiled some advice on the treatment of various common illnesses, but do bear in mind it is only advice. If you are worried about your condition contact the surgery, NHS Direct or speak with a local pharmacist.

COUGHS

Coughing protects the windpipe from unwanted things going down, such as food when you are choking or mucus when you have an infection. It is a very difficult symptom to treat and some say that as it protects the body it is best left to get better on its own. A safe, simple and effective treatment is to put a teaspoon of vapour rub (eg Vicks) into a pint of steaming water and inhale the fumes from under a towel for 10 minutes a couple of times a day. Rubbing some vapour rub on your chest at night will also help congestion. You should see the doctor if the cough lasts longer than a week or two, if you are coughing up blood, have pains in your chest or experiencing difficulty with breathing.

COLDS

Even today there is no magical cure! Runny noses, sore throats, hoarse voice, congestion and temperatures are almost always caused by bugs called viruses. There is no treatment for these - ANTIBIOTICS DO NO WORK - unnecessary use makes them less effective if they really are needed. It is best to allow your body's own immune system to deal with the virus. Taking regular Paracetamol, ibuprofen or cold remedies such as Lemsip in the higher recommended dose helps with the symptoms.

SORE THROATS

The vast majority are caused by viruses. As there is no treatment for viruses it is worth trying Paracetamol or ibuprofen taken regularly at the recommended higher dose for a few days or asking advice from the pharmacist. In tonsillitis you may have a high fever, pain on swallowing, headache and tender neck glands along with a sore throat and you should contact the surgery.

BACK PAIN

This, as we all know, is very common and in the vast majority of cases gets better by using painkillers, taking it easy and avoiding aggravating the problem. The best recognised advice nowadays is to keep as active as the pain permits so the back does not seize up and avoiding things like lifting which may aggravate the symptoms. Special attention should be paid to your posture and supporting the lower back. Painkillers such as Paracetamol with codeine and ibuprofen which the doctor may prescribe are available over the counter from the chemist.

If pain is going down the legs or is not showing any signs of improving after a week you should seek advice from the doctor.

CHILDREN WITH TEMPERATURES

It is always worrying when your child is unwell with a temperature. Most of these infections are due to viruses and the only treatment is palliative, ie regular Paracetamol (like Calpol or Disprol) or ibuprofen (such as Junifen). These medicines should be given regularly at the higher recommended dose for your child as stated on the bottle or box and accompanied by cool fluids. Keep the child undressed, cover them with light sheets for sleeping and sponge them down with a damp cool flannel.

We will always see your child on the same day at the surgery. We ask for your help in bringing your child down to the surgery whenever possible rather than requesting a home visit. You will not make your child worse by bringing him or her out, indeed the cool fresh air may help. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated. If you are worried about your child or if they are not improving in two to three days it is worth bringing them back to the surgery for a check.

STOMACH UPSET

Most stomach upsets are not serious and are usually caused by indigestion or wind. A hot water bottle will often relieve the symptoms and, in the case of indigestion, a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in a glass of water will help. If the pain is severe or persists see the doctor.

DIARRHOEA

This is unpleasant but rarely dangerous. The symptoms are usually caused by a virus but also a sudden change in diet, over-drinking or foreign travel. It is often accompanied by cramps in the bowel (colic) and vomiting. In adults the best treatment is to stop taking solids as soon as the symptoms start and drinking plenty of cool, clear fluids for 24 hours and then slowly start taking simple solid foods, avoiding dairy products for up to a week. Oral rehydration salts such as Dioralyte are available from the chemist and may be useful in the first 24 hours. For vomiting it is best to take small sips of cool fluid at regular intervals despite the vomiting.

If babies are breast-fed continue to give them milk. If bottle-fed replace with rehydration fluids for 24 hours, then half-strength formula milk (by using half the amount of powder for the same amount of water) for another 24 hours. For babies under six months see the doctor if diarrhoea occurs in more than one nappy a day; in other infants and younger children see the doctor if symptoms are not improving after 24 hours. In adults, if you experience symptoms like severe tummy pains, high fever or if you are passing blood or large amounts of mucus you will need to see a doctor.

VOMITING

This may be caused by viruses, food poisoning, drinking or eating too much. Many children vomit when they have a temperature or a cough and cold. The greatest danger is from dehydration - knowing that you or your child are passing urine is a good sign that the body is not becoming dehydrated. The best treatment is to eat no solids and to take small sips of cool clear fluids regularly, for example every 15 minutes. In children, using a cup and a spoon is often helpful. Continue to give them milk. If bottle-fed replace with rehydration fluids for 24 hours, then half-strength formula milk (by using half the amount of powder for the same amount of water) for another 24 hours.

See the doctor if vomiting is accompanied by constant stomach pains, if vomiting is not getting better after 24 hours, if the child has a high temperature over 38C or 100F, or becomes drowsy or lethargic.

INSECT BITES

These can be treated with cold compresses and antihistamines which you can get from the chemist. Unexplained itchy spots appearing on the lower legs in the summer are often insect bites. Always ask the pharmacist which antihistamine is suitable for you.

SPRAINS

These are painful and caused by twisting a joint in the wrong way. The best treatment is to apply a cold compress wrapped in a towel to the affected area for 15 - 30 minutes. Crushed ice or a bag of frozen peas is ideal. Firmly applying a crepe bandage or Tubi-grip during the day and elevating the limb will decrease swelling and stiffness. As soon as you are able you should gently exercise the affected part, moving it in all directions. Painkillers such as Paracetamol and ibuprofen will help by easing the pain and reducing inflammation.

NOSEBLEEDS

Sit in a chair, leaning forward with the mouth open, and pinch the soft part of the nose just below the bone for 10-20 minutes continuously. Avoid cleaning or blowing through the nostrils for 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped.

SUNBURN

Avoidance is the best treatment. Too much sun on the skin can lead to premature ageing and skin cancers. Always cover up, use sunscreen and avoid the midday sun. This is particularly important in children. If you do get burnt the skin can be cooled by taking cool showers, moisturising the skin and taking antihistamines (after checking with the pharmacist).

CHICKENPOX

This is caused by a virus. Your child may have had symptoms like a cold beforehand. Usually small red patches 3-4mm across will develop, starting at the top of the body. Within a few hours these spots start to spread down the body whilst developing a small blister in the middle. The rash lasts three to five days with the first spots crusting then scabbing over. Your child may have a temperature and a sore throat/mild cough. Children are infectious for three days before the rash and for five days after the start of the rash. After this they can return to school. If any person has just had or is recovering from chickenpox and they have been in contact with pregnant women, you should advise them to contact their doctor.

HEAD LICE

Head lice prefer clean hair and are not a sign of poor personal hygiene. Medicated lotion can be obtained from the chemist and should be used following the instructions closely.

MAP OF PRACTICE AREA

The map below gives a general idea of our current catchment area. In addition we have created a new outer catchment boundary specifically to help existing patients remain at the practice when they move only a few roads away. Full details are available on our website and our Reception counter but in general terms we are happy to keep patients registered who move north of the practice up to but not including Brownhill Road; east of the practice up to and including Cumberland Place and Reigate Road; south of the practice up to and including Park Avenue and Coniston Road and up to and including Braeside to the west of the practice.

Applications to register with us from new patients living outside our current catchment area but within the new boundary can also be considered at the discretion of the practice. If you move outside the outer boundary, I am sorry but you will need to register with another practice.

