



RAMSEY HEALTH CENTRE NEWSLETTER SPRING 2018



Inside this issue:

COPD Workshop	1
National Stalking Helpline	1
Bank Holiday Closures	1
Staff Changes	2
Prescription Charge increase	2
RHC Appointments System explained	3
A Message from the Nurses	4
A Message from Reception	4
A Message from the Dispensary	4

British Lung Foundation COPD workshop: Monday 23rd April 2018

Ramsey Health Centre will be hosting a Self-Management Workshop run by the British Lung Foundation, for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) on **Monday 23rd April 2018**.

The workshop will run over four hours and will help patients with COPD:

- Understand their medication better
- Learn breathing exercise and techniques
- Learn about the benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation
- Realise the benefits of any type of exercise
- Feel more confident in controlling their symptoms

Places will be limited (15 patients only) so please let us know if you are interested in attending. Please look out for promotional material in the waiting room and on our website in the coming weeks.

National Stalking Helpline

The National Stalking Helpline supported by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust are able to offer not only practical advice concerning stalking and the law, but also links to Single Points of Contact within each Police force, who can review cases of stalking behaviour to help ensure enough is being done to protect victims.

If you or anyone you know is a victim of stalking and needs help or support, the helpline number is:

Freephone helpline: [0808 802 0300](tel:08088020300)

Opening times: 9.30am – 4.00pm weekdays, Wednesdays 1.00pm-4.00pm)

Or see the website at:

- Website: <https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/Category/national-stalking-helpline>

Easter and May Bank Holiday Closing Dates

A reminder to all patients: The surgery will be closed on the following Bank Holidays:

Good Friday: **Friday 30th March 2018**

Easter Monday: **Monday 2nd April 2018**

Early May Bank Holiday: **Monday 7th May 2018**

Spring Bank Holiday: **Monday 28th May 2018**

Please bear these dates in mind when ordering/collecting any regular medication to ensure that you do not run out over a holiday weekend.



Staff Changes at Ramsey Health Centre

In March we said farewell to Practice Nurse Assistant **Helen Heritage** who has left to join the community diabetes team after nine years of service at RHC. She will be much missed by colleagues and patients alike — we wish her all the very best for the future.

RHC is currently in the process of recruiting a Health Care Assistant and a Practice Nurse to join our nursing team.

Prescription Charge Increase from 1st April 2018

Readers may well be aware that NHS prescription charges are shortly due to rise again. From 1st April 2018, the charge for each item or medication will rise by 20 pence to **£8.80 per item**.

In fact, around 90% of people pay no prescription charges at all. For example, the over 65s and under 16s are exempt from payment, as are women who are pregnant or who have had a baby within 12 months. Under-18s who are in full-time education are also exempt from charges.

People with certain medical conditions can apply for an exemption certificate to cover prescription costs – for example, patients with a cancer diagnosis or those who are using insulin for diabetes.

If you are on welfare benefits or on a low income, you may also be entitled to assistance or exemption from charges. Anyone earning less than £15,276 and on tax credits is entitled to free prescriptions, and there is an NHS low income scheme which offers full or partial cover to others on low earnings.

For the remaining 10% who are eligible for prescription charges, the increase will come as something of a blow, but even here, there are ways to avoid the full impact. Pre-payment certificates are like a “season ticket” for prescription charges and can drastically reduce the amount you pay, particularly if you have multiple items on prescription. The cost of these is not due to rise at present.

The cost of a pre-payment certificate is £29.10 for three months, or £104 for a year – and after that, all your prescriptions are covered. Even if you only have one item a month, this represents a saving on the normal charges. If you get two prescriptions a month – at a cost of £211.20 a year – then the prepayment certificate will save you more than £100. One useful tip to know is that you can request for the certificate to be backdated by one month – and then reclaim the cost of the prescriptions for which you've already paid provided a receipt and refund claim form was issued at the time of payment (as receipt cannot be backdated).

The final tip to reduce your prescription costs is to consider whether any of your regularly-prescribed medications might be cheaper over-the-counter. For example, ranitidine may be prescribed for heartburn, but it sells in pharmacies under the brand Zantac for less than the cost of a prescription charge, or generic ranitidine anti-indigestion tablets sell in the main supermarkets for around £1.50 a packet.



Ramsey Health Centre — Our appointments system explained

The appointment system at Ramsey Health Centre is under constant review to ensure that we continue to provide appropriate care for our patients within safe working parameters and against an increasing demand for access. We work closely with the Patient Participation Group to try and understand our patient concerns.

The appointment system ensures that all patients who need to be seen on the day have the opportunity to speak to a clinician and discuss their symptoms. If the Clinician then makes the decision that the patient should be seen on the day they will be seen before 6pm.

All our GPs undertake telephone consultations for the first hour of the day. These are available for you to book on the day. The GP will call you back and will either arrange to see you later that day, offer you advice over the telephone, or refer you to our Minor Illness Nurse if appropriate. By working this way it is hoped that we can reduce your waiting time for an appointment, put you in touch with the most appropriate person for your problem and address your health concerns promptly. We also have a dedicated Duty Doctor who will be available for any urgent matters.

Our Nurse Practitioner, Lesley O'Connor, works alongside the Doctors and is able to see any minor injury or illness. Her appointments are booked on the day by the Doctor.

Our patients value continuity in their care and to facilitate this we have created GP Follow Up appointment slots. If, for example, the Dr wishes to see you again in two weeks' time, the GP can either book that appointment for you straight away or they will ask their PA to contact you to arrange.

We continue to have some appointments that are pre-bookable for patients who need to book in advance but these are limited in number. Pre-bookable appointments are available through on-line services and also via the Patient Services team.

We understand that a few people have had some frustrations with the appointment system and appreciate that if you want to see a particular doctor you need to wait longer. We are trying to review the system to enable us to add more pre-bookable appointments; however, there are two main barriers which means this is currently not possible and they are as follows:

- We need to ensure we have enough 'on the day' appointments to be able to see the people who are acutely unwell. Acutely means your symptoms have developed or got worse in the last 24/48 hours and you need to be seen by a clinician on the same day. Monday is still an extremely busy day with our clinicians calling back between 50 and 80 patients before 10:30am.
- The number of unattended appointments is unacceptable.

How can you help?

We aim to call you back within 30-45 mins which - on the whole - we have achieved, even during our busiest times. If you are unable to accept a call back until a specific time, please state this to the receptionist. They will make a note on the screen and the clinician will endeavour to call you between the times that are convenient to you. If you have not been called back within 1 hour and 30 minutes, please call us to see why not.

The doctors have asked the receptionists to gain a brief reason for the call back so the doctor knows why they are calling. There are also many things that can be dealt with over the phone.

If you have any queries or comments please let us know. We are open to constructive suggestions, although we cannot guarantee they will be implemented.

We know the system isn't perfect but we are trying our best to ensure the doctors see those in need as soon as possible whilst maintaining continuity of care for those with long term conditions.

Please cut out the handy contact details and keep them to hand. Cards with this information on can be collected from the Reception

Would you like to receive future copies of the Ramsey Health Centre Newsletter by email?

See our website at www.ramseyhealthcentre.co.uk for details, call us on 01487 812611, or email us: ramsey.health-centre@nhs.net

Ramsey Health Centre

Mews Close, Ramsey, Huntingdon, PE26 1BP Phone: 01487 812611,

Fax: 01487 711801

E-mail address: Ramsey.health-centre@nhs.net

Web site: www.ramseyhealthcentre.co.uk

Surgery Opening Times

Monday	8.00am to 1.00pm, 2.00pm to 6.00pm
Tuesday	8.00am to 1.00pm, 2.00pm to 6.00pm
Wednesday	7.45am to 1.00 pm, 2.00pm to 6.00pm
Thursday	8.00am to 1.00pm, 2.00pm to 8.00pm
Friday	8.00am to 1.00pm, 2.00pm to 6.00pm

Dispensary Opening Times:

Mon to Fri 08:00 - 13:00 and 15:00 - 18:00



A REMINDER FROM THE NURSING TEAM

May we just remind patients that - in order to see as many patients as possible - our nurses operate to very tight schedules for blood test/blood pressure appointments.

These appointment slots are sometimes only 7 minutes long which means that:-

- it is important that patients are on time, and
- it is just not possible for the nurses to deal with additional matters within that slot.

If you have an additional health matter that you need to discuss with one of our nursing team, please make a separate appointment.

We would also encourage patients to dress appropriately if they know they are to have a blood test or blood pressure appointment—i.e. please wear SHORT or LOOSE sleeves and not multiple layers of clothing with tight cuffs!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US USE NHS RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY

A REMINDER FROM THE RECEPTION TEAM

May we remind patients that the reception staff are not able to take medication requests over the telephone—these requests must always be made **in writing**.

There are a number of ways you can make your request in writing - you can fill out a prescription request at reception, you can email us, you can write to us or you can use the online access.

Taking medication requests over the telephone significantly raises the risk of drug errors, and we are committed to prioritising the safety of our patients.

Secondly, we apologise for the fact that "Option 2" on our telephone menu ("Medication queries or prescription requests") goes straight to voicemail. Please use Option 1 and speak to a member of staff instead. Any prescription requests left on the Option 2 voicemail cannot be dealt with as **medication requests must be made in writing**.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US REDUCE RISK AND MAINTAIN PATIENT SAFETY.

A REMINDER FROM THE DISPENSARY TEAM

Please may we remind all our patients that they must allow **two working days** between requesting a prescription and collection. This does NOT include weekends or bank holidays.

Please bear in mind that this means:-

- If you order on a **Friday**, your prescription will normally be ready the following **Tuesday**
- If you order on a Friday **before a bank holiday weekend**, your prescription will be ready on the following **Wednesday**

If you need your prescription early, (e.g. because you are going on holiday) please telephone the health centre and ask for the dispensary. Otherwise, prescriptions will be available on the date given.

If you are using the online system, please be aware that this does not recognise weekends and bank holidays.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US MANAGE OUR WORK EFFICIENTLY