

The View from the First Floor ...

Another newsletter – my, how time flies. I thought in this issue I'd address something that has been coming to our attention more and more. Those dreaded words "social media".

The practice has become increasingly aware of the use of Facebook and other social media platforms by patients as a means of them expressing their views regarding the practice e.g. the service they received that day, staff and doctors attitudes and so on.

Due to patient confidentiality requirements, the practice is not in a position to respond to such 'posts', nor clarify exactly what happened and the rationale for clinical decisions. However, once a post has been put online, it is almost impossible to remove and we would remind anyone considering making such comments that although we may not reply, we are frequently made aware of such posts, and have noted that some can be quite personal in their criticism. So please, take some time to think before posting anything that you may regret later.

Nevertheless, we do genuinely welcome and encourage the views of patients to enable us to improve the service which we deliver. However all feedback to the practice should be made via the appropriate mechanisms. Compliments or complaints should be put in writing to the practice manager and either handed to a member of staff or emailed to the practice at the address shown below.

Whilst on the subject of 'Facebook'

The clinicians sometimes receive 'Friends' requests online from patients.

Whilst 'Friend requests' are usually well-meant, the British Medical Association (BMA) advise that Clinician's should refuse 'Friend requests' from Current or Former Patients of the Practice, so please do not be offended when your request is declined.

Finally

On a completely different subject, this will be the last newsletter article I will have the pleasure to write for Townhead Practice as I am moving on to pastures new in the middle of May. The years I have spent here have been both challenging and enjoyable, and I know my successor will be inheriting a practice that works extremely hard to meet the needs of its patients. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to wish everyone associated with Townhead – doctors, staff and patients – all the very best for the future as the practice continues to serve the people of Montrose in delivering the very best healthcare it possibly can.

Ian McNeil

A timely word from the Nurse ...

Every year the nurses at Townhead practice do hundreds of annual health reviews. These are for various health complaints such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke and heart reviews. The review is a way of checking that your health is at its best. We do a health screen, take blood and review your medication. We would also give health information if required or requested. Most patients take up the offer of what they call their 'annual MOT'.

We also review patients who suffer from lung diseases like COPD and asthma. This review is to try and give patients the advice and support required to deal with their illness. Lung conditions can often be well controlled, but on occasions patients can suffer problems. We hope by giving advice and support you would be able to manage your lung condition when things are deteriorating and know when and how to seek help if required.

Some patients have no health conditions and do not routinely attend the surgery. If you feel you would like a health review, then you can request an appointment with the nurse.

We do health reviews at all times in the day from 8 am through into our evening surgery. We hope this allows patients to attend when it suits them. If you are a patient who does not take up the offer of a review due to work or other reasons, why not phone and see if we can see you when you are free.

Townhead Practice Extended Hours Clinics:

Thursday 8 May
Tuesday 13 May
Wednesday 21 May

Public Holidays for 2014/15

The surgery will be closed on the following days:

Monday 5 May
Monday 26 May
Monday 28 July
Monday 13 October
Thursday 25 December
Friday 26 December
Thursday 1 January 2015
Friday 2 January

In addition, there are **protected learning times** when the surgery will be closed in the afternoon from 12.30 pm.

Wednesday 11 June
Wednesday 27 August
Wednesday 24 September
Wednesday 19 November

Young People and the Townhead Practice Team

It may not surprise you to know that most people who attend their GP are over the age of 20. But each day I work at Townhead, I might see 2 teenagers, which over time is quite a few. It is known that young people might not come to see their GP for a number of reasons; fear of confidentiality being broken, embarrassment, or not being able to get away from school or college, to name a few. To help the young people in our Practice to understand how we can work with them, I will cover a few points here.

Firstly, the doctor or nurse or receptionist that you speak with on the 'phone or face to face must ensure full confidentiality to you, even if you are under 16 years of age. This becomes a bit harder for children under the age of 12 but we would only speak to parents or carers or another person if we felt that there was a serious risk to you or another person. We would always tell you if we had to break confidentiality, before doing so, and explain why. So you can see that we take confidentiality very seriously. If a staff member breaks this rule, they can lose their job!

Secondly, we are keen to encourage young people of all ages to be to tell their story, rather than letting the carer do all the talking. This might just be a few words, or it might involve coming in to the room alone. Everyone is different in how they deal with this, but it is a way of gaining confidence and taking responsibility for your own health. This might also involve having details of your mobile number on your medical file, as well as your mum's or dad's. It may include ordering your own inhalers when you need them.

As you get older, such things become easier but everyone is different in how quickly they want to be more independent. Appointments can be made by young people themselves, and we have late afternoon appointments until after 5 pm every day, or evening appointments one evening every week, which is handy if you are going to College or University in Aberdeen or Dundee.

As well as helping with health issues, we try to be a source of information and support for any young person who has health issues or queries. This might mean looking at our website, or looking at trusted self help sites online. A list is added below. We are keen to hear from any young person who has ideas or thoughts for improving accessibility to our service, or barriers that you think stop you from coming to Townhead Practice.

We are keen to help you learn how to look after your own health and to self- manage illnesses such as coughs, flu and other viral infections.

SOME USEFUL WEBSITES

www.patient.co.uk - lots of useful information and links about a range of health issues- good search tool.

www.sexualhealthtayside.org- a site covering Tayside services

www.thecorner.co.uk - a drop in and advice centre in Dundee

www.healthyrespect.co.uk - Lothian based site but lots of useful information

www.teenagehealthfreak.org- loads of useful information

www.youthhealthtalk.org - support for specific problems and shared patient experiences

<http://www.townhead-montrose.co.uk>

Contact us:

Townhead Practice 01674 676161 (8.00am until 6.00pm, Mon-Fri)

Prescription Line 01674 677819 (24hr Answering Machine)

Email: townhead.tayside@nhs.net

townheadprescriptions.tayside@nhs.net

<http://www.townhead-montrose.co.uk>

