

The View from the First Floor ...

Welcome to our latest newsletter. Now that all the festivities are over we can start looking forward to 2014 and all it may hold for us. We can plan for the worst and expect the best, as my old mum used to say.

Part of the ability to plan is having the necessary information in front of you – the hard facts from which you can draw conclusions. This is true whether it is the practice looking at how we can continue to meet the needs of the people of Montrose, or you as an individual seeking to understand your present state of health and what you can do to improve it. An increase in physical activity, perhaps, the determination to lose those pounds you put on over Christmas, or maybe just developing better strategies to cope with a long-term condition. Whatever it is, if you feel unsure and want some advice, don't be afraid to talk it over with your doctor or the practice nurse next time you're here.

Yet there are some who take the view they'd "rather not know". This can be illustrated in the drive to extend and improve screening for cancer. For example, it has recently been pointed out that the number of 50 to 74 year-olds in Montrose returning their screening test kit for bowel cancer has declined from around 67% to just over 60% in the past two years. The test may be a little unpleasant, but the result of undetected bowel cancer is obviously much worse. Even if the test is positive it does not mean cancer is present, just that a more thorough investigation is needed.

Remember too that screening is for people with no symptoms, and the sooner treatment commences the better it is for the patient. I know I mentioned this in our last newsletter, but bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Scotland after lung and breast cancer, and nearly 4000 people are diagnosed with the disease every year. Yet according to the Bowel Cancer UK website, regular bowel cancer screening has been shown to reduce deaths from bowel cancer by 16%. So if you are one of those who have yet to return their screening kit, why not just go ahead and get it done?

On now to something that has happened since our last newsletter – the launch of our new website, which became active in November 2013. We've already had some constructive feedback, but if you haven't visited yet please take a look – we'd love to know what you think. In the two months since the new site was launched we've had over 4000 unique visits and that figure is rising. Plans for future development include the addition of an archive of these newsletters and access to our freedom of information act publication scheme, as well as more links to useful resources, so visit often. You'll find us at www.townhead-montrose.co.uk

Finally, on behalf of all the Doctors and staff at Townhead Practice, I would like to wish all our patients a very happy - and healthy - 2014.

A timely word from the Nurse

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New Year, change in lifestyle? I would like to continue with the keeping healthy advice from the doctor (overleaf).

There are various programs running within Tayside for exercise for all abilities and ages. The practice has a booklet at reception called 'Be Active'. This provides information from seated exercise classes to outdoor walking groups and many activities in between. Please feel free to pick up a copy and contact the appropriate person.

The Sports Centre is also a good place to find information on what is available locally.

Within the Be Active booklet there is information about weight management programs and who to contact, if you wish to shed a few pounds and get supported through this.

Some of the issues covered in the program are healthy eating, eating out, how to deal with stress and eating habits.

The library is also a good source of information for groups and weight loss programs within Montrose and surrounding area.

Townhead Practice Extended Hours Clinics:

Wednesday 15 January
Thursday 23 January
Tuesday 28 January
Wednesday 5 February
Thursday 13 February
Tuesday 18 February
Wednesday 26 February

Patient Contact information

Please send me future information like this by email.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Email address.....

New Year's Resolution? Stop Smoking ??

Smoker? Undoubtedly one of the single best things you can do to improve your health, quality and quantity of life is to stop smoking. There is overwhelming evidence to show benefit for you and those around you.

Researching this article, I found this list of benefits from Healthier Scotland's website.

Benefits within days:

- Heart rate drops.
- Carbon monoxide and oxygen levels in blood return to normal (similar to those of never-smokers).
- Senses of taste and smell sharpen.

Benefits within weeks:

- Risk of sudden death from cardiac event/heart attack begins to reduce.
- Decline in lung function slows down; lung function begins to improve.
- Reduced rates of post-operative complications.
- Reduced chest infections; coughing and shortness of breath decreases.
- Reduced severity of asthma attacks.
- Improved complexion.
- Reduced risk of complications during pregnancy.

Benefits within a few months:

- Symptoms of chronic bronchitis (cough, phlegm, wheezing, shortness of breath) improve.
- Stomach ulcer risk drops – improved short-term healing and reduced recurrence.

Benefits within a year of having quit:

- Reduced risk of heart and lung disease, i.e. slows progression of heart or lung disease and reduces risk of it recurring (heart disease risk is cut by half one year after quitting).
- Mild/moderate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) sufferers: improvement in lung function.

Benefits after several years (five years or less) of having quit:

- People without heart disease: substantial reduction in risk of developing heart disease compared with persistent smokers.
- People with heart disease: approx 35% reduction in risk of further heart attacks or death.
- Decline in lung function with age slows to that of never-smokers (within five years).
- Cervical cancer risk falls to that of never-smokers (five years).

Being quit in the longer-term reduces the risk of:

- Lung cancer.
- Other cancers (compared with continuing smokers): e.g. mouth, throat, oesophagus and oral cancer, bladder, kidney, pancreas, urinary tract, stomach, and larynx.
- COPD: risk of death is reduced after quitting.
- Cardiovascular disease including stroke and heart disease

So no-one is short of a reason to stop! And that is without mentioning the cash saved.

If you have read this far, chances are you are keen to quit. Great news – this is the most important ingredient. Well done, you have already started the process. The next step is from thinking to doing.

Easily accessible support is available at <http://www.canstopsmoking.com/> or by calling the Smokeline on **0800 848484**. Additionally local community pharmacies have trained staff providing individual support and nicotine replacement therapy.

You may have tried stopping in the past. We know many smokers need more than one attempt to quit. The most important thing is that you want to be an ex-smoker.

Go for it – make 2014 the year you became an ex-smoker!

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>

