BEACON SURGERY Bulletin

Welcome to our 4th quarterly bulletin. Keeping you up to date with the latest news from the Surgery and information relating to your health that may be of interest to you.

In this Issue:

**News from the Surgery**

A regular feature letting you know the latest news from the Surgery.

**Winter Pressures; Coughs/Colds/Flu and Infection Control**

How we can prevent the spread of germs and stay well.

**How to keep warm**

Important information to help you to stay warm and well during the winter months.

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Surgery News

Happy New Year!

Dr Walker is our latest GP Registrar. He will be with us for around 6 months and will be working Monday, Thursday and Friday.

We are pleased to welcome Dr McDaid to the practice who will be working on Wednesdays.

We said goodbye to one of our Practice Nurses just before Christmas and whilst we wait for our new nurse to join us at the end of February, we welcome back 2 nurses who have previously worked at the practice on a temporary basis to help us provide more appointments. We apologise for any inconvenience that this has caused and thank you for your patience.

We have had 4 of our GP rooms refurbished just before Christmas and we are starting work on the entrance area and accessible toilet.

Winter Pressures; Coughs/Colds/Flu and Infection Control

All services are seeing a high number of unwell people. To help stop the spread of flu and other respiratory infections please see the following advice:

* Rest and sleep.
* Keep warm.
* Take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower your temperature and treat aches and pains.
* Give paracetamol or ibuprofen to your child if they’re distressed or uncomfortable – check the packaging or leaflet to make sure the medicine is suitable for your child,
* Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.

A pharmacist can give treatment advice and recommend flu remedies. Do not take paracetamol and flu remedies that contain paracetamol at the same time. Antibiotics do not work for viral infections such as flu.

Flu is very infectious and easily spread to other people. You’re more likely to give it to others in the first 5 days. It is spread by germs from coughs and sneezes, which can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours.

To reduce the risk of spreading flu:

* wash your hands often with warm water and soap
* cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (if you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow, not into your hand)
* bin used tissues as quickly as possible

How to keep warm

Cold weather can have a serious impact on our health and those who are older or have a long-term condition are at higher risk. It is important to make sure you know how to stay warm and well during the winter months.

* Heat your home to a temperature that’s comfortable for you – if you can, this should be at least 18 °C. This is particularly important if you have a pre-existing medical condition.
* You should also keep your bedroom windows closed at night.
* Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed – but do not use both at the same time and always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
* Have at least one hot meal a day – eating regularly helps keep you warm.
* Have hot drinks regularly.
* To reduce the risk of [sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids/), babies should sleep in rooms heated to between 16 °C and 20 °C.
* Draw curtains at dusk and keep doors closed to block out draughts.
* Check your heating and cooking appliances are safe – contact a Gas Safe registered engineer or a qualified electrician to make sure they’re operating properly.

Over 18s can apply to Wealden District Council <https://www.wealden.gov.uk/benefits/household-support-fund/> but you have to meet all three of the following elements:

* Applicants must be over 18 years old.
* Applicants must be resident within the Wealden District Council Local Authority area.
* Applicants must be getting either Universal Credit (that also includes the Housing Costs element), Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction (or getting a SEMI exemption and would otherwise get Council Tax Reduction)."

Please see our website for more helpful information.

...and finally if you use a walking aid don't forget to regularly renew the stopper/ferrule so that it gives you the support you need.