

## SEVEN STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

Most of us are aware of the dangers of smoking, and are at least vaguely aware of the dangers of 'passive smoking' – breathing in second-hand smoke exhaled by smokers, or drifting from the end of a lit cigarette. The problem is that second-hand smoke is not as easy to avoid as we tend to think; it's an immensely complex mixture of more than *four thousand* different chemical compounds. Most of these – about 85% – are odourless and invisible, and some of them hang around long after the tell-tale blue smoke haze has disappeared. Now that smoking is banned in the workplace and in most other places where people gather together indoors, the dangers of second-hand smoke are greatest in the home.

Children are especially at risk – second hand smoke doubles the chances that a child will become asthmatic, and increases breathing difficulties for those who already suffer from the condition. The chances of cot death are five times greater for a baby living among second-hand smoke. The list goes on, and the accumulated evidence is absolutely compelling.

So what can *you* do about it? Well, if you're a smoker the best advice is to give up smoking, but that can be easier said than done. If you are still smoking, and you are worried about the effect of your second-hand smoke on others – and you *should* be worried! – there is still something you can do. There's no point in wafting the smoke away, or opening a window; second-hand smoke from a single cigarette can be detected up to two-and-a-half hours after it can no longer be seen or smelt – even if a window *is* open. But you can do what you do at work or at the pub – smoke your cigarettes outside. But even standing at an open door doesn't work – and here's where the seven steps come in. Go outside, close the door behind you, and walk seven steps away from the doorway (and from any open window). Then you can smoke your cigarette in the knowledge that your home will stay smoke free. So make your resolution now; to help you keep it, you can make an on-line pledge and find out more about keeping your home smoke free by visiting [www.gateshead.gov.uk/stopsmoking](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/stopsmoking).

### HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS

We'll be open as usual Monday to Friday *except* on the three Bank Holidays –

**Monday 26 December 2011 (Boxing Day)**

**Tuesday 27 December 2011**

**Monday 2 January 2012.**

If you have an urgent medical problem, you should contact our local Out-of-hours Service on

**08450 568 060**

or in an emergency dial 999.

### FLU INJECTION – REMINDER

If you are eligible for a free flu injection but haven't had it yet, please contact Reception straight away to arrange an appointment.

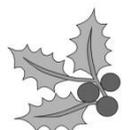
### REMOVAL OF STITCHES

If you will need to have stitches removed at the surgery, please contact Reception as soon as you can so that we can arrange an appointment to have them removed at the proper time.

BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

FROM EVERYONE AT

GRANGE ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE



## SURGERY UPDATES

The surgery will be closed from 12.30pm for staff training on the following dates:

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012**

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012**

In an emergency please contact the Out of Hours Service on 08450 568 060 or if necessary call 999.

## HOSPITAL PRESCRIPTIONS

Please could we ask that when you are given a prescription by the hospital you have this dispensed by the hospital pharmacy.

## GP AWARDS

We're very pleased to report that Grange Road Practice reached the top five nationally in no less than five different categories of the recent GP awards – and we've got framed certificates to prove it! We didn't manage to come first in any of the categories, but we're proud of our achievement, and we'll just have to try harder next time. The five categories in which we reached the final group were Practice of the year, GP of the year, Practice Manager of the year, Innovator of the year and Commissioner of the year – the last two relate to our ideas about improving the diagnosis of hypertension, and our work in implementing those ideas, helping to establish what is now the 'gold standard' for all practices to aim for. Thanks to everyone involved with the practice for your support; we hope you will all feel proud of our success.

## ON-LINE APPOINTMENTS

We have recently extended our online booking system to cover Nurse Practitioner appointments. These appointments are available to patients suffering from any of the following ailments:

- ◆ Sore throat
- ◆ Earache and other ear problems
- ◆ Chest problems
- ◆ Sticky Eyes
- ◆ Sinusitis
- ◆ Coughs and colds
- ◆ Cystitis
- ◆ Urinary tract infections
- ◆ Hay Fever
- ◆ Vaginal Discharges
- ◆ Skin rashes and other skin infections
- ◆ Muscular Problems
- ◆ Contraceptive problems
- ◆ Cuts and abrasions, including suturing
- ◆ Sprains and any other minor injuries
- ◆ Other minor ailments

## APPOINTMENTS WHILE PREGNANT

Because of prescription protocols Gill, our Nurse Practitioner, is unable to provide treatment during pregnancy. If you need treatment for minor injuries or ailments while you are pregnant, you should make an appointment to see one of our doctors.

## RING BACK

Most telephone services offer a ring back facility, which allows you to press 5 if the number is busy; this connects you with the number you are ringing as soon as it is free. Unfortunately, Grange Road Surgery is unable to provide this service, and you will not therefore be re-connected.

## PRIVACY AT RECEPTION

We have recently carried out some research at the surgery, and we have discovered that very few patients realise that we have a confidential area in which you can speak to a member of the Reception Team in privacy. If you have a matter you would like to discuss in confidence, just ask!

## DON'T WASTE MEDICATION!

Every year, in England alone, half-a-million tonnes of waste medication is handed in at pharmacies for safe disposal. This level of wastage costs the NHS £100,000,000 – that's right, **one hundred million pounds!** – every year. It's impossible to eliminate all wastage, but we should all do what we can to reduce the total. If you are among those who need regular repeat prescriptions, please follow these simple rules:

- Always check how much of each medication you have on hand before calling the surgery.
- Don't re-order any items you don't yet need or are no longer taking.
- Always be sure to have your current medication list (the tear off sheet from your **last** prescription) with you when you place your order.

If we all do our bit, we **can** make a difference.

## GRANGE ROAD HEALTH TIP No.7

If you don't feel that you are sleeping as well as you should, try these simple suggestions –

- ~ Sprinkle newly-washed sheets and pillowcases with lavender water. Studies have shown that this scent promotes relaxation, which in turn can lead to better sleep.
- ~ Buy a new pillow. Pillows with an indent in the centre can enhance sleep quality and reduce neck pain. You could also try a "cool" pillow – one containing either all-natural fibres or a combination of sodium sulphate and ceramic fibres that help to keep your head cool.
- ~ Eat a handful of walnuts before bed. You'll be giving yourself a boost of fibre and essential fatty acids, together with the amino acid tryptophan, a natural sleep-inducer.

