

GRANGE ROAD – THE INSIDE STORY!

As the NHS is so much in the news at the moment, we thought it might be a good idea to remind you all of the way your practice works and what it can do to help you, not only when you're ill, but in lots of other ways which can help you to stay healthy and make the most of life.

Grange Road Medical Practice is provided and managed by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust as a Community Health Services GP practice; this simply means that the Trust directly employs everyone who works for the practice. When the current team took over the Practice in 2003, we had 2458 patients on our list; this total has since grown to 3504 patients, an increase of well over 40% over nine years – quite a high growth for any practice, as patients don't tend to make changes lightly. We have an efficient and experienced team working happily and effectively together as we try to deliver the best possible healthcare, helped and supported by our patient forum.

At the moment we have one full-time GP, Dr Geoffrey Smith, who is available at the surgery on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and two part-time GPs; Dr Jane McWilliams is available on Mondays and Thursdays, and Dr Laura Anderson is available on Wednesdays, and sometimes for part of the day on Mondays. The GPs are supported by our Nurse Practitioner, Gill Betts, and our Practice Nurse, Mandy Kimber, both of whom can prescribe where appropriate. In addition, our Healthcare Assistant, Amanda Sargeant can provide advice on giving up smoking, improving your eating habits and lots of other ways to help you move towards a healthier lifestyle. Amanda also deals with routine monitoring such as taking blood samples or checking blood pressure. In addition, we have visiting professionals providing services such as Physiotherapy and Counselling, and the Community Midwife holds a weekly clinic.

Holding it all together - at least for most of the time! - is our Administration Team, comprising Sally Pern, our Practice Manager, Barbara Reay, our Senior Receptionist, and our reception team consisting of Josie Kelly, Victoria Back, Sandra Hind and Carole Walton. If you're in any doubt about what to do or who to see, don't hesitate to ask; they'll be happy to help you find the answer you need.

Over the years we have tried to develop in-house services to reduce the need for patients to travel to hospital. Our Minor Surgery Clinic deals with various skin lesions (at the discretion of the GP) and offers cryotherapy ('freezing') treatment for warts and verrucas. We have an Electrocardiogram (ECG) to monitor heart rhythms and an Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitor which in appropriate cases can be used to monitor a patient's blood pressure over a 24-hour period. At a more basic level, you've probably noticed the 'weighing machine' in the corner of the waiting room; this produces a printout showing not only your weight but also your height and body mass. You're welcome to use the machine to monitor yourself at any time when the surgery is open; just ask for a free token at Reception.

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Could we remind all patients to be sure to inform the practice if changing their address or telephone number? It is very important to have up to date information in our records in case we need to contact you or to arrange a home visit. If you have internet access, you can do this online by logging on to www.grangeroadgpryton.nhs.uk

OBTAINING THE NEWSLETTER

If you don't have internet access and for any reason you can't get to the surgery, but you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, please get in touch with Reception and we'll make arrangements for a copy to be sent to you.

CAR PARK COURTESY

If you are bringing someone to the surgery and are using the car park, don't stop in the entrance to drop people off as this causes a potential hazard for anyone trying to enter behind you. Please drive all the way into the car park before stopping.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It's impossible to maintain absolute confidentiality in a public reception area. We have a radio playing a local station in the waiting room, but this doesn't help if there is a queue of patients waiting for attention. If you feel that you would like to speak to a member of staff in complete privacy, just ask at the reception desk; we have an area set aside for this purpose.

SURGERY UPDATES

The surgery will be closed all day on the following Bank Holidays –

Friday 6th April 2012
Monday 9th April 2012
Monday 7th May 2012
Monday 4th June 2012
Tuesday 5th June 2012

It will also be closed from 12.30pm on the following dates for staff training –

Thursday 22nd March 2012
Tuesday 15th May 2012
Tuesday 12th June 2012

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

GP APPOINTMENTS

As you'll appreciate from the lead article overleaf, we have three regular GPs here at Grange Road. You can choose which doctor you wish to see, but if your preferred GP isn't available don't forget that you will usually be able to see an alternative GP rather than delay your appointment.

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS

A recent survey indicated that some of our patients would like the surgery to be open later in the evening and on a Saturday. Unfortunately we can't provide this service at present because of difficulties relating to staffing levels, as we are a fairly small practice. We have already tried early morning and late evening surgeries, but neither of these attracted a sufficient number of patients to justify the continuing use of scarce resources. We are still very much aware of your preferences and we are keeping the situation under close review.

CHOOSE AND BOOK

If you need to go to hospital to see a specialist, you now have the right in most situations to choose the hospital to which your GP refers you. You can choose any hospital in England (including some independent hospitals) where suitable treatment is available within NHS quality and cost standards. You can make your choice according to whatever matters most to you – for example your GPs recommendation, the quality of service offered, your previous experience, the opinions of other patients, the waiting time for treatment or the location of the hospital. You can discover further details by visiting www.nhs.uk/choices.

FUNDRAISING

We're delighted to announce that we have recently raised £15.00 for the Breast Cancer Campaign and £64.71 for St. Oswald's Hospice; sincere thanks are due to all who contributed.

Our current project is the Mending Broken Hearts Appeal; there is a box in Reception if you'd like to make a donation. We also have a box of daffodil emblems for sale in aid of the annual Marie Curie Hospice Appeal.

CLINICAL SAMPLES

When handing in a sample to the surgery, please make sure that it is properly labelled with your **name** and **date of birth**, together with the **time** and **date** at which the sample was provided and, if appropriate, details of any symptoms. Incorrect or inadequately labelled samples cannot be sent to the laboratory for testing. Please hand in samples at reception no later than 3.00pm. to ensure that they reach the laboratory on the same day. If your sample is not received in time for collection by the laboratory courier, we may need to ask you to provide a replacement before any tests can be carried out.

CHANGES TO HOME VISITS

Due to a significant increase in our workload, we have had to review the Practice's ability to fulfill all home visit requests. If you ask for a home visit, a member of the Clinical Team may telephone you in advance to discuss your situation. In some cases a home visit by a doctor may not be necessary; we may be able to provide a prescription, to arrange for a District Nurse or Urgent Care Team visit, or to make arrangements for you to be seen elsewhere. If you have any questions or problems about this change, don't hesitate to contact the Practice so that your concerns can be discussed and dealt with.

PATIENT ACCESS

If you book appointments or order prescriptions online, you may like to note that access facilities previously provided by Egton Medical Information Systems (EMIS Access) are now provided by Patient.co.uk. You can check out the new-look site at www.patient.co.uk. The links from our own website at www.grangeroadgepryton.nhs.uk still connect to the old EMIS site, which will remain operational at present, but these links will be updated soon. Look for the buttons at the bottom right of the Grange Road Practice screen.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Unhappily, we have been subjected to some verbal abuse recently. The practice is part of the NHS Zero Tolerance Campaign, under which verbal abuse, threats or violence to all NHS staff is unacceptable and cannot be tolerated. Any such behaviour may result in removal of the offender from our practice list.

GRANGE ROAD HEALTH TIP No. 8

Try to make sure that you keep to a healthy weight. The weight that's right for you depends on many factors including your sex, height, age and heredity. Excess body fat increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some types of cancer and other illnesses. On the other hand, being too thin can increase risk for osteoporosis, menstrual irregularities and a number of other health problems. Both diet and regular exercise play an important part in maintaining a healthy weight. Just call Reception and make an appointment with the Practice Nurse if you would like further advice.