A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GP

As doctors, there are no typical days, no two days are the same and it may be viewed that we work fixed hours, according to the opening times of the surgery, however this is far from true. Patients may perceive that the day starts at 8.00 am when the appointments line opens and finishes at 6.30pm when the doors are locked. The practice thought it may be helpful for patients to gain some insight into the current workload of a GP.

Dependant on workload your GP may arrive in the surgery to start work at 7am or 8am and may not go home until 7pm to 8pm, unfortunately doctors cannot be available for appointments for all of this time owing to the associated paperwork and other requests from patients and the Department of Health. We have a duty GP on call for the day who starts work at 8.00 with appointments and then in the afternoon deals with emergency appointments and queries (of which there can be many). The morning surgery typically lasts for 3 hours depending on how many "extras" are slotted in. After surgery the morning post will have to be dealt with, this involves reading and “action” anything up to 80 letters that have come from the hospital or from patients. There will be visits to attend to, prescriptions to raise and sign, pathology results to read, and referrals to dictate. During this time there will of course be any number of queries put through from reception, whether it is phone calls from patients, from colleagues at the hospital or urgent blood results from the pathology lab. We need to deal with the repeat medication queries and on top of all that we have to complete medical reports.

The afternoon surgery will then last 3 hours depending on how many "extras" are slotted in. Home time at last and the GP can typically sometimes finish work around 7pm -8pm. Once home, somewhere in that hectic schedule the GP has to find time for fulfilling their independent learning, of which there are increasingly significant requirements for appraisal and revalidation.

A full time GP at the surgery can spend 30 hours per week just seeing patients in morning and afternoon surgeries. This excludes the administration, extras slotted in, and home visiting detailed above. It is inevitable that sometimes your doctor may run late. We are sorry if you are kept waiting longer than you would expect. Here are just a few examples as to why your doctor may run late in surgery:-

- Your doctor is duty doctor for the day and has been called to an emergency
- Your doctor may be admitting someone to hospital-this can be a lengthy process
- They are required to take a call from a colleague at the hospital in relation to a patient
- A patient is presenting with more than one problem on a single appointment
- They have been interrupted between patients to deal with an urgent request for a prescription or other matter
- They have been called out to confirm a death

We ask patients to please try and understand why we sometimes run over time. Doctors and nurses do try to see patients as close to their appointment time as possible. Every patient has different needs and we never know what type of problem or emergency will present.
ADVANCED NURSE PRACTITIONERS (ANP)

Many patients will be aware or have been seen by one of our Advanced Nurse Practitioners. These additions to our staff are a very important extension to the medical services we offer at our Practice.

Here at Charnwood Surgery we have four ANP’s:

- Anji Webster
- Deborah Pearson
- Mike Bramley
- Virginia Cerbo

Advanced Nurse Practitioners are highly skilled and experienced nurses with advanced clinical skills obtained by attaining a Master’s Degree or Doctorate. This enables them to assess and examine you, make a diagnosis and provide appropriate advice and treatment which may include referring you for further investigation where this is deemed appropriate. This involves the following:

- Undertake a comprehensive and sophisticated physical and/or mental health assessment of patients with complex multiple healthcare needs and/or in crisis.
- Interpret the results of multiple different assessments and investigations in order to make a diagnosis, and plan and deliver care.
- Prescribe medication and work with individuals to manage their medicines.
- Work independently but also as part of a multi-disciplinary team and exercise values based leadership.
- Plan and provide skilled and competent care to meet a patient’s health and social care needs involving or referring on to other members of the healthcare team as appropriate.
- Respiratory Infections, Urinary symptom, bowel related difficulties (constipation etc), ear, nose & throat issues, dizziness & headaches, skin problems, stress/depression. Menstrual & vaginal problems, contraception, abdominal, Muscular & skeletal difficulties (back, knee etc), medication reviews.

Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP) make an important contribution to the surgery and the role has been successfully introduced in many different settings. They are not only able to substitute for doctors, which is highly relevant in view of the growing shortage of GPs, but in doing so they often enable a patient to get the care they require more quickly, because the need to refer on to a doctor, and the associated delay, is negated. They can assess a patient, make a diagnosis and provide treatment, just like a doctor.

Top Ten Tips for Winter

Get your flu jab if you’re at risk
Those eligible for a free jab are people who are at more risk of serious complications from flu. These are children and adults under 65 with long term conditions; the over 65s; carers; two to four year olds and pregnant women.

If you’ve got a cold, you don’t need to go to the GP
You can usually look after yourself by resting, drinking plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration and avoiding strenuous activity. Painkillers such as ibuprofen or paracetamol can relieve aches and pains (if you are allergic to these seek advice from the pharmacy).

Prevent Norovirus or Winter Vomiting Bug spreading
Don’t go to the doctor or the hospital, because Norovirus is contagious and the doctor can’t do anything while you have it. Phone your GP or call 111 for advice if symptoms last longer than a few days or you already have a serious illness.

Make sure your medicine cabinet is stocked up & get your repeat prescriptions in good time
Stocks of cold remedies, painkillers, antiseptic cream and plasters can help you to treat yourself. Your GP surgery will be closed on Bank Holidays and not all pharmacies will be fully open, so make sure you pick up repeat prescriptions in advance – but don’t order things you don’t need. Pharmacies can provide advice as well as over the counter remedies and can help you decide whether or not you need to see a doctor.

What if you can’t see your GP?
If you think you need to see a doctor but your surgery is closed or you can’t get an appointment, just phone 111. You can call 111 for advice 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and it’s free. You can also go to your nearest Walk In or Urgent Care Centre and get seen quickly, but don’t forget A&E is only for life threatening emergencies.

Keep warm
To keep warm during the day, try to heat your main living room to around 18-21°C and the rest of the house to at least 16°C. Set the timer to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed. If you feel cold at night, use a hot water bottle or electric blanket – but never use both together. Don’t forget to wrap up warm if you do go out. Check the weather forecast so you are prepared.

Eat healthily
Food is a vital source of energy for everyone and helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day and keep in touch with your friends, family and neighbours in case they have not been able to get out to the shops. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables – try them in hearty warming stews or soups.