



The Prescription

Countesthorpe Health Centre News

Issue no 2.

www.countesthorpehealthcentre.co.uk

July/August 2009



Countesthorpe
Health Centre

Countesthorpe Health Centre Has a New Web Site

Since our last newsletter we've been working hard to develop our new web site which you can see at www.countesthorpehealthcentre.co.uk and which we hope will be a useful resource for our patients.

The web site features:

- All the essential information you need about the practice including opening hours and telephone numbers;
- Details about everyone on the Countesthorpe team;
- Useful information, web links and downloadable leaflets on a wide range of health issues;
- Current and past copies of our newsletter;
- A page where you can leave feedback about Countesthorpe Health Centre.

The web site is also the ideal place for us to post important information on health issues such as the recent swine flu outbreak where the guidance given to us changes too often for us to ensure that we can pass on the most up-to-date information in this newsletter. You'll find that it's always worth checking the web site for information of that nature so make a note of our web address – www.countesthorpehealthcentre.co.uk.

Swine Flu and Seasonal Flu

The information and advice that we are given on swine flu changes frequently and rapidly – for the latest advice you should check our website – www.countesthorpehealthcentre.co.uk – or the NHS Direct website – www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk.

Swine flu

At the time of writing, we have been informed that a swine flu vaccine is likely to be available in the autumn, but we cannot make plans for a vaccination programme until we know when supplies will be delivered. We will keep you up to date via our website.

Seasonal flu

As in previous years, the normal seasonal flu vaccine will be offered in October to all patients over 65 and those with a chronic condition such as asthma or diabetes. We will write to everyone eligible for this vaccination in September so expect to hear from us then.

Helping Us to Help You – How Our Appointment System Works

Here at Countesthorpe Health Centre we aim to achieve the best possible balance between being able to offer patients an appointment on the day they call and ensuring that there are appointments available to be booked ahead. To achieve this balance we have to limit the number of pre-bookable appointments to ensure that there will be sufficient same-day appointments available.

Additionally, we try wherever possible to ensure that when you pre-book an appointment you can see the doctor of your choice although, because there are a limited number of these appointments available, we may occasionally need to book you in with an alternative GP. It really is a fine balancing act!

What can you do to help us give you the most appropriate appointment with your doctor?

- For same-day appointments, you can call from 8.30am. The earlier you call, the better it helps us to make sure you can see the doctor of your choice.
- For pre-bookable appointments our system means that you can call from 10.00am. Again, calling early helps us to make the most suitable appointment for you.

Don't forget that telephone appointments are a convenient alternative for reviews and medication queries, especially if you need to fit your appointment into a busy working day.

Changes to Our Computer System

In October this year we will be upgrading our computer system to enable improvements to our service including:

- an automated patient check-in screen in the waiting room;
- a more secure system for ordering your repeat prescriptions online;
- and – coming in 2010 – the ability to book your appointments online.

We are making plans now to keep any disturbance to a minimum but some disruption to normal services will be inevitable. We will keep you informed about what to expect as we get closer to the date.

If you order repeat prescriptions and are likely to order during October, we will instead issue you with two prescriptions in August or September and calculate what you will need to cover the changeover period. You simply need to order your prescription in the usual way and let us take care of the rest.

Countesthorpe – A Teaching Practice

The beginning of August is nearly approaching and, with it, you'll see some new faces at the Health Centre as we welcome some new GP trainees.

Countesthorpe has long been involved in training both medical students and GP registrars and because of recent changes in medical training the number of trainee doctors in the practice has increased substantially.

So if you've ever wondered why Countesthorpe seems to see so many doctors come and go, read on.

Medical students are undergraduates in the latter part of their journey to becoming doctors and they join us to improve their consultation skills. They are not yet medically qualified so, while they are encouraged to take a full part in consultations with patients, they are always supervised and the final decisions about your diagnosis and treatment will be made by the supervising doctor.

GP Registrars are fully medically qualified and able to make clinical decisions, write prescriptions and make referrals in their own right. Some, known as FY2 doctors, are here as part of their basic postgraduate medical training and may not necessarily be planning to go into General Practice, although some will.

The majority of GP registrars that join us, however, are part of the GP training programme which takes three years to complete and they will stay with us for between 4 and 12 months, depending on the point they are at in their training. Every training grade doctor has a named trainer responsible for supervising their education and clinical practice while they are at the surgery.

What does this mean for our patients?

Some might say that there are some down sides: educational activities can take regular doctors out of normal surgeries which might make it harder on occasion for you to see your normal doctor. And, because trainees move on, patients sometimes find themselves facing a change of doctor just as they have become used to the GP registrar that they have been seeing.

So why do we continue our involvement with training?

We believe that having young and enthusiastic doctors in the practice is the best way to keep the partners young and enthusiastic too – and provides an excellent way of keeping us all up-to-date. Training is also a great help when we need to recruit new doctors – no less than four of our current permanent GPs did their training with us.

We also believe that the core strength of the NHS is in its staff and that if we are to benefit from excellent GPs in the future we need to provide a high quality training environment for those future GPs today. We hope you agree.

Look After Your Health

Our recent health promotion campaigns have been proving very popular. A number of patients have chosen to join the Counterweight programme to help them lose weight and there has been a keen interest in the healthy eating displays in the waiting room.

Look out for the health promotion campaigns throughout the rest of the year.

Giving up Smoking	Monday 10th August
Minor Illnesses	Monday 14th September
Alcohol Issues	Monday 12th October
Child Health	Monday 9th November

If you missed previous campaigns within the Health Centre, you can find related information through the links on our web site on the Health Advice section at www.countesthorpehealthcentre.co.uk.