



Summer Newsletter



A Letter from a GP by Dr Angie Gurner

Do you ever feel that, as you haven't attended the practice for some time, you have a number of things to discuss? Or are you leading a very busy life and find it difficult to come in and so bring a list to your appointment?

Often patients come in to the practice with a number of different problems and are sometimes disappointed that the doctor will ask them to make a further appointment.

As clinicians used to making a diagnosis and organising a management plan we are trained to consider each problem thoroughly and exclude serious underlying pathology as far as we are able to in the practice and then arrange further investigations or appointments as necessary. It then puts us in a very difficult position when a patient wants a quick answer to a problem such as headaches which may not have been causing them particular concern but they wanted a quick word of reassurance. In this example we would need to take a full history of the nature of the headaches and the frequency and consider other medical conditions and medications and examine the patient appropriately before we are able to give that quick word of reassurance and sometimes this causes frustration to the patient and doctor when there is then no time to deal with other queries.

If you ask us to do prescriptions which could be done by the reception staff in the normal way or complete a form which could be done outside practice time, this will mean that you will have less time to discuss clinical concerns with your clinician. It really helps us in the practice if people do not save up too many problems to deal with and then expect everything to be sorted out in one consultation.

You will often get a more effective service by booking appointments as you need them and being aware that we are trying to keep to time for everyone else waiting as far as we possibly can.



Do you use our Website to book appointments?

If you have been online lately, you will have noticed that we look a little different. Our new website is easier to navigate and use, while having the important information on the front page.

Did you know you can go online and request your medication and book appointments? If you would like to register for our online services then please come in to either Cuckfield Medical Practice or The Vale Surgery and the Reception team will be happy to help. You will need to bring in photo ID and a bill/letter with your address when you come in to register.

Looking for a GP Practice?

Are you new to Haywards Heath or Cuckfield and need a GP Practice? Do you have friends or relatives that have just moved to the area and are looking for a GP? Cuckfield Medical Practice are taking new patients and with a great team including; 5 GPs, 2 Registrars, a team of 5 nurses, along with appointments with a GP each day and online services which allow you to plan your care and medication requests around you, we are a great choice if you're in Cuckfield or Haywards Heath.





Vaccination Programme for 2014

The following are the latest updates on the NHS immunisation programme. The influenza programme will start in October for:

- Those who are 65 years old and those with chronic diseases as in previous years
- Children aged 2, 3 and 4 years old being offered the vaccine via a nasal spray
- Girls aged 12 and 13 years will be offered the HPV immunization at school, and parents should receive a letter from the school with information about this vaccine

For a full schedule of all vaccinations please go to the **Child Immunisations** section of our website:

http://www.cuckfieldmedicalpractice.co.uk/A-Z_Clinics_and_Services.php

Any queries of concerns about the programme please do not hesitate to contact Cuckfield Medical Practice or The Vale Surgery on 01444 458738 and discuss the matter with Philippa or Liz.

Everything you need to know about Gout by Dr Daphne Coutroubis

Gout is the most common inflammatory joint disease in the UK, affecting 1.5% of the population. Men are more commonly affected than women and it usually presents in middle age. There is a family history of gout in about 1 in 5 cases. Gout is caused by increased levels of a chemical called uric acid in the blood stream.



What increases your uric acid levels?

- Drinking too much alcohol.
- Diet low on vitamin C
- Drinking sugar-sweetened soft drinks high in fructose
- Certain foods, such as herring and sardines
- Some medicines may raise the level of uric acid. For example, 'water' tablets (diuretics) such as bendroflumethiazide, aspirin (at full painkiller dose - not low-dose aspirin used to prevent blood clots), and some chemotherapy medicines.

From time to time the level may become too high and tiny grit-like crystals of uric acid may form. The crystals typically collect in a joint and irritate the tissues in the joint to cause inflammation, swelling and pain - a gout attack. An attack typically develops quickly over a few hours. It usually causes severe pain in one joint. The base of the big toe is the most commonly affected joint. However, any joint can be affected. Sometimes two or more joints are affected. Affected joints usually swell and the nearby skin may look red and inflamed. If left untreated, a gout attack may last several days but usually goes completely within 7-10 days.

What is the treatment for a gout attack?

Simple measures: cooling down with an ice pack for 10 minutes twice a day can be helpful. Short course anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen or naproxen - these drugs need to be taken with care as can upset the stomach lining. If you have a history of problems with your stomach consult your Doctor. If gout attacks become recurrent your doctor may start you on a preventative medication such as allopurinol.

Why is my doctor that interested in Gout?

Multiple studies have shown that there is a strong link between Gout and Diabetes as well as Cardiovascular Disease. Some studies suggest that Gout as a factor can double Cardiovascular Disease Risk such as heart attack or stroke. Taking care of yourself and looking after your diet and lifestyle can prevent an attack of gout and also protect your heart.

What can you do to help prevent a good attack?

- **Eat sensibly:** A high uric acid level may be lowered a bit by avoiding a high protein intake and foods rich in purines, such as liver, kidneys and seafood.
- If you are overweight, try to **lose some weight**.
- If you drink a lot of alcohol then it will help if you **reduce the amount of alcohol you drink**
- **Cut down on sugar-sweetened soft drinks**, especially those containing fructose
- If taking any medicines, check whether they are a cause of gout. An alternative medicine may be available.
- **Avoid dehydration:** drink plenty of water (up to 2 litres per day unless there is a medical reason why not to).

What would you like to read about in your Newsletter?

If you have any requests for articles you would like to read please email: Cuckfield.reception@nhs.net and we will consider all requests and where possible write articles.