



Summer Newsletter



Welcome to our new, bigger Newsletter which contains more information for you and a new PPG section!

Heart Rhythm week...Do you know your pulse? by Dr Steely

This year the World Heart Rhythm Week focus is 'Identifying the Undiagnosed Person'. The aim is to make one million people pulse aware.

The reason?

The most common form of an abnormal heart rhythm is **Atrial Fibrillation (AF)** and although it rarely causes symptoms it is a major risk factor for **stroke**. If AF is detected early and the person affected can begin treatment the increased risk of stroke can be **reduced** or even **eliminated**.

Atrial fibrillation is an **irregularly irregular** pulse. Our pulse is controlled by an inborn pacemaker in the upper chamber of the heart which stimulates contraction of the muscle. Sometimes the pacemaker is overridden and as a result of this irregular stimulation the upper heart chambers 'fibrillate' or contract at irregular times and with varying intensity. The signals pass through to the lower heart in a haphazard way causing an irregular rhythm of contraction, felt as an **irregular pulse**. It can mean that the ejection of blood out of the heart is less efficient and blood may collect in the chambers and clot. It is these clots which may shoot off into the brain and cause stroke.

We check your pulse rate and rhythm by feeling for it in the radial artery at the wrist. As medical equipment has progressed we now often use machines to count the pulse rate. Typically your heart beat will be recorded when your blood pressure is taken and providing the rate of your heart beat is normal your rhythm may not be checked. With experience of checking many pulses we are able to detect an irregularity but the diagnosis of AF would still need to be confirmed by taking an Electrocardiogram (ECG).

Pulse Check Clinics

We are very pleased to announce that we are getting some new equipment which can record your heart rhythm using a mobile device. This machine will make the process very easy and we are planning to run some pulse check clinics alongside our flu vaccination programme later in the year. In the meantime please ask the Dr or Nurse you see to have a feel of your pulse when you are next seen.

Knowledge is power!

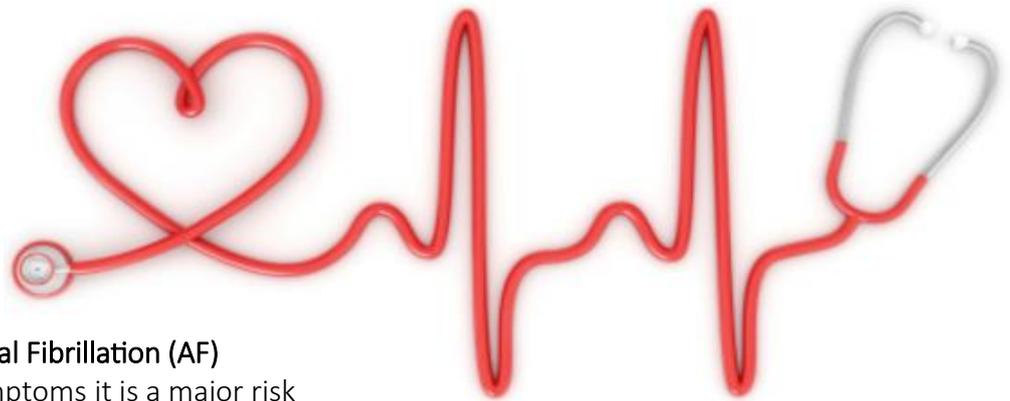
If we know you have AF we can discuss the best way to monitor you and go through your individual risk of stroke and take steps to reduce it. For more information go to:



<https://patient.info/health/atrial-fibrillation-leaflet>

<https://patient.info/health/abnormal-heart-rhythms-arrhythmias>

<http://www.heartrhythmalliance.org/aa/uk/know-your-pulse>



Your Pulse in four steps

1

To assess your **resting** pulse rate in your wrist, sit down for **5 minutes** beforehand. Remember that any stimulants taken before the reading will affect the rate (such as caffeine or nicotine). You will need a watch or clock with a second hand.



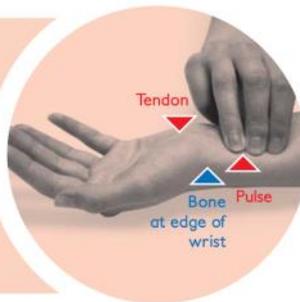
2

Take off your watch and hold your left or right hand out with your palm facing up and your elbow slightly bent.



3

With your other hand, place your index and middle fingers on your wrist, at the base of your thumb. Your fingers should sit between the bone on the edge of your wrist and the stringy tendon attached to your thumb (as shown in the image). You may need to move your fingers around a little to find the pulse. Keep firm pressure on your wrist with your fingers in order to feel your pulse.



4

Count for **30 seconds**, and multiply by 2 to get your heart rate in beats per minute.



If your heart rhythm is irregular, you should count for 1 minute and do not multiply.

Record your pulse here

Day	Result		Activity (e.g after a run)
	am	pm	
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Pulse Facts



Why should you 'Know Your Pulse'?

- The easiest way to detect an arrhythmia (irregular heart beat) is to feel the pulse – uneven, too fast, too slow?
- Arrhythmias cause at least 75,000 sudden cardiac deaths each year in the UK; over 200 every day.
- At the age of 40, we all have a 1 in 4 life-time risk of developing AF which increases the risk of stroke.
- 120,000 people experience unexplained loss of consciousness each year, commonly a sign of a heart rhythm disorder

GP APPOINTMENT?
CAN'T MAKE IT?
DON'T NEED IT?

CANCEL IT!

452 patients Did Not Attend their GP or Nurse appointment between April and June 2017

If you are unable to attend your appointment please contact the Surgery, or use online services to cancel that appointment. This could then go to someone who needs it. We can send out SMS reminders the day before your appointment.

If this would be useful for you, please provide the Receptionist with your current mobile number and give us your consent to send you text messages.

Many people do not realise that their appointment is 10 minutes long

Cuckfield Medical Practice and The Vale Surgery would like to politely ask our patients to remember the following when attending an appointment with one of our doctors or nurses:

- ✓ Please be on time, if you are more than 10 minutes late you will have to rebook
- ✓ Please only bring one problem to the attention of the doctor
- ✓ If you have other things you would like to discuss you will need to make another appointment

Thank you for working with our practice in helping us to deliver great care to all our patients



MYTH BUSTER!

Sunscreen Myths

Think you need to lie out to boost vitamin D levels? That it's safe to tan as long as you wear sunscreen? That skin cancer isn't that big a deal? Top skin doctors help set the record straight on common sun, sunscreen, and skin cancer myths.

Myth: "A base tan protects you."

There. Is. No. Such. Thing. As. A. Safe. Tan. A tan is literally your body's response to being 'injured' by UV exposure.

Myth: "80% of sun damage occurs before age 18, so the injury is already done."

The latest thinking shows that you get closer to just 25% of total sun exposure by age 18 - that 80% figure is outdated and inaccurate!

Myth: "As long as I protect my face, it's OK."

Skin cancer loves anywhere the sun touches. You can get it on your arms, legs, back, feet, and chest. So while it's good to protect your face, skipping the rest of you leaves you vulnerable

Myth: "But I need sun to get enough vitamin D."

This is a common misconception. Most people don't apply sunscreen well enough to prevent skin from producing vitamin D.

Myth: "I'm allergic to all sunscreens."

While many people don't love the gloopy or viscous texture, or the irritation sunscreen can sometimes cause, being truly allergic is exceptionally rare. If you have sensitive skin, stick to a physical sunscreen which has titanium dioxide or zinc oxide to block rays, which will be less aggravating. Try a test spot before applying all over.

Myth: "Skin cancer isn't that big a deal."

While non-melanoma skin cancer typically doesn't travel throughout the body, it's still cancer and will continue to destroy your skin and invade the tissues if it's not removed.

Practice Manager's Message by Jess Yaxley



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Practice Newsletter and what a beautifully sunny time we have been having!

As we have mentioned in this edition it is very important to use sun cream and cover up to avoid sunburn and sunstroke at this time of year. We have been busy recruiting new team members to the Practice and I'm delighted to let you know that Hollie Ashton has just joined the reception team and after her training period you will see her on the desk at The Vale on Mondays and Cuckfield on Fridays. We are also lucky to have Ray Whitlock joining us from St Peter & St James' Hospice, as our new IT & Systems Support Lead. Also in July we will be adding to our nursing team with Emma Burnham joining us as a Phlebotomist. I am sure you will welcome them all and wish them luck in their new role.

Sadly, I have to let you know that Sam Shearman, who has been our Reception Manager for 3 ½ years is leaving the Practice to further her career in the IT sector. She is joining the Commissioning Support Unit who support Primary Care provider services, based in Crawley, so will still be involved with GP Practices but will be specialising in providing IT knowledge and support. Sam has been a loyal and conscientious member of the Practice team and has developed a superb reception team who provide such an effective and efficient service to all of our patients. We are all going to miss Sam enormously; she is always willing to go that extra mile and nothing is too much trouble where our Patients are concerned. I'm sure you will all join the Partners and myself in wishing her well for the future and a huge thank you for her dedication to the Practice.

Jess



Getting along Swimmingly by MW of the Cuckfield & The Vale Patient Participation Group

I know it's trendy to talk about exercise, but I have discovered that it really does help to improve all round health. Swimming is a particular favourite of mine because it seems to benefit every aspect of my physical and mental wellbeing. When I came to Sussex, thirty one years ago, I had three young children who kept me on my toes. I did not initially consider doing exercise beyond that required to care for three lively children - until a friend invited me to join her at an aerobics class. Although initially wary of leaping about in nothing more than a leotard, I found that I enjoyed the social element of the activity as much as the physical boost to my level of fitness. I couldn't leap about like that now to save my life so I focus on swimming instead. In the water my body is totally supported, and just a forty minutes' swim leaves me with a wonderful sense of wellbeing.

My customary programme is to swim forty lengths of the pool: twenty lengths freestyle, and twenty lengths backstroke so that I am varying the way the muscles are used. I also try to ensure that my breathing is regular and systematic by breathing bi-laterally. I invariably emerge from my swimming session in the pool with easier breathing, a lighter step and a brighter attitude than when I started. It is certainly worth giving this form of exercise a try. Why not enquire at your local Leisure Centre for further details? There are pools in Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead all of which I have used and enjoyed.

Save the Date: Macmillan Coffee Morning



Cuckfield PPG started hosting the Macmillan Coffee Morning in 2015. It went so well we held it again in 2016 and so far we have raised £600. Please join us again this year:

Friday 22nd September, from 9:30am, Cuckfield Surgery

Save the Date: Winter Wellbeing Fairs

Cuckfield PPG organised and held a Winter Wellbeing Fair at Cuckfield in October 2016. This was a real success and this year we will be holding one at both Surgeries.

More information to follow in our next Newsletter:

Cuckfield Wellbeing Fair: Saturday 7th October, 8:30 - 12:00

The Vale Wellbeing Fair: Saturday 21st October, 8:30 - 12:00

**Stroke Association Voluntary
Group in Cuckfield**

Communication Group

If you or someone you know has had a stroke, you'll understand the impact it can have on daily life, from mobility problems to communication difficulties, and more.

There is a lovely group of volunteers offering a varied programme of activities, including: Singing, Art, Baking, Games, Quizzes and Bingo to name a few.

For information pick up a leaflet in the Surgery or email carolynjd591@gmail.com

If you would like to contact or join the PPG then please email: cuckfieldpatients@gmail.com

You can follow the PPG on Twitter: [@CuckfieldPPG](https://twitter.com/CuckfieldPPG)