

# Autumn Newsletter

## Winter Diarrhoea and Vomiting Bug by Sharran Rigby-Smith

So named because it is more common in winter, but can occur all year round. Caused by Norovirus, it is the most common cause of stomach bugs (Gastroenteritis) and is highly contagious - affecting all age groups.

### The bug is spread in three main ways:

- Contact with an infected person
- Contact with contaminated surfaces
- From contaminated food or water

### Onset may be sudden and the main symptoms are:

- Nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting
- Watery diarrhoea and mild abdominal cramp
- Mild fever

You may be infectious (carrying the bug) for up to 48 hours before you have symptoms.

If you have any of the above symptoms **PLEASE DO NOT VISIT THE GP SURGERY, A&E OR A HOSPITAL** as you will be very likely to spread the bug to others.

### What should you do?

- ✓ Drink plenty of water or fluid replacement drinks (such as Dioralyte or sports drinks)
- ✓ Take regular paracetamol for abdominal pain and fever
- ✓ If you feel like it, eat foods that are plain and easy to digest

### To prevent the spread to others it is important that you do the following:

- ✓ Stay at home and avoid contact with others especially the elderly, children and those known to have a weakened immune system
- ✓ Wash your hands thoroughly with **SOAP AND WATER** - alcohol gel is **NOT** effective
- ✓ Clean all surfaces including door handles thoroughly with a detergent cleaner

If you are worried about any of your symptoms please ask the surgery for a **Telephone call**.

**Please avoid contact with others or returning to work until 48 hours after your last symptoms.**

For more information go to: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Norovirus/Pages/Introduction.aspx>



## Coffee Morning & Winter Wellbeing

**A huge thank you to our Patient Participation Group (PPG) who organised two very successful events:**

On 30th September the PPG held a coffee morning for MacMillan. Staff and PPG members baked delicious cakes and a **fantastic £290 was raised**. Thank you to all who baked and Donated to this great cause.

On 15th October we held our first Winter Wellbeing Fair which saw 215 patients attend for their Flu Vaccine and many of those stayed to speak to the advisors we had arranged from the following organisations: Age UK, Citizens Advice Bureau, Action for Deafness, Carer Support, Alzheimer's Support, Stroke Association, and Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

**Thank you to all who attended and contributed.**

**We will be running another one in 2017!**

## We will be Closed on the following dates:

Please be aware that the Surgery will not be open on the following dates and times in November and over the December holiday period:

**Wednesday 9th November - CLOSED staff training**

**Friday 23rd December - Cuckfield OPEN / Vale CLOSED**

**Saturday 24th December - CLOSED**

**Sunday 25th December - CLOSED**

**Monday 26th December - CLOSED**

**Tuesday 27th December - CLOSED**

**Saturday 31st December - CLOSED**

**Monday 2nd January - CLOSED**

**Tuesday 3rd January - OPEN as usual**



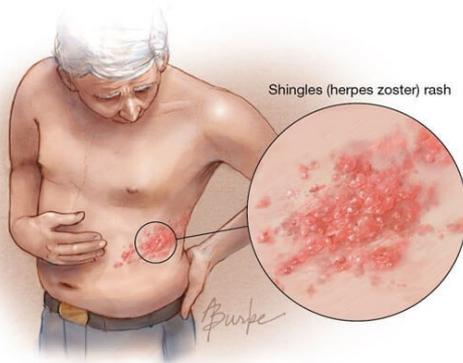
If you need a GP while the surgery is closed please call 111 for an out of hours GP.

## Have you had your Flu Vaccination?

We had our 3 weekend drop in clinics on the 8th, 15th and 22nd October. We are running mop-up clinics, please see call us or ask at Reception for the dates.



## Shingles Vaccination by Sheila Graysmark



Shingles usually affects a specific area on one side of the body and does not cross over the midline of the body (an imaginary line running from between your eyes down past the belly button).

If you've ever had chickenpox you could be at risk of developing shingles, a condition that ranges from mild to severe symptoms and can be unpleasant for some. As older people are more likely to get shingles the national shingles programme is aimed at people aged 70–79. Due to limited supplies of the vaccine it will only be available to certain age groups each year.

**From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 patients who are 70, 71, 72, 73, 78 or 79 on this date will be eligible to receive the vaccine. Don't miss out on your opportunity to have this vaccine!** Please ask a clinician during your next appointment or ask our Receptionists to make you an appointment.

## Ear Care by Philippa Lockett

Earwax is a normal build-up of dead cells, hair and foreign materials such as dust and natural wax which forms a protective coating on the skin in the ear canal. The amount of wax will vary from person to person. A doctor or nurse can look into the ear canal and confirm a plug of earwax has formed. A plug of ear wax is not a serious problem, more a nuisance. You only need to remove the plug of wax if it is causing a problem such as dulled hearing or pain.

### 'Nothing smaller than your elbow should be placed in the ear'

This means cleaning your ears out with cotton buds, paperclips, pens, fingers **are ALL BANNED**. If you use one of the above offending items you can push 90% of the wax further in, usually packing it into a hard mass against the ear drum, thus causing further problems. People ask what they can clean their ears with; the answer is **let nature do her job**, the hairs in your ears will naturally get rid of the wax. Obviously your ears may already be blocked, especially if you wear hearing aids or ear defenders.

If your ear is blocked with wax, the up-to-date (evidence based) way to clear the wax is to use simple olive oil. (This is available from the pharmacy with a dropper bottle, or just off the shelf, but try to avoid those with garlic or chillies in!). Pop a few drops in the blocked ear **2-4 times a day**, for at least **2-3 weeks**. This should clear the blockage. Surprisingly, you will not necessarily see the wax come out.

### How To Use Ear Drops

- ✓ Warm the drops to room temperature only
- ✓ Lie with the affected ear facing up when putting in drops
- ✓ Pour/drop/spray a small amount of olive oil into the ear canal
- ✓ Stay like this for 5-10 minutes to let the oil soak in
- ✓ Gentle manipulation of the ear by pulling the outside of the ear can help penetration of the wax
- ✗ **DO NOT** put cotton wool in the ear, as this only soaks up the oil and pushes the wax further down the canal.

If you are prone to repeated wax build up you can continue to use olive oil drops weekly to prevent recurrence.

**If this does not work then make an appointment to see your GP or nurse to examine the ear**, which will just mean the GP or Nurse tell you if there is a blockage, they will not clear it in that appointment. If you call the surgery for an appointment about your ears or to request ear syringing, you will be required to complete 2-3 weeks of oiling first.



## Would you like to work with us to improve Cuckfield Medical Practice & The Vale Surgery?

Our Patient Participation Group would love to hear your views! Please email us on [cuckfieldpatients@gmail.com](mailto:cuckfieldpatients@gmail.com) or follow us on Twitter [@CuckfieldPPG](https://twitter.com/CuckfieldPPG). We are interested in hearing from a wide range of patients or carers who have used local services and are keen to be involved in making a difference to NHS services in the future. We would particularly like to hear from groups who are under-represented, such as young people, parents of young children and also the under 40's.