

At the time of writing this month's newsletter there is a chill in the air and our weather forecasters are hinting that we may yet see a return of the 'Beast from the East' of last year. As a result it feels timely to touch on ways to stay well and out of hospital this winter. So far we haven't seen too much flu (yet!) but there are plenty of other unpleasant viral bugs around and lots of calls in recent weeks have been about a laryngitis / tracheitis bug causing an unpleasant and persisting cough. Unfortunately antibiotics don't help it though we would still advise patients who feel their symptoms are worsening or if they are feeling particularly feverish or unwell to seek further advice either from us or 111. Lots of patients who are calling at the moment we are directing to local pharmacy services as over the counter cold and flu remedies can help to ease symptoms while your body deals with the germ itself. We would of course encourage you to use your local pharmacist as a health care resource and as a possible option before contacting the GP surgery. As mentioned above we are expecting our flu cases to start to rise so I would encourage those of our patients eligible to still have their flu jab. We still have flu jabs available and we are particularly keen to see those of you who often don't bother coming along but might benefit. Simply have a word with our receptionists to book an appointment or drip in for our treatment room which is open every day from 8.30 to 10.00 -or until all slots are taken.

So, here are my 4 tips for staying out of hospital in the winter months

1. Take care in cold or icy weather - trips and slips are more common at this time of year and for our older patients can be particularly serious. When it is icy do you really need to go out? Could a friend, relative or neighbour run the errand for you instead?
2. Stock up with medicines before you feel ill - colds and flu like illness are common at this time of year so stock up when you are well. A simple home first aid kit is sensible and our local pharmacists are well placed to advice on what it would be sensible to keep on your shelves. If you are eligible for a flu jab, have one. Proper flu can be serious in vulnerable patients and many admissions at this time of year are flu related. Some of these could be prevented by a flu jab so why risk it?
3. Finally, remember 111 and our local Urgent Care Centres (on London Rd by the BBC studios in town and at Newark and Kings Mill Hospitals). All are available for you to access and may be particularly useful at times when the surgery is closed. They can also be helpful to be aware of if you need advice or to be seen by a health practitioner for a minor injury or possible fracture and avoid the extremely busy ED at QMC where there can be long waits at this time of year.

Also, a reminder to patients living in our practice area to register at the practice before you feel unwell. Unfortunately we find that a lot of people newly moved to Calverton and the surrounding villages don't initially register with a GP but wait until they feel unwell. It is much better to do this sooner as it means we can obtain your medical records and get them all set up on the practice computer system ready for when you need us. Similarly keeping us informed of up to date contact details, especially mobile phone numbers when they change is very important for if we need to contact about a health related matter. Any questions please contact our reception team. Don't forget as well as Calverton itself we also cover the villages of Oxton, Woodborough, Epperstone and Lambley and now that our practice building is expanded and nearly finished, we hope that rising patient numbers using the practice will enable us to offer further and improved services to our patients in future.

Phil Rayner