

Melbourne Grove Medical Practice

Newsletter October 2016

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Preparing for the winter

The leaves are falling from the trees, and the nights are drawing in. And that can only mean one thing! It is time to drop in for your influenza vaccination!

You are eligible for a flu vaccine through the NHS if you have a chronic health condition or are aged over 65 years old. Pregnant women and children aged 2-4 years are also invited in for the vaccination.

There have been many myths and misinformation spread about the flu vaccine over the last few years. Inside this newsletter we hope to combat some of these with the truth behind this important vaccination campaign.

We are also focusing this month on another serious problem, mental illness. Coinciding with the national Mental Health Awareness Day, we are providing activities and information all week about a variety of topics relating to mental health.

Join us for an evening talk about stress and anxiety, pick up information about depression and its treatment, help us support local mental health charities by donating in reception, and come and relax with a special session on *mindfulness*.

Wishing you continued health and happiness,

Dr Jonathan Love, Clinical Lead GP

Opening Times

Monday	8am – 6:30pm
Tuesday	8am – 6:30pm
Wednesday	8am – 6:30pm
Thursday	8am – 6:30pm
Friday	8am – 6:30pm
Saturday	9am – 1pm (Pre-booked only)



Contact us (comments, complaints, and ideas):

Telephone: 020 8299 0499

Email: souccg.mgmp@nhs.net

The truth about flu

It is that time of year to come and get your flu vaccine for this winter. This is a safe vaccine, and will be offered to all patients in who are at risk. Some patients decide against having this vaccine, which not only put them at risk, but also those around them, including family and friends. Any patients who are not sure if the flu vaccine is a good idea, should read the information below, or discuss your concerns with your GP.

Flu kills

For the majority of people who catch it, flu is unpleasant but not life threatening. Yet for others, it can lead to chest infections, severe complications and even death. Globally, seasonal flu accounts for around 3 to 5 million causes of severe illness annually and between 250,000 and 500,000 deaths

The flu vaccine is safe

The risk of having a serious (anaphylactic) reaction to the seasonal flu vaccine is less than one in a million – much lower than the risk of getting seriously ill from actually catching flu. If you have had a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a flu vaccine before, please talk to a clinician before getting vaccinated

The vaccine is one of the safest in the world

Seasonal flu vaccine is given to millions of people in the UK each year. The specific strains of flu that are included may change from one year to the next, but vaccines are still thoroughly tested and are safe.

The flu jab can't give you the flu

It's impossible to get flu from having the flu jab because the vaccine doesn't contain live viruses. A very small number of people experience side effects such as aching muscles, but this is simply their immune system responding to the vaccine.

Anyone can catch the flu

One of the most common reasons patients give for not getting vaccinated is: 'I've never had flu before'. There's no such thing as natural immunity to influenza, with new strains circulating this year, it's best to get vaccinated against flu.



Meet the team: Stephanie Campbell

Stephanie is the practice manager, who can be contacted by patients for any queries or concerns

I have been the Practice Manager at Melbourne Grove since November 2015 and prior to this I was a manager at a GP Practice in Merton.

I have always been interested in healthcare and while at university I studied Medical Genetics.

I enjoy helping and being involved with the local community and services. Working at Melbourne Grove is a great pleasure the team are amazing and all come together to try and help our patients as best they can.



How to get this year's flu vaccine

Drop-in clinics (no appointment necessary) will be available from 9am-1pm **SATURDAY 1st and 8th October 2016**

You can also have your flu vaccination during your GP or nurse appointment, or book in with our health care assistant.

The vaccine is offered on the NHS to the following patient groups:

- Over 65 years old
- Children 2-4 years old
- Pregnant women
- Patients with chronic (long-term) conditions
- Carers
- Healthcare workers

Mental health awareness week

October 10-14th 2016

During this week, please drop into the surgery for a range of events: educational sessions about depression and anxiety, a session about "mindfulness", and information stands about various mental health problems. The practice will also be supporting local mental health charities.

One of the most common conditions treated by our GPs is depression. We hope the information below might be of use. If you or any loved ones are worried about depression or other mental illness, please make an appointment with the doctor as soon as possible.



<http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.co.uk>

Depression:

What is it and how can we help?

Symptoms of depression

- **Persistent sadness or low mood.** This may be with or without weepiness.
- **Marked loss of interest or pleasure in activities,** even for activities that you normally enjoy.
- **Disturbed sleep** compared with your usual pattern. This may be difficulty in getting off to sleep, or waking early and being unable to get back to sleep. Sometimes it is sleeping too much.
- **Change in appetite.** This is often a poor appetite and weight loss. Sometimes the reverse happens with comfort eating and weight gain.
- **Tiredness** (fatigue) or loss of energy.
- **Agitation or slowing of movements.**
- **Poor concentration** or indecisiveness. For example, you may find it difficult to read, work, etc. Even simple tasks can seem difficult.
- **Feelings of worthlessness,** or excessive or inappropriate guilt.
- **Recurrent thoughts of death.** This is not usually a fear of death, more a preoccupation with death and dying. For some people despairing thoughts such as "life's not worth living" or "I don't care if I don't wake up" are common. Sometimes these thoughts progress into thoughts and even plans for suicide.

Who does depression affect?

About 5 in 100 adults have depression every year. Sometimes it is mild or lasts just a few weeks. However, an episode of depression serious enough to require treatment occurs in about 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men at some point in their lives.

What causes depression?

The exact cause of depression is not known. Anyone can develop depression. Some people are more prone to it and it can develop for no apparent reason. You may have no particular problem or worry, but symptoms can develop quite suddenly.

An episode of depression may also be triggered by a life event such as a relationship problem, bereavement, redundancy, illness, etc. In many people it is a mixture of the two. For example, the combination of a mild low mood with some life problem, such as work stress, may lead to a spiral down into depression.

Depression is more common in people who are known to have certain physical conditions.

What treatment can be offered?

Mild-moderate depression is likely to improve without specific treatment, but it can take much longer to settle this way. With it being such a common problem, there are many treatment options that can help all severities of depression.

Psychological treatment includes mindfulness, counselling, and talking therapies such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy). Your GP can discuss this with you, and refer you to local services if needed. There are also online resources for psychological therapy, which are very effective and can be done at home at your own pace. Please ask your doctor about this, or collect a leaflet in the waiting room.

Medications, known as SSRIs, are also very effective. Your doctor will discuss this treatment in detail with you at your appointment.

Remember, depression can be treated: you are not alone, and help is available. So please see your GP to talk about how you are feeling.

Returning to work after mental illness

If you've had time away from work, or are long-term unemployed because of mental or emotional health problems, you're not alone. Almost 50% of long-term absences from work are the result of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder.

People who have had a mental health problem and been out of work often worry about going back. Common concerns include fears of facing discrimination or bullying, and feeling that they are going back too soon or that they might become unwell again.

Although work can cause stress for some people in some situations, for most people work is beneficial to health and wellbeing. The benefits of being in work include gaining a greater sense of identity and purpose, having an opportunity to build new friendships, improved financial situation and security, and a feeling that you're playing an active part in society.

You don't have to be 100% better or well to do your job, or at least some of it, and the benefits of returning to work generally outweigh the downsides. Your GP can give you advice about going back to work as part of your *fit note*. The fit note includes space for your GP to give you general advice about the impact of your illness, and to suggest ways your employer could support your return to work.

If you're unemployed and want to get back into work, staff at your local Job Centre, your GP or your mental health worker can all give you advice about getting back into work. Full-time paid employment is not the only option available to you. There are a number of possibilities, such as part-time work or volunteering. There are many community volunteering opportunities in East Dulwich, including at Melbourne Grove. If you are interested in applying for a volunteer role at the surgery, please email/write to us, or speak to our practice manager.



In the next issue:

Chronic disease annual reviews: get yourself checked over before the winter

Blood pressure and cholesterol: the silent dangers

Your PPG, Your Voice: feedback from our patient PPG team

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Melbourne Grove
East Dulwich
London
SE22 8QN

020 8299 0499

Email: souccg.mgmp@nhs.net