Welcome to the first edition of the relaunched Claremont Medical Centre Practice Newsletter. This newsletter has been produced following discussions with the Patient Reference Group and based on the results of last year's Patient Survey. We very much hope that you will find the information useful and informative as well as providing you with an insight into the practice team and day to day life in General Practice. If you have any suggestions as to subjects you would like covered in future issues, please do not hesitate to contact us - we are always keen to respond to patient suggestions.

1. New Duty Doctor Triage System

From mid September we will be operating a new triage system, which we hope will improve the quality of our service provision. Patients calling for an urgent on the day appointment once all of the same day appointments have been booked will be asked for brief details by the receptionist & informed that a GP will phone them back to assess their needs, and make arrangements for appropriate care to be provided.

Many problems will be satisfactorily resolved without the need to attend the surgery to see a GP face to face. Instead they can be dealt with by a telephone consultation with a GP who will offer appropriate advice and/or a prescription, saving an unnecessary visit. If clinically appropriate, an urgent on the day appointment will be offered. The time saved by the doctor resolving a proportion of the problems via a telephone conversation, enables more time to be spent seeing patients with more complex & serious problems. The system for booking appointments in advance will remain unchanged.

We believe that this system will enable faster and more convenient access to a GP for patients, and make better use of time for both GPs and patients. It is working well in a number of other practices locally and we believe that it will be of great benefit to our patients. Once this system is up and running, we would appreciate your feedback.
2. Flu vaccination during Pregnancy

Flu can cause very severe illness so the vaccination is recommended for everyone who will be 65 or over by March 2013 and for anyone with heart, kidney, liver, diabetes, stroke, neurological or chest problems. We also recommend it for all those who may have reduced immunity due to pregnancy, medical conditions or medication, and for carers of sick or elderly people. The vaccination gives immunity to the flu viruses that are expected next winter.

During pregnancy the normal changes in the immune system mean that its harder for the body to fight some viruses, including influenza (flu) so it can result in more serious illness for pregnant women. This is why we strongly recommend it for women who are pregnant.

We have special clinics for flu vaccination on Weds 19 September and Weds 10 October. We’ve printed letters to invite all those in the above groups. Please collect your letter from reception. If there isn’t a letter for you and you think you should have one please let us know.

3. Appointment Reminders via SMS

Since August we will be sending out appointment reminders via Text Message to those patients who pre-book an appointment in advance. The advantages of reminding patients of their forthcoming appointments are threefold;

(1) patients are more likely to remember and keep their appointment
(2) patients are more likely to cancel their appointment if they are unable to attend
(3) increased patient satisfaction

If for any reason you do not wish to receive these reminders via text message, you must let one of the reception staff know so that we can mark it on your records.

Similarly we will also use this new facility to send out notices to patients about things like flu clinics or updating their clinical records.

In order for this service to work effectively, please remember to keep us notified of any change in mobile telephone number.

4. Summary Care Record going Live

Work on the Summary Care Record project is continuing to progress across the NHS and it is envisaged that practice across South West London will go live with the uploading of patient data at some point in the next year. All registered patients were sent a letter about this project last year with details about what it means and how you can opt out of having a Summary Care Record should you so wish.

The personal information that will be uploaded to the NHS Spine at this initial stage includes any allergies or adverse reactions that you have had to medications in the past, any repeat medications that you are currently being prescribed along with any discontinued repeat medicines, plus any acute medications that you have been prescribed in the last six months. If you want to you can also chose to add additional information to your Summary Care Record such as long term condition diagnoses like Diabetes or Coronary Heart Disease, if you feel that this information could be important in the event of an emergency. You can discuss adding additional information with your GP.

Claremont Medical Centre has been chosen as the first GP Practice in Kingston to go live with the uploading of basic patient data to the NHS Spine. We are hoping to go live by the end of September 2012.

It is important to note that if you DO NOT want your data uploaded to the Summary Care Record, that you complete an Opt Out form and bring it to the Practice. You can also ask to see a preview of the information that will be in your SCR by speaking to one of the Reception team.
5. GP Biography - Dr Martin Wolfson

I am the senior partner at Claremont Medical Centre and took over the single handed practice in 1987 when there was one doctor, no nurse, no appointments, no out of hours service, no mobile phones and only 1600 patients. I did virtually all the out of hours home visits myself. No out of hours service then.

I have 2 main ways of relaxing. Both completely non-medical.

Firstly I am a passionate fitness fanatic. I love running and still play geriatric six a side football. At 62 I am only the third oldest player on the pitch. When I was sixty, the others bought me an Arsenal shirt with the number “60” and the name “DOC” on the back.

I usually run twice a week. On Sundays I run 13 to 16 miles around Richmond Park, usually with some friends. Runners are a really friendly group so it is easy to make friends. On Tuesdays I run with the Ranelagh running club in Richmond, again usually around Richmond Park. Please contact me if you want to join us. I ran the London Marathon for the Princess Alice Hospice in 2010 and 2012. I also ran it back in 1982 but then did not run again for about 25 years. I find running hugely relaxing and really miss it when I cannot do it. I am sure it keeps you fit both physically and mentally. I intend to live to 90 though maybe not still running then.

My other hobby is steam engines. I am a member of the Kent & East Sussex Railway in Tenterden in Kent. I have no ambition to drive one, just to help. At present I am one of a small band of people restoring an 81 ton engine that has been rusting in a scrapyard and elsewhere for over 40 years. It is going to take 10 years. Again if you would like to join me, get in touch.

6. Annual COPD reviews

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a general term which includes the conditions chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The symptoms can include cough and breathlessness and most cases are caused by smoking. The lungs become permanently damaged and the condition can deteriorate with time. We invite all patients with COPD to attend for a review at least annually, before the winter, more frequently if their symptoms become worse. The annual review with Nurse Practitioner Debs Stevens or Jane Fox, Practice Nurse is an opportunity to assess symptoms, discuss smoking cessation, assess the effectiveness of medication and check inhaler technique (inhalers can be difficult to use) A breathing test called spirometry is carried out to see if there has been any change in lung function since the last test. Emergency medication is issued together with a care plan which can help to prevent hospital admissions. There is also an opportunity to discuss any problems and concerns. Suitable patients can be referred to the Community Rehabilitation Integrated Services (CRIS) which is a multidisciplinary service that encompasses exercise, education and social and psychological support for patients and their families. Respiratory disease can be debilitating but with our help patients can gain a better understanding of their condition and how best to manage it.

7. Kingston Clinical Commissioning Group

Claremont Medical Centre is part of the Kingston Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), established in response to changes that Government has made to the way in which the NHS operates. Kingston CCG is made up of the 28 GP practices in Kingston working alongside health practitioners from nursing, pharmacy and secondary care. They have come together
to put patients first and improve health services in the borough.

Since April 2011 Kingston CCG has had delegated responsibility for planning and allocating most of the funding for hospital, community and mental health services in Kingston. They have also just become one of the first CCGs to apply for authorisation as an independent commissioning group. This means that locally we are in an excellent position to start working with patients to improve local health services.

If approved, from April 2013 Kingston CCG will officially take over responsibility for the commissioning of hospital, mental health and community services, while a new body called the National Commissioning Board will commission doctors, dentists, pharmacists and opticians. PCTs will be phased out in April 2013, although continue to formally sign off decisions until then.

Kingston CCG want local people to feel heard, listened to and cared for, and believe that by using local clinical knowledge and close working relationships with patients, they can make a difference to the way in which care is delivered in the Royal Borough of Kingston.

If you would like to get more involved with the development of Kingston CCG and have a chance to influence how local decisions are made, why not attend their first quarterly Patient Forum, taking place on Tuesday 9 October between 7 - 9pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall Kingston. Light refreshments will be provided and you can find out more information at www.kingstonccg.nhs.uk

8. Staff news

We are pleased to welcome some new members to the growing team here at Claremont Medical Centre;

Dr Helen Gage joined the clinical team as a GP Registrar for six months from August. She will be here all day on a Monday and Friday.

We also welcome two new members of staff to the Reception team, Sarah and Magdalena who both seem to be settling in very well.

We also say a fond farewell to Dr Adam Ibrahim who has now moved on to a new practice having completed his Registrar training year here at Claremont. We wish him all the very best in his new post and every success in his future career.

Finally, you may well have noticed that several of the female staff have been a bit elusive over the past year - the reason being that they have been on Maternity leave. We are pleased to say a huge Congratulations to the following;

♀ Dr Katie Williams on the birth of Mary on 7 October 2011 weighing 6lb 15oz.
♀ Laura Tuck, Receptionist on the birth of Kyla on 5 July 2012 weighing 6lb 8oz.
♀ Dr Emily Kelly on the birth on Emma on 3 July 2012 weighing 6lb 15oz

Above: Baby Mary aged 7 months

We hope that you have enjoyed this first edition of our Practice Newsletter and now have a greater understanding of some of the changes taking place in the NHS as well as here at Claremont.

We strive to provide all patients with a first class primary care medical service and are always looking for new ways to build upon and improve the service that you receive within the resources available to us.

If you have any comments or feedback please pass them to one of the reception staff or submit them via our website.

The next edition of the Newsletter will be out in March 2013, in time for Spring.

Thank You