

Melbourne Grove Medical Practice

Newsletter December 2016

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Keeping warm and well this winter

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Oh, the weather outside is frightful...

With snow being forecast for December, we have focused this newsletter on the difficulties faced by many people in the cold winter months. There is advice on how to stay warm and well, which is particularly important for the elderly, the vulnerable, and those with chronic health conditions.

Remember, influenza vaccines are still available and are the best way to protect yourself from flu this winter.

On Saturday 3rd December, your Melbourne Grove team and PPG members are volunteering their own time to work with the St Mungo's homeless charity, in providing medical care to homeless people across Southwark. We are also collecting warm clothing for this day too: all donations are gratefully received.

Lastly, we will be again supporting the National Aids Trust in December, and helping raise awareness of HIV to coincide with World AIDS Day. We offer free and confidential HIV testing to all patients, so please let your doctor or nurse know if you would like testing.

Remember, winter is a busy time for the NHS. Take care in ordering your repeat prescriptions with plenty of time to spare, particularly around the Bank Holidays. Warm regards and season's greetings!

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

Keeping warm and well this winter

In our waiting room you will see leaflets with some advice about having a safe and warm winter. We hope the following tips will be of use to you in the cold weather months.

Make sure you get the flu jab

The flu virus strikes in winter and it can be far more serious than you think. Flu can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis.

Keep warm

Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F)

Keep your bedroom window closed on winter nights

Wear several layers of clothes

Make sure you're receiving all the help that you are entitled to

Learn how to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating and keep up with your energy bills at www.gov.uk/phe/keep-warm

Check your heating and cooking appliances are safe

Feeling unwell? Don't wait – get advice from your nearest pharmacist

Look out for other people, like friends, neighbours and relatives

If you need help with any of the above, let any of our staff know. Help is also available via SAIL (safe and independent living) Age UK and referrals can be made for all Southwark residents over 50 years of age.



Meet the team: Angela Buckingham

As a registered patient, Angela started volunteering in the surgery in 2013. Since then she has become increasingly valuable to the practice, in her role as "Patient Ambassador".

I was welcomed to the team of staff here with great warmth, and started off doing small jobs such as giving out feedback surveys to patients. My role has widened since then to include working with the Southwark Locality PPG and helping to design the new Dulwich hospital site. I really enjoyed speaking with the commissioners and the patients across Southwark.

Within the practice I help with administrative tasks such as letter-folding, planning staff parties, charity collections, and organising the PPG. I am now also involved in the Youth-PPG and the practice's Diabetes Support Group.

My biggest achievement is that I run the Melbourne Grove Gardening Project, which includes organising day trips for the group, and liaising with other networks who wish to see our garden as inspiration for their own practices.

Working at the practice has helped me learn new skills, and also helped me cope with bereavement. I am so very proud of the work I do at Melbourne, and I especially enjoy engaging with and helping our patients.

Volunteering at the surgery

If, like Angela, you would like to volunteer some time to help the surgery, we would love to hear from you.

You will be invited to an interview, and should you be successful, we will arrange training and safety checks including DBS. As long as there are no problems with this process, we can involve you in a variety of activities: helping patients in the waiting room, assisting our PPG and patient groups, helping our admin staff, working with the Southwark Locality – there is always plenty to get involved in at the surgery!

At present we can only accept volunteers aged >18 years old. If you are interested, please write a letter to us explaining why you would like to volunteer, along with a copy of your CV. Or speak to our managers for more information.

World AIDS Day

In marking World's AIDS Day on 1st December 2016, we thought it might be useful to debunk some of the myths and misinformation regarding HIV.

We offer HIV testing to all our patients, usually as part of the new patient health check. If you are concerned about HIV please do speak to our clinicians. Just like any test, this is quick, confidential and free.

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system, and weakens your ability to fight infections and disease. It's most commonly caught by having sex without a condom.

How do you get HIV?

HIV is found in the body fluids of an infected person, which includes semen, vaginal and anal fluids, blood, and breast milk. It is a fragile virus and does not survive outside the body for long. HIV cannot be transmitted through sweat or urine.

The most common way of getting HIV in the UK is by anal or vaginal sex without a condom. According to statistics from Public Health England, 95% of those diagnosed with HIV in the UK in 2013 acquired HIV as a result of sexual contact.

Other ways of getting HIV include:

- Using a contaminated needle, syringe or other injecting equipment
- Transmission from mother to baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding
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It's also possible for HIV to spread through oral sex and sharing sex toys, although the chances of this happening are very low. For example, it's estimated that you only have a 1 in 5,000 chance of getting HIV if you give unprotected oral sex to someone with the infection.

How common is HIV?

At the end of 2014, there were an estimated 103,700 people in the UK living with HIV. The majority were infected through sex (43,000 gay and bisexual men and 54,100 heterosexuals).

An estimated 17% of people with HIV (18,100) do not know they are infected.

Around one in every 620 people in the UK has HIV, but the two groups with highest rates of HIV are gay and bisexual men (approximately 1 in 20) and Black African heterosexuals (approximately 1 in 56 men and 1 in 22 women).

Preventing HIV

Anyone who has sex without a condom or shares needles is at risk of HIV infection.

The best way to prevent HIV is to use a condom for sex, and to never share needles or other injecting equipment. Knowing your HIV status and that of your partner is also important.

For people with HIV, effective antiretroviral therapy significantly reduces the risk of passing HIV to sexual partners.

Getting tested for HIV

Seek medical advice as soon as possible if you think you might have been exposed to HIV.

The only way to find out if you have HIV is to have an HIV test. This involves testing a sample of your blood for signs of the infection.

It's important to be aware that:

- Emergency anti-HIV medication called PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) may stop you becoming infected if started within three days of possible exposure to the virus, and starting it as soon as possible is recommended
- An early diagnosis means you can start treatment sooner, which can improve your chances of controlling the condition
- You can get tested in a number of places, including at Melbourne Grove, and local sexual health clinics

Treating and living with HIV

Although there is no cure for HIV, treatments are now very effective, enabling people with HIV to live long and healthy lives.

Medication, known as antiretrovirals, work by stopping the virus replicating in the body, allowing the immune system to repair itself and preventing further damage. These medicines come in the form of tablets, which need to be taken every day.

HIV is able to develop resistance to a single HIV drug very easily, but taking a combination of different drugs makes this much less likely. Most people with HIV take a combination of three antiretrovirals and it is vital that the medications are taken every day as recommended by your doctor.

For people living with HIV, taking effective antiretroviral therapy (where the HIV virus is "undetectable" in blood tests) will significantly reduce the risk of passing on HIV to sexual partners. It is rare for a pregnant woman living with HIV to transmit it to their babies, provided they receive timely and effective antiretroviral therapy and medical care.

Without treatment, the immune system will become severely damaged and life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and severe infections can occur. This is known as late-stage HIV infection or AIDS.

Please see <http://www.nat.org.uk/> for more information, or speak to your GP or practice nurse



Helping the homeless at Melbourne Grove

On 3rd December 2016 Melbourne Grove will be working with St Mungo's to provide drop-in medical services for homeless patients. Our staff will be volunteering their time to this endeavour, with help from our PPG. We hope to be able to roll this out to provide care to some of our most vulnerable patients into 2017.

Anyone can become homeless, and sleeping rough can be dangerous and can damage your health. The longer someone sleeps rough, the greater the risk that they will become trapped on the streets and vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime, developing drug or alcohol problems, or experiencing problems with their health.

Rough sleepers may not be known to local services because they remain out of sight, bedding down at different times of day or night, and moving from place to place.

Not all rough sleepers are aware that advice and support is available to them.

We will be collecting donations of warm clothes and blankets – and we thank you all in advance for supporting this endeavour.

If you have any concerns about people sleeping rough or using the streets please contact St Mungo's:

Call 020 7902 7941
Email streetconcern@mungos.org

The outreach workers will attempt to contact the person, based on the information you provide, so try to give an accurate description of them and their exact location. All information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence.

For more information about housing or homelessness in Southwark, contact the Housing Options Service: 020 7525 5950



In the next issue:

A new year, a new you! - Exercise on referral and smoking cessation

Minor surgery at Melbourne Grove - a new service for lumps, bumps and painful joints

Melbourne Grove Medical Practice

Melbourne Grove
East Dulwich
London
SE22 8QN

020 8299 0499

Email: souccg.mgmp@nhs.net