

Skerryvore News

www.skerryvorepractice.co.uk

December 2004

Issue 9



□ Festive Arrangements □

Over the Christmas period we shall be closing at 1pm on Friday 24 December and reopening at 08.30 on Tuesday 28 December, and over the New Year we will be closing at 1pm on Friday 31 December and reopening at 0830 on Tuesday 4 January. If you need to contact the doctor over this period please phone 888 240 and you will be put through to the doctor on call.

NHS 24

What is it?

NHS 24 is a call centre based service available for all in Scotland. Nurses work in the call centre answering questions and give advice. Practices that choose to link to NHS 24 have their phone lines diverted to the call centre. The nurses answering the call decide (based on the answers given by the caller) whether nurse advice, a doctor visit or a 999 call is needed. Our local call centre is based in Aberdeen. It was developed to provide a service for patients and relieve on call stress for GP's.

Why doesn't Skerryvore take part?

We believe that personal knowledge of a patient is important and local knowledge of Orkney makes a difference to patient care. Our patients are mostly very sensible about when they call us and this makes it possible for us to continue to provide a more personal service.

Can Skerryvore Patients still use the service?

Yes. Anyone can call NHS 24 but they will only be able to give you advice and will not be passing messages to us.

If I need a doctor what number should I ring?

888 240

Patient Fund

Our fund was set up to enhance comfort and care of our patients. We are delighted to achieve our first goal this year with the purchases of a spirometer and a defibrillator. At present our Office Staff have reproduced our recipe book and have designed a new calendar for 2005, both of which can be viewed at our reception desk. Our fund presently stands at £2798.71 and the fund committee, includes which 2 patient representatives, will meet in January to decide how this money should be spent. Areas for discussion include items for the consulting rooms, a specialist bed for the treatment room and equipment for our District Nurses. Details of any purchase will appear in the next newsletter. We also plan to hold a car boot sale in February and details will appear in the local newspapers. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support. We have been overwhelmed by your generosity and good wishes.

FLU FACTS

- Flu or influenza is a virus spread by coughing or sneezing. Most cases occur during the winter, and occasionally epidemics occur where large numbers of people are infected.
- The common symptoms are fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and exhaustion, sometimes there is also a cough, sore throat and running nose.
- The flu is best treated with rest, plenty of fluids and over the counter remedies which contain paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve pain and fever.
- ANTIBIOTICS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE FLU.
- Most people will feel dreadful for about a week then gradually improve with the above treatment.
- The flu is more dangerous, and sometimes even fatal for certain groups of people. This includes the elderly and those with other diseases such as chest, heart or kidney problems, diabetes or anything that causes a weak immune system. PEOPLE IN THESE GROUPS SHOULD BE VACCINATED EVERYYEAR
- If you are over 65 or have one of the conditions mentioned above and have not yet had your flu jab please get in touch with the practice as soon as possible to arrange this.

PATIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

On a few occasions in the past we have used questionnaires to find out about our patients' views of our services. We plan to do this again in January, but this time with a bit of a difference.

We want to find out in a bit more detail how you think we can improve our services to you. We plan to use a more detailed questionnaire than before, which will give us information about how the receptionists and the doctors in the practice are performing! We would then like to discuss what we find with our patients at a meeting at the Health Centre, which will be held during the winter.

To be useful, we need honest answers from you. No matter what they might be. The questionnaires will be anonymous – they will not identify you, but they will identify the doctor you have seen, so all of our doctors will get some individualised feedback! Your help with this will be greatly appreciated.



Merry Christmas and all the
best for 2005



Premises update

We were very disappointed that our plans for a new Health Centre were set back this year. Now with the restrictions on developments within Kirkwall because of Scottish Water and limited capacity for sewers, it seems that we face the prospect of being in the current building for at least another 5 years.

We are discussing changes that could be made within the Health Centre to make the building better suited to the needs of the Practice and will keep our patients informed of any news on this front

Earlier this year we decided to "close our list". This meant that we stopped accepting new patients to the Practice (except those with close relatives who were already patients of Skerryvore Practice). We had to do this because we had run out of space in which we could keep patient records and it was done with great regret, as we are not happy being unable to take on patients who wish to be cared for by the Practice.

We are keeping this situation under review. We will be looking into ways of trying to create more space and reduce the volume of our medical records. Once we are able to re-open our list, we will inform the Practice through our newsletter.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

The majority of our patients use our services appropriately by either attending their appointments or cancelling them at least 2 hours in advance. However it has been noticed that some patients persistently miss their appointments. We are a busy Practice who as well as offering GP services also work in the Balfour Hospital. Over the last month we had 47 appointments that patients failed to attend for. This equates to over 7 hours worth of consulting time, a problem we can no longer choose to ignore. We have therefore introduced a policy whereby if a patient has failed to attend 2 appointments in a six month period, they will be sent a letter explaining how this behaviour affects the working of the Practice. Hopefully this will be a deterrent but if they continue to fail to attend future appointments they will be sent a further letter asking them to register with another Practice. We hope our patients can understand and support this course of action.

REMEMBER TO ORDER YOUR REPEAT PRESCRIPTION IN PLENTY OF TIME FOR CHRISTMAS.

WHAT IS THE BEST HANGOVER CURE?

We all enjoy making merry over the festive season and a glass or two of good cheer is all part of the fun and tradition for many of us. However what is the best way to avoid the unpleasant effects the morning after?

The recommended weekly limit for alcohol consumption is 14 units for woman and 21 units for men (1 unit = 1 pub nip, 1 glass of wine or half a pint of beer or lager).

Drinking more than this increases your risk of health problems associated with alcohol, but also increases your chances of relationship problems with friends and family, financial problems and avoidable accidents.

It is well known that although alcohol can make you feel happy at the time, it makes depression and anxiety problems very much worse in the long term..

So, please enjoy the festive period but don't start the New Year with a sore head and lots of regrets!

If you feel you have a problem with alcohol and would like to get some help in tackling this please make an appointment with one of the GP's or contact the alcohol specialist nurses via the Balfour Hospital switchboard.

 **New Phone Number**  **888 240**

DON'T BE THE ONE IN TEN

Around **1 in 10** young people in Orkney have CHLAMYDIA. It is the commonest sexually transmitted diseases in the UK, usually causes no symptoms but can have serious long-term effects. PLEASE KEEP YOURSELF SAFE THIS CHRISTMAS. Free condoms are available from the practice nurses or from the Health Promotion in Victoria Street. Speak to one of GP's or practice nurses if you are worried that you might have put yourself at risk by having unprotected sex.

NEW COMPUTER SERVICES FOR SKERRYVORE PRACTICE

In September this year, Skerryvore Practice purchased a new up to date clinical software system. We believe this new system will enable us to deliver high quality care by providing us with the information we require, at the time that we see you.

The new program, allows appropriate information to be available to us all any time you contact us. Out of hours, we now have access to important clinical information by the use of hand held computers.

The program allows us to construct electronic care plans for chronic conditions, such as Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Disease, Asthma and Thyroid disease. If you have a computer record of a previous allergy, we will be warned of this if we attempt to prescribe a drug. The new software allows us to effectively audit and monitor the care that we are delivering. We intend to move towards a complete electronic patient record. This will not only reduce filing for the office staff but allow accurate information to be shared amongst the professional involved in your care. We look forward to utilising the full capabilities that this new software will offer us.

We thank you for your patience during the transition period!