Welcome to the July Edition of the Hall Grove Group Practice Newsletter!

If you cannot attend your appointment please cancel it as it can be used by someone else.

You can book and cancel appointments using internet access or the automated phone line. If you have not been given an internet password please speak to reception today.

Remember to update details such as your mobile number.

Useful Telephone Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointments (Hall Grove)</td>
<td>01707 328528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments (Parkway)</td>
<td>01707 332233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>01707 323355</td>
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<tr>
<td>'111' out of hours advice and GP line</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lister Hospital</td>
<td>01438 314333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Transport (QEII, Lister &amp; Hertford)</td>
<td>02080 454254</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCG (previously the PCT)</td>
<td>01707 685000</td>
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Requesting ‘Fit’ (sick) notes

Sick notes (now officially called ‘Fit notes’) are issued if someone is off work completely or have restrictions on their normal work due to ill health. Below is some useful information in case you ever need to request one.

A fit note can only be issued if there is medical evidence of the condition: usually seen by a doctor at the practice during this illness, although we can do it based on evidence from another medical report, eg a discharge summary or out of hours report; we may not need to see the person for a continuation of a sick period if this was predictable, eg back pain not improved by end of first note.

We can complete a ‘May be Fit’ note if a person could work with amended duties or reduced hours.

To complete a fit note we need to know the following facts: confirm the medical reason; date it starts from (can not be before date first seen); date to finish (this may be an estimate).

Fit notes are only issued when it reaches 7 days since the person was first off sick, although we may issue it before then if the patient will definitely be off longer than 7 days.

We never issue sick notes for 7 days or less: the employer has no legal right to insist on a doctor’s note until after 7 days off work (you can complete a self-certificate for 4-7 days off work).

We do not issue private sick notes: if we did some employers would start asking all their staff for these, wasting appointments and it would most likely be you paying for it not the company.

There is no such thing as a ‘Back to work’ note. It is assumed that the person is fit to go back to work when the sick note ends. No further appointment is required. If the employer wants a letter they would have to pay a medical examination fee. Assessing ability to do specific employment tasks requires special training as an Occupational Health Doctor – if the employer says they want this they need to pay for an assessment by an Occupational health doctor.

If calling for a sick note please allow 48 working hours (although may be longer if the required doctor is not in during that time). The employer has no right to demand a note the same day. The DWP allow back dated notes so you do not have to call before or the same day as the existing note expires (and we can not start them in advance).
Are you short of breath?

If you get out of breath doing things you used to be able to do, it could be a sign of lung or heart disease, or even cancer. **Finding it early makes it more treatable.** So don’t ignore it, tell your doctor. Some causes can be treated, some are serious.

If you are **over the age of 50** and have had a **cough for 6 weeks** we would usually request a chest x-ray to look for lung cancer. If you have had the cough for 3 weeks with no obvious reason for it we may request the chest x-ray early.

If you were **ever** a smoker and notice you are more **short of breath** than you used to be, plus have a **cough** most days or have suffered **chest infections** a few times in the last few years, you may have developed **COPD** (the modern name for Emphysema). Please see your GP to discuss your symptoms.

If you are more **short of breath** than you used to be, and have ever had a **heart attack** or get an **irregular heart beat**, or have developed **ankle swelling** recently this may be due to your **heart** not pumping efficiently. Do not ignore this, tell your doctor.

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Make getting your medications easier!

We have now been connected electronically to Pharmacies to enable prescriptions to be sent via the computer system. If you have not done so already please notify us which Pharmacy is your **nominated Pharmacy**—when we ‘issue’ the prescription it will appear at your nominated Pharmacy’s computer within seconds.

When you are having a medication review with the Doctor ask about setting up ‘batch dispensing’. When a medication is expected to stay the same for a period of time (usually longer than 6 months) we can issue a **batch of medications** to your nominated Pharmacy, allowing the Pharmacy to dispense the medications during that period without requesting authorisation from us each time.

Every repeat prescription list should have a ‘review date’ on it. You **only need to attend if you have been asked** by the surgery.