

# COOMBE MEDICAL PRACTICE

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015/16

### **Emergency contact**

Some patients have tried to contact me via the pager during office hours or when I am not on call. **Please always call the landline (0208 605 0044) first.** The message will inform you who is on call and the appropriate number to call. Colleague doctors may be on call.

A fee is charged for missed appointments, and for those cancelled less than six hours. Details on our website.

### **Meningitis B (not to be confused with Meningitis C)**

We offer the new vaccine (Bexsero) to protect against Meningitis B. **Meningitis B** is responsible for 90% of meningococcal infections in the UK. It is fatal in one in 10 cases. It remains a serious threat to children, teenagers and young adults. The vaccine will help protect against meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia. I do consider it important to make parents aware that there is a vaccine which prevents against this devastating disease.

### **Coughs and colds**

Winter is here and with it the viruses that cause coughs and colds. A diet rich in vitamin C – so lemons, oranges etc will boost the immune system. Or vitamin C supplements. A low vitamin D level impairs our ability to fight viruses: with less sunlight over winter it might be sensible to take a vitamin D supplement. This is especially important in children – the best is the DLux vitamin D spray.

### **Prescriptions**

When a repeat prescription is required for on-going medication, it is appreciated if at least five days' notice is given. I need to check the medical records to see whether the medication is intended to be repeated; whether a blood pressure or blood test is required; and to ensure safe clinical monitoring. This also allows enough time for us to post the prescription to you.

### **Travel health**

Summer holidays may seem a distant dream at present, but don't forget to plan ahead when it comes to travel jabs. Some need to be given a few weeks before travel to be effective. We stock all the required immunisations and are a recognised Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre. Call Roopal with your travel itinerary and she will advise which jabs (and antimalarial tablets) are necessary.

### **Referral**

A number of patients pre-book an appointment with a specialist and then contact me requesting a referral letter. This is poor clinical practice – I need to see a patient first to ensure that the correct diagnosis is made and the appropriate specialist is then chosen. Insurers insist that the referral has been sanctioned by the GP – this should be prior to the appointment. Notice is required - especially for lengthy referral letters.

### **Fees**

It is appreciated when accounts are settled promptly. Interest will be charged to accounts outstanding by more than two weeks. As stated at the foot of each invoice, payment can be made by BACS.