

## The Whitswood Practice Patient Newsletter: Feb/March 2016

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We hope you like our patient newsletter which helps keep you informed about the services that we provide. If you would like to join our Patient Participation Group please contact us on [CMCCG.ar-ppg@nhs.net](mailto:CMCCG.ar-ppg@nhs.net). We would like to hear your suggestions as to the sort of items you would find useful and would like us to include in future newsletters.



### Change of details – let us know

Occasionally we may need to contact you and it is vital we have your up to date details. If you need to attend hospital they will use the information we have on record for you. If it is incorrect this can delay your treatment. This includes address and phone number. Please tell reception any changes to your details.

## Hay fever season

**If you require hay fever medication please fill out the slips in reception requesting what you need. If we are unable to prescribe this for you we will contact you within 48 hours.**

Hay fever is caused by an allergy to pollen. Common hay fever symptoms are a runny, itchy and/or blocked nose, sneezing and itchy eyes. Common treatments are an antihistamine nasal spray or medicine and/or a steroid nasal spray. Other treatments are sometimes used if these common treatments do not work so well.

### What is hay fever?

Pollen is the name given to the fine powder that is produced by plants, trees or flowers to fertilise other plants, trees or flowers of the same species. Strictly speaking, hay fever is caused by an allergy to grass or hay pollens. Grass pollen is the most common cause and tends to affect people every year in the grass pollen season from about May to July (late spring to early summer). However, the term is often used when allergies are caused by other pollens such as tree pollens. Tree pollens tend to affect people from March to May (early to late spring) each year. Other people may be allergic to weed pollens (including nettles and docks). Weeds tend to pollinate from early spring to early autumn. Symptoms are due to your immune system reacting to the pollen. Cells on the lining of the nose and eyes release chemicals (for example, histamine) when they come into contact with pollen. This causes inflammation in the nose (rhinitis) and eyes (conjunctivitis). Sometimes the sinuses and throat can also be affected.

### Who gets hay fever?

Hay fever is very common. It affects about 2 in 10 people in the UK. It often first develops in children of school age and during the teenage years. Symptoms return for a season each year. But, the condition eventually goes away or improves in many cases (often after having had symptoms each season for several years).

Hay fever tends to run in families. You are also more likely to develop hay fever if you already have asthma or eczema. Equally, if you have hay fever, you are more likely to develop eczema or asthma.

### What are the symptoms of hay fever?

The symptoms of hay fever can vary from person to person. Some people only have mild symptoms that tend to come and go. Others can be severely affected with symptoms that are present every day during the pollen season:

Common symptoms - one or two or all of these symptoms may occur. They include:

A runny nose or a blocked nose.

An itchy nose.

Sneezing.

Itchy and watery red eyes.

An itchy throat.

More information can be found at [www.patient.info/health/hay-fever-leaflet](http://www.patient.info/health/hay-fever-leaflet)

## Walking for health

**Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier.**

It's underrated as a form of exercise, but walking is ideal for people of all ages and fitness levels who want to be more active. Regular walking has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, stroke and some cancers. Try to walk [10,000 steps a day](#). Most of us walk between 3,000 and 4,000 steps a day anyway, so reaching 10,000 isn't as daunting as it might sound. If, to begin with, you can only walk fast for a couple of minutes, that's fine. Don't overdo it on your first day. You can break up your activity into 10-minute chunks, as long as you're doing your activity at a moderate intensity. Begin every walk slowly and gradually increase your pace. After a few minutes, if you're ready, try walking a little faster. Towards the end of your walk, gradually slow down your pace to cool down. Finish off with a few gentle stretches, which will improve your flexibility. From walking to the shops or part of your journey to work, to walking the dog and organised group walks, try to make every step count. See NHS Choices website for more information and links to walking groups in your area. [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/getting-started-guides/Pages/getting-started-walking.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/getting-started-guides/Pages/getting-started-walking.aspx)



### Do you have Online Patient Access?

We now provide some of our services online through Patient Access once you have registered as a patient. You can have 24hr online access to booking some appointments, cancelling all appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and viewing your medication, allergies and immunisations. You will need to ask for a registration form at reception. You will then be able to register through our website at: [www.whitswood.nhs.uk](http://www.whitswood.nhs.uk)



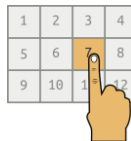
### Reception Refurbishment

We are delighted to let you know that we have secured funding from NHS England to improve the reception desks and reception work area. We are in the planning stage at the moment and will let you know when you can expect the work to start.



### Email

Do you have an email address? We sometimes have important health information which we would like to share with you. Let reception know your address. Please be assured that your details are never passed on to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.



### Arriving for appointments!

We introduced a self-check in screen in the waiting room. When you arrive for your appointment you do not need to queue up to tell us that you are here. We have a self-check in machine. You simply touch the screen to start, enter your date of birth and gender (male or female) then confirm your identity. Then take a seat and wait to be called.



### Improving your health

If you would like more information about improving your health and the services available go to [www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk/](http://www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk/).

The Minor Ailments Scheme service operates in partnership with your GP practice so that registered patients can get advice and any medicines they need from a local community pharmacy without the need for an appointment with your GP.