



# Waterhouses Medical Practice Newsletter

ISSUE 14

Autumn 09

## New Faces in the Practice

Dr Chirag Mehta is a qualified doctor, who has joined the practice as a GP Registrar for six months as part of his training to become a GP. He is running his own surgeries at Waterhouses, with advice always available from one of the partners.

The practice welcomes two new members of the Community team. Diane Pierce is the new district nursing sister, who came to the team in August from a general practice in Wirksworth.

And in November we will be joined by a new midwife, Julie Perry-Rhead, who replaces Liz Beswick. Julie's day in the practice will

change from Thursday to Monday, and she will run an ante-natal clinic every week instead of the current fortnightly clinic. With 34 new babies registered in the practice in the past twelve months Julie and health visitor Judith Johnson have plenty to keep them busy!



Sister Diane Pierce



Dr Chirag Mehta

### Waterhouses Medical Practice

Waterfall Lane  
Waterhouses  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST10 3HT

Phone: 01538 308207

Fax: 01538 308653

Primary Care Centre  
Hurstons Lane  
Alton

Stoke-on-Trent  
ST10 4AP

Phone: 01538 704220

Fax: 01538 703345

[www.waterhouses.net](http://www.waterhouses.net)

### Surgery Times

Waterhouses surgery:  
Monday: 8.30am-1.00pm,  
2.00-8.00pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and  
Friday

8.30am-1.00pm, 2.30pm-  
6.00pm

Thursday 8.30am-1.00pm  
Alton surgery:

Monday-Friday 8.30am-  
12.30pm

### Out-of-hours Emergency Treatment

North Staffs Urgent Care  
01782 719100

Minor Injuries, Leek  
Moorlands Hospital  
01538 487104 (8.00-20.00)

### Repeat Prescriptions

Phone 308207 between  
9.00am and 1.00pm

Fax: 01538 308653

Email:

[prescriptions@waterhouses.net](mailto:prescriptions@waterhouses.net)

## Flu and You

It's the time of year when we give vaccinations against the 'normal' seasonal flu. Flu (influenza) is not just a bad cold. You feel shivery, achy, too weak to get out of bed or go to work. You might also suffer a headache, high temperature, dry cough, sore throat and runny nose. Flu can make you ill for many weeks.

Seasonal flu can be very serious for the elderly, or those with long-term medical conditions, because their bodies are not always strong enough to fight off the infection.

The annual flu vaccination is safe and gives good protection against flu for one year, but not against the common cold.

As these vaccines are in limited supply those in the

risk groups below will have priority, and will be vaccinated free of charge.

### Who should be vaccinated?

- All those aged 65 years or over
- Patients with chest, heart, kidney or liver disease
- Patients with diabetes
- Patients with a weak immune system

Ask a doctor or practice nurse for advice if you are unsure whether you are in a risk group.

Vaccinations are available now.

If there are vaccines remaining after the 'at risk' groups have been vaccinated it may be possible for other patients

to receive the vaccination for a charge of £8.50.

*See page 2 for more detailed advice about the pandemic "Swine flu" from Dr Artus*

## Repeat Prescriptions

Please note that all repeat prescriptions are dispensed at Waterhouses surgery; they cannot be dispensed at Alton. If you would like to collect your medication from the Alton surgery please tell the dispenser when you place your order, and allow three working days.



## Swine Flu

After all the news and scares about "swine flu" or "pandemic flu" earlier this year, the number of cases has dropped over the summer and most cases in the UK have been fairly mild. However, the prediction is that autumn and the new school year will see a rise in cases and some local children are already getting symptoms. The name "swine flu" suggests that it can be caught from pigs but this is not clear - the flu may have originated in pigs but it is now caught from other humans. The name "pandemic flu" simply means that it has spread worldwide, not that it is any worse or more dangerous than our normal "seasonal" or "epidemic" flu.

### *How do you catch swine flu and how can you avoid it or avoid spreading it?*

"Coughs and sneezes spread diseases" - all colds and flu are spread by coughing or sneezing, when moist droplets full of virus particles get into the atmosphere, onto hands and hard surfaces and can be breathed in directly by someone close by. People with flu are most infectious when their symptoms first appear and can spread flu for the next 5-7 days. So, unless you stay at home alone, you rely on other people doing their best not to spread the infection. If you have symptoms of flu:

- Stay away from work or school from the start until symptoms settle
- Stay away from the surgery, shops, churches or other meeting places
- Get a good supply of paper tissues, use them once and dispose of them safely - they carry infection
- Wash hands frequently and always, if possible, after using tissues

There is no evidence that face masks are effective in preventing spread of flu.

### *What are the symptoms of swine flu?*

Typically, the symptoms are like "ordinary" flu and worse than a cold: high temperature (over 38 degC), aching muscles, sore throat and cough. Symptoms often get worse over the first 48 hours then gradually ease and people typically recover in 5-7 days without any specific treatment.

### *What are the dangers and are some people more at risk?*

As with seasonal flu, the greatest risk is from complications, such as bronchitis and pneumonia (lung infections caused by bacteria), happening once the flu virus has made a person vulnerable. Occasionally, the flu virus itself seems more aggressive and there is a risk that the virus can change and become more potent during an outbreak - this is one of the main reasons for government concern about the pandemic. Patients with some conditions are more at risk from complications of swine flu or "ordinary" flu and we already offer them annual flu vaccinations. These conditions include: diabetes, asthma, other lung diseases, kidney disease. Patients receiving chemotherapy for cancer or immunosuppressant medicines for conditions like severe arthritis are also more at risk. Pregnancy also alters your immune system, so pregnant women may be more at risk of complications.

### *What do you advise for people at higher risk?*

The general advice for everyone with flu symptoms is to avoid spreading the infection (see above) rest, drink plenty of fluid (fever and sweating cause dehydration) and take remedies such as paracetamol, aspirin or ibuprofen to ease the symptoms.

At present, the government is advising those at higher risk to take antiviral medicines, such as Tamiflu, which reduce symptoms, shorten it and

reduce the risk of complications. Once a vaccine is available (expected during October) the government is likely to recommend this for patients in higher risk groups and for NHS staff. Two doses of the vaccine will be needed to give protection.

The practice already has a register of all patients at higher risk for flu and will make sure they are offered the vaccine as soon as it is available. The situation is constantly changing and we have no clear advice yet about a vaccination programme but will keep patients informed of developments.

### *What about "ordinary" flu vaccination?*

The annual flu vaccination season is starting and it is important for everyone who usually has a "flu jab" to come for this as usual. This includes everyone of 65 years or older as well as people at higher risk through medical conditions. *Swine flu vaccine does not protect you against the seasonal flu expected during the winter and the seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against swine flu - you need both and it is safe to have both.*

### *How can I get more information?*

This is an extract of a longer article by Dr Majid Artus and the full text is on the News page of the practice website: [www.waterhouses.net](http://www.waterhouses.net)

Further information can be obtained from the official NHS website: [www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu)

Finally, one of our recent GP Registrars, Dr Zana Khan, now works as a deputy editor at BMJ Learning, part of the British Medical Journal and you can hear a podcast of her interview with a flu expert at: <http://pandemicflu.bmj.com>

Dr Majid Artus





## Waterhouses Community First Responders

It has been a busy summer, dealing with incidents that passing tourists and the local community encounter, from road traffic accidents to medical emergencies.

Driving courses - some drivers are enrolled on a police blue light driving course and expected to start the course in next few weeks. The others are preparing for their advanced driving course.

A community first responder training programme is under way at the ambulance service training school.

Waterhouses is expected to benefit from this by receiving new members to serve the community.

August saw the Waterhouses First Responders AGM, at which new members were elected, including a new chairperson and a new fundraiser. We will still be applying for grants and funding, but will be concentrating on public events and working with the community. We are currently looking to organise a Halloween Ball, including a live band and fun for all the family. Look out for further advertising. We have also signed up to the following

websites who donate money to us. Basically you shop, and the shop will donate a percentage to us

[www.thegivingmachine.com](http://www.thegivingmachine.com)

[www.buy.at/wcfrg](http://www.buy.at/wcfrg)

If you would like to become a Responder, or volunteer in any other way, please contact Tim Batey on 07967325352, or visit the Training page of our website: [www.waterhousesfirstresponders.org](http://www.waterhousesfirstresponders.org)

Tim Batey.

## Moorlands Community Minibus

The Minibus Committee thanks everyone who supported the Pig Race in Waterfall during the bank holiday weekend. The sum of just over £650 was raised for our funds. Unfortunately the team of piggies sponsored by the practice, Doctor Trotter, Nurse Crackling, Poorly Porker, Snuffly Snout and friends, failed miserably to win any prizes!

Soon you will hopefully see a brand new minibus around the villages. The Committee is currently looking at new models, and our new vehicle should be ready for action in the next couple of months. It will feature lower easier access, and a ramp for wheelchairs.

The minibus provides transport to Waterhouses surgery for patients with appointments from Monday to Thursday, and alternate Fridays. You can also use it to shop in Ashbourne every Thursday, and twice a month it goes to Bakewell for the

Monday market.

### Timetable

**Monday:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month Ipstones to Bakewell

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of month Waterhouses to Bakewell

**Tuesday:** Alternate weeks Friendship Club at Waterfall parochial Hall 2.00-4.00

**Thursday:** Ashbourne (leave 11.30, return about 1.30)

**Friday:** 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> week Luncheon Club at Waterhouses Hub (the Bungalow)

If you want to book a minibus trip, need transport through the car share scheme, or if you would like to become a volunteer driver, please contact Clare Cooper on 07964 297850

*Please note that the minibus is for everyone to use....young, old or in-between!*

Clare Cooper

Minibus and Car-Share Co-ordinator



## Hearing aid batteries

Unfortunately hearing aid batteries are no longer available from the surgery. The University Hospital of North Staffordshire has introduced a new procedure in order "to control the cost and supply of NHS hearing aid batteries".

From 1<sup>st</sup> October patients needing new batteries will have to contact a messaging service on **01782 555673**, and leave their name and telephone on the answer machine. Someone from the Audiology Department will get back to the patient to arrange their new battery supply. Hearing aid batteries will still be supplied free of charge.

If you have any difficulty with the new system please ask at Reception for help.



Notice seen on the toilet wall in St Oswald's Hospital:

*"A recent survey of handwashing showed that 19% of ladies did not wash their hands when leaving. In men, the percentage rose to 49%!*

*What do you do?!"*

Underneath someone has written

*"Keep away from men"!!*



# The Rhyming Receptionist

Well I've been suffering with a pain in the neck,

Going down to my shoulders and back,  
From years of sitting at a keyboard-  
Fingers going clackety-clack!

I've been taking so many supplements  
From cod liver to Glucosamine,  
I've even considered WD40-  
Squirting myself like a machine!

I've been seen at St Oswald's today  
By a super physiotherapist called Dave,  
He gave me a thorough assessment  
Of how to exercise and behave.

Moving my head from side to side,  
Up and down and around;  
If I sit at Reception whilst nodding  
Please don't think I'm a clown.

He suggested enrolling for Yoga,  
Something I've thought of for a while,  
To help me relax all my muscles  
Therefore giving you all a nice smile.

So let's hope that nice man from  
Ashbourne  
Will help me feel supple again  
By working out a good recovery plan  
To alleviate the 'orrible pain.

I'll keep you posted how I get on,  
And hopefully will improve fast-  
With all the yoga I'll be doing  
I'll be like a world-class  
gymnast!

**Michelle Wilton**  
**Receptionist**



*Michelle...later*



This newsletter will be issued quarterly, in March, June, September and December. If you have any comments or suggestions about the newsletter, or would like to contribute an article or information which would be of interest to other readers, please contact Clare Cooper at the surgery or email [clare@waterhouses.net](mailto:clare@waterhouses.net)



## Booking appointments online

It is just two years since the practice introduced online booking of appointments, and nearly 360 patients have registered for this useful service. The website is quick and easy to use, and is particularly useful if you cannot phone during surgery hours or the telephone lines are busy. You can view any appointments you have already made, cancel them if necessary or book a new appointment after checking which times are available.

Before you use this service you need to register in person with the receptionist at either Waterhouses or Alton surgery. If the member of staff does not know you personally you may be asked to provide proof of your identity (e.g. passport or photo card driving licence).

Children under seventeen can be registered by their parents, and each child needs separate registration details. Young people aged seventeen and over are required to register in person.

When you have registered, visit the practice website at [www.waterhouses.net](http://www.waterhouses.net) and click on "Booking appointments online". Follow the link to the Emisaccess website, and enter the details given to you by the receptionist to create your account. You are now ready to book your next doctor's appointment online. Please check carefully when you book your appointment online that you know

which surgery you will be attending, Alton or Waterhouses. The location is clearly indicated on the appointments screen, but at present it is not specified in the Appointment Confirmation that you can print off after making your booking.

### **What you won't see on the appointments screen:**

Appointments with any of the nurses or the health care assistant cannot be booked online. Also, appointments during a joint surgery with the doctor and the final year medical student do not show on Emisaccess as the patient's consent is required prior to booking.

If you have any problems using this service please contact the practice on 01538 308207/704220, or email [clare@waterhouses.net](mailto:clare@waterhouses.net)

### **Screen display**

The screen display in the waiting room at Waterhouses surgery is available for local community groups to advertise. The easiest way is to send your poster or notice as an email attachment to Clare Cooper at [clare@waterhouses.net](mailto:clare@waterhouses.net)

If you don't use a computer drop a note in for Clare at Waterhouses surgery.