

# NEWSLETTER

Summer  
2010

## Travelling abroad??

Are you going abroad this year? Is it recommended that you have travel vaccines?

For more information on travel health and advice visit the NHS Choices website or to book an appointment to see the nurse please ask at reception.

**Please do remember** that if you do book a last minute holiday or need to travel urgently, vaccines need to be started at least **4 weeks before your travel commences** and that some vaccines do incur costs.

## The facts about Hayfever

**Hay fever affects between 15 and 20% of Britons and is mainly caused by grass pollen.**

According to John Collard, clinical director of Allergy UK, hay fever, or seasonal allergic rhinitis, is an allergy caused by the body making antibodies to certain triggers, such as pollen.

Although it's more common in children, and particularly teenagers, you can develop hay fever at any time.

"Once your body has made the antibodies, the next time you're in contact with the pollen, chemicals including histamine are released which produce the symptoms of hay fever," says Collard. These symptoms usually include sneezing and itchy, watery eyes.

"As well as histamine, there are other chemicals released that produce more delayed symptoms of hay fever, such as swelling and stuffiness."

## What causes it?

In Britain, hay fever is mainly caused by grass pollen but increasingly, tree and shrub pollen, mould spores and weeds cause it too.

The pollens that cause hay fever vary from person to person and region to region. The amount of pollen in the air will also affect how bad your hay fever is.

There's more likely to be more pollen in the air on hot, dry and windy days than on cool, damp, rainy days. Research shows that pollution, such as cigarette smoke or car exhaust fumes, also makes some allergies worse.

The time of year at which people begin to experience hay fever symptoms varies depending on the types of pollen they're allergic to. Trees start to release their pollen in April, grasses in mid-June, and weeds and certain shrubs in late summer.

So hay fever season can last from April to October, and some people could have symptoms as early as March. They would only have two or three months off in the winter and then the cycle starts all over again.

## **Dear Patients**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the kind wishes you have expressed to me on the occasion of my retirement from the Practice. I have enjoyed 22 very full years at the Practice and have seen many changes over that time.

I will very much miss the people I have been in contact with, both staff and patients, and have enjoyed the challenges presented by both groups. Being a general practitioner has changed over the years as have the services we have tried to provide and whilst many have expressed regret at my leaving I would suggest to you that it should be regarded as an opportunity to move forward to new and innovative ways of providing the many and complex demands that medical care in the future will bring.

The team that will take the practice forward is the strongest and best that I have been associated with and I would urge your continued support to them. The best thing that happened to me during my time with the practice was the enforced period I had in Germany during the first Gulf War as it was there I met and managed to convince Dr Coombe to consider General Practice as a career and during that time also made him an offer to join me in practice when he finished his time in the Army. I haven't for one day regretted that decision and I feel that we developed a practice that we can be truly proud of.

Many of you have tolerated seeing a variety of young Doctors who have either been preparing for their professional exams or have been completing their General Practice training. I am sure it is this that has kept the practice fresh and innovative. Your support to the practice has allowed us to influence the future of these Doctors and in a small way leave a legacy to the NHS as a whole.

Although I am leaving General Practice I am continuing as an advisor to the NHS Choose and Book programme which is changing the way you are referred to hospital. I have enjoyed the past 2 years with the programme and look forward to in least a further 2 years, so although, I have released some time to spend doing things I want to do for myself and to enjoy my recently born granddaughter, I will still be involved with an organisation (the NHS) I believe passionately in.

I wish you all the very best for the future, thank you again for all your thoughts and support and with humility thank you for allowing me to be a part of many of your lives.

**Dr Graham Croker**

### **Message from Dr Mark Coombe**

I would like to thank Dr Graham Croker for everything he has done for me and the surgery in his career. I would like to wish him well in his retirement we will all miss him and will see him socially soon.

### **Message from the Horndean Surgery Patient Group**

As a result of donations from patients we were pleased to present Dr Graham Croker with a retirement gift at the last meeting of the Patient Group. The money raised enabled us to buy him some photographic equipment and several bottles of wine. A bouquet was also given to him for his wife. Thank you to all who contributed.

## **How can you reduce the risk of getting hay fever?**

If you live in Britain, you've got around a 20% chance of developing hay fever. If your parents are allergic to something, you have a 50% chance of inheriting an allergy (it doesn't have to be the same allergy).

If you smoke while pregnant, your child could be more likely to develop an allergy. Not smoking and eating a healthy diet can limit the chances of passing on the tendency to your children.

### **Other tips**

Avoiding exposure to pollen is the best way to reduce the allergic symptoms associated with hay fever. Limit exposure to pollens by keeping the windows shut at night and first thing in the morning, staying indoors when the pollen count is high (between 50-150), wearing wraparound sunglasses, or putting some Vaseline just inside your nostrils, which will trap some of the pollen.

Don't mow the grass or sit in fields or large areas of grass. Wash your hands and face regularly. Avoid exposure to other allergens, such as pet fur, or environmental irritants, such as insect sprays or tobacco smoke.

### **Treatment**

As with most allergies, the best way to control hay fever is to avoid triggers. However, it's difficult to avoid pollen, particularly during the summer.

Even straightforward hay fever can be debilitating, causing runny eyes, sleepless nights, bunged-up nose and headaches. Some people with hay fever develop asthma.

A range of over-the-counter products is available to treat the symptoms of hay fever, including tablets, nasal sprays, eye drops and creams.

Antihistamines are the usual treatment for the main symptoms, such as itchy, watery eyes and runny nose, while steroid nasal sprays are the main treatment for a stuffy nose.

Speak to your GP or pharmacist before you decide on a treatment. It's particularly important to speak to your GP if you have asthma. Hay fever often makes asthma symptoms worse. If this happens, you may need to increase the dosage of your asthma medication.

### **Why not join in?**

Why not come along and join in the discussions that can have a direct effect on the services you receive from your doctors surgery?

The HORNDEAN SURGERY PATIENT GROUP meet regularly at the surgery and are always looking for new members to bring their ideas with them.

For further information contact the surgery or email [gjdenby@goolemail.com](mailto:gjdenby@goolemail.com)

## **Dr Mark Coombe**

I am very excited about the future of the surgery. We have a very enthusiastic, caring and talented team taking over, with lots of skills to provide an excellent service for the patients. We have recently been recognised as one of the top training practices in the UK which is judged on very strict criteria. We plan to build on the extensive range of clinics already provided. Drs Jenny Allinson, Ben Allured, Helen Jones and I will be sharing clinical responsibility for surgeries. We also each have areas of specialist responsibility- like minor surgery, family planning, antenatal, postnatal, baby checks, cryosurgery, GP training and much more. Sister Nicky is leading the nursing team and we will be working closely and in conjunction with the nurses to ensure we provide an effective team led approach to chronic diseases and maximise access and daily appointments.

With the support of the patients we hope to move into a new purpose built surgery in the Gales site as we are desperately short of space. It seems funny to think when I first joined the surgery in 1996 we had 2 doctors, one nurse and 3,000 patients. We now have 4 doctors, 4 nurses and 5000 patients and growing everyday. We need your help to make it happen so keep telling East Hants district council and the developers you want and need a new surgery and it WILL happen.

We are all working very hard to help you in every way we can, thank you for your continued support.

Dr Mark Coombe

## **Nursing Team at Horndean**

Here at Horndean Surgery we have a nursing team of 4. Between us we offer Chronic disease management which includes Asthma, COPD, Heart Disease and Diabetes. We also provide Child Health care including immunisations, minor injury treatment, dressings, smear taking, travel advice, stop smoking advice and a wide variety of general health care.

As registered health care professionals we have attained high levels of training and education and we are committed to providing the patients of Horndean Surgery with the highest possible standard of care. To book an appointment with the nursing team please contact reception.

Sr Nicky Harris