

Newsletter Date: December 2016

Issue 24

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Telephone Numbers

Boots Chemist - 01769 572576
Care Direct - 0345 155 1007
Citizens Advice Bureau - 01769 572342
Day Lewis (formerly Curries) Chemist - 01769 572528
District Nurses 01769 57310
Health Visitor - 01769 575176
Health Visitor Ansaphone - 01769 575189
Midwife (Clinic @ SMCH) - 01769 579154
Midwife (Messages) - 01769 573101
NEW Devon CCG - 01769 575100
NHS Helpline - 111
North Devon District Hospital - 01271 322577
Opticians - Byrnes & Byrnes - 01769 599670
Opticians - Mr. Donner - 01769 572064
Patient Transport - 01271 314332
Police - 101
Rural Outreach Advice Project - 07971 824911
Samaritans - 01271 374343
South Molton Community Hospital - 01769 572164
Volunteer Bureau (Car Transport) - 01769 573167



MERRY CHRISTMAS...

Have you ordered your repeat prescriptions for this Christmas?

Avoid being left without vital medication over the holidays.

We're anticipating a really busy time over Christmas, so if you need a routine repeat prescription, or need to see your GP to get a prescription, make sure you make arrangements well in advance.

East Street Surgery + South Molton Health Centre will both close on **Friday December 23rd @ 6.00pm** and re-open on **Wednesday 28th December @ 8.30am**. The surgeries will also be closed **Monday 2nd January 2017**.

Please let us have your repeat medicine requests by the **14th December 2016** (or sooner if possible). Thank you.

If you need medical attention during the Christmas holidays when the surgery is closed please call **111**.

Out-of-hours services are generally busy so please think carefully before asking to see a doctor and only do so if you genuinely cannot wait until the surgery re-opens. Please click the link here to see the [Devon Doctors](#) website for further out of hours information.

... & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Flu Vaccinations



There is still time to book your appointment for your free NHS vaccination if you fall into one or more of the following at-risk groups.

- are 65 years old or over
- are pregnant (including those becoming age 65 years by 31 March 2015)
- all pregnant women (including those women who become pregnant during the flu season)
- all those aged two, three, and four years old (but not five years or older) on 1 September 2014
- all school-aged children who are part of the pilot childhood programme
- have a serious medical condition (see below)
- are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility (not including

prisons, young offender institutions or university halls of residence)

- people who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill
- are a frontline health or social care worker (see below)

If you are the parent of a child who is over six months old and has a long-term condition on the list below, speak to your GP about the flu vaccine. Your child's condition may get worse if they catch flu.

Call our Reception Team today and book an appointment.

Medical Students

East Street Surgery currently has a medical student attached to the practice from The Medical School in Exeter. You may be asked if you are happy to have a medical student present or indeed if you would be happy to be examined by a medical student. We hope you will feel able to participate in these sessions to enable the medical student to gain experience in General Practice.

10 winter illnesses



Some health problems, such as asthma, sore throat and cold sores, are triggered or worsened by cold weather. Here's how to help your body deal with cold weather ailments.

Colds

You can help prevent [colds](#) by washing your hands regularly. This destroys bugs that you may have picked up from touching surfaces used by other people, such as light switches and door handles.

Read this guide to how to [wash your hands properly](#).

It's also important to keep the house and any household items such as cups, glasses and towels clean, especially if someone in your house is ill.

Top tip: If you get a cold, use disposable tissues instead of cloth handkerchiefs to avoid constantly reinfected your own hands.

Read five surprising [facts about the common cold](#).

Sore throat

[Sore throats](#) are common in winter and are almost always caused by viral infections. There's some evidence that changes in temperature, such as going from a warm, centrally heated room to the icy outdoors, can also affect the throat.

Top tip: One quick and easy remedy for a sore throat is to gargle with warm salty water. It won't heal the infection, but it has anti-inflammatory properties and can have a soothing effect. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of part-cooled boiled water.

Asthma

Cold air is a major trigger of [asthma symptoms](#) such as wheezing and shortness of breath. People with asthma should be especially careful in winter.

Top tip: Stay indoors on very cold, windy days. If you do go out, wear a scarf over your nose and mouth. Be extra vigilant about taking your regular medications, and keep rescue inhalers close by and in a warm place. Get five tips to [avoid cold-related asthma attacks](#).

Dry skin

Dry skin is a common condition and is often worse during the winter, when environmental humidity is low.

Moisturising is essential during winter. Contrary to popular belief, moisturising lotions and creams aren't absorbed by the skin. Instead, they act as a sealant to stop the skin's natural moisture evaporating away.

The best time to apply moisturiser is after a bath or shower while your skin is still moist, and again at bedtime.

Top tip: Have warm, rather than hot, showers. Water that is too hot makes skin feel more dry and itchy. Hot water will also make your hair look dull and dry.

Norovirus

Also known as the winter vomiting bug, [norovirus](#) is an extremely infectious stomach bug. It can strike all year round, but is more common in winter and in places such as hotels and schools. The illness is unpleasant, but it's usually over within a couple of days.

Top tip: When people are ill with vomiting and [diarrhoea](#), it's important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Young children and the elderly are especially at risk. By drinking oral rehydration fluids (available from pharmacies), you can reduce the risk of dehydration.

Read about [how to prevent food poisoning](#).

Painful joints

Many people with [arthritis](#) say their joints become more painful in winter, though it's not clear why this is the case. Only joint symptoms such as pain and stiffness are affected by the weather. There's no evidence that changes in the weather cause joint damage.

Top tip: Many people get a little depressed during the winter months, and this can make them perceive pain more acutely. Everything feels worse, including medical conditions. Daily exercise can boost a person's mental and physical state. Swimming is ideal as it's easy on the joints.

Read about how to get started with [swimming for fitness](#).

Cold sores

Most of us recognise that [cold sores](#) are a sign that we're run down or under stress. While there's no cure for cold sores, you can reduce the chances of getting one by looking after yourself through winter.

Top tip: Every day, do things that make you feel less stressed, such as having a hot bath, going for a walk in the park, or watching one of your favourite films.

Read about the [top 10 stress busters](#).

Heart attacks

[Heart attacks](#) are more common in winter. This may be because cold snaps increase blood pressure and put more strain on the heart. Your heart also has to work harder to maintain body heat when it's cold.

Top tip: Stay warm in your home. Heat the main rooms you use to at least 18C and use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed. Wrap up warm when you go out and wear a hat, scarf and gloves.

More tips on [how to keep warm and well](#).

Cold hands

[Raynaud's phenomenon](#) is a common condition that makes your fingers and toes change colour and become very painful in cold weather. Fingers can go white, then blue, then red, and throb and tingle. It's a sign of poor circulation in the small blood vessels of the hands and feet. In severe cases, medication can help, but most people live with their symptoms.

Top tip: Don't smoke or drink caffeine (they can both worsen symptoms) and always wear warm gloves, socks and shoes when going out in cold weather.

Get advice on [how to stop smoking](#).

Flu

[Flu](#) is a major killer of vulnerable people. People aged 65 and over and people with long-term health conditions, including diabetes and kidney disease, are particularly at risk.

The best way to prevent getting flu is to have the [flu jab](#) (or [flu nasal spray](#) for children aged 2 to 18). The flu vaccine gives good protection against flu and lasts for one year.

Top tip: Find out if you're at risk of getting flu by asking your GP, or read our article on [who should have the flu jab](#). If you're in a high-risk group, see your GP to get the vaccination.

Now, read about [how to stay well in very cold weather](#).

Have your say on our future GP services

Welcome to this survey about shaping the future of GP services at East Street Surgery and South Molton Health Centre

Both East Street Surgery and the South Molton Health Centre are looking to the future and considering ways to maintain and improve the quality of care we provide for our patients, develop services and increase access for the future, whilst remaining financially viable and sustainable in order to continue to offer health care to patients in this locality.

Any new model needs to be sustainable offering long term care and support to all our patients. As patient numbers grow that is looking increasingly difficult to do by ourselves, but can be made possible by the merger of South Molton Health Centre and East Street Surgery into a single practice entity. GPs and staff from both practices are supportive of this proposed merger and exciting development.

We believe this merger will offer important patient benefits combining our strengths, developing our team and enabling us to further improve and enhance our patient experience, you will not have to change you GP and you will still be able to see the GP of your choice. While this merger obviously signifies change, we are committed to making the process of integrating the two practices seamless to you.

Joint working would provide the opportunity for the following benefits:

1. Access to Nurse Practitioner and duty doctor daily, offering same day appointments for patients who need to be dealt with more urgently.
2. Improved continuity of care for those with complex needs or long term health problems. GPs will have more time to devote to their own patients due to the same day team working arrangements above.
3. A better ability to respond to the challenge of extending surgery hours during weekday evenings and the weekends, should the need arise.
4. New services and alternative health professionals such as Pharmacists and Paramedics etc

We need your help and input to shape the future provision, delivery and access to local primary care services. Please complete the survey below; your responses will help ensure that primary care services meet the health needs of our patients, as the information provided by the survey will be used to plan and evaluate services.

This is your opportunity to have your say.

The survey is open from **16th November – 16th December 2016** please complete on line if possible or ask for a paper copy at the reception desk.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DGNP9FJ>

***The Practice Teams wish all our patients a Merry Christmas and a
Happy and Healthy New Year!***