

A WORD FROM DR. RUTT

Dr Rutt is leaving us ... but not because he wants to. He writes:

“As many of you know, the last three and a half years have been very challenging for me as I developed cancer. In the spring of 2012 I had to have chemotherapy. Officially I am cured, but the chemo has damaged the nerves in my hands and feet. Simple acts like touching paper and walking cause me severe pain. Having lost the reflexes in my legs, I have to concentrate on making sure I do not fall over every time I stand up! The painkillers are great but make me tired. Luckily lots of exercise helps, but at 58 that makes me tired too! Sadly, therefore, I have decided that it is time to reduce my commitment to the NHS and concentrate on my own health. I will still work for *Health Education North East* designing and delivering training to the next generation of GPs, but I will no longer work at the surgery. After 32 very happy years here, this will be a huge wrench. You, the patients, have been my inspiration and my guide and have taught me an immense amount over the years. I have always tried to use what I have learnt from you when teaching others. Now I know what it is like to be a patient first hand, your example has helped me at a more personal level...

Whilst I will miss you all, I am sure that I am leaving you in excellent hands – the current team promises to be the best yet as they face the challenges posed by the recent NHS reforms, and a list size that has suddenly mushroomed. I will be gradually reducing my commitment to the practice over the next few months as other doctors are able to take up my sessions, with my last working day in the middle of August. Good luck and love to you all.”

GET CONNECTED!

We'd like to make better use of modern technology to keep you in touch with developments here at the surgery, to give you a better service and to provide an increasing range of text and online services. These are just a few examples:

- ❖ We would send you a free e-mail copy of our new quarterly newsletter.
- ❖ We would send you a text reminder a couple of days before your pre-booked appointments at the surgery.
- ❖ You can register to make appointments and order repeat prescriptions on line.
- ❖ We would be able to contact you more quickly if we had urgent queries or information.

As a first step, we would like everyone registered with this surgery to provide details of their mobile phone number and their e-mail address. There's a simple form to complete – just ask at Reception.

PATIENT GROUP MEETING

The next meeting of the Patient Group will be held on Tuesday 8 April 2014 at 6.00.pm. – please note change of day. All interested patients are welcome to come along.

SURGERY UPDATES

The surgery will be closed all day on:

Friday 18 April (Good Friday)

Monday 21 April (Easter Monday)

Monday 5 May (May Day Bank Holiday)

Monday 26 May (Late Spring Bank Holiday)

and also for staff training from 12.00.pm. on:

Tuesday 11 March

If you need medical assistance during any of these periods, please contact the Out of Hours Service on 111 or, in an emergency, call 999.

FREE NHS HEALTH CHECKS

If you are aged from 40 - 74 and haven't already had your free NHS Health Check please contact the surgery to arrange an appointment. The check takes about 20 minutes and assesses the extent to which you are at risk of developing high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke or diabetes.

These conditions are the main cause of premature death across the North East, You're more at risk if you're a smoker, are overweight, have a high cholesterol level or already suffer from high blood pressure.

Do yourself a favour – book your health check now, and give yourself a good start to the year!

DO YOU CARE?

Do you care for someone who cannot manage on their own because of illness or frailty, or who is suffering from a physical or mental disability or from substance abuse? If you provide a significant amount of care directly to that person, without payment, you are a carer! You have access to a whole range of support, from practical help in providing care to personal support in solving problems.

We'd like to make contact with all the carers in our Practice, so that we can be sure that they know about the resources available to them. We're especially anxious to find the hidden carers – those who provide care for a family member, friend or neighbour, but who don't think of themselves as being a 'proper' carer. As a carer, you are entitled to a free assessment of your situation to identify the ways in which help could be offered, but it's up to you to choose which options - if any - you'd like to take up.

Just pick up a carer registration form from Reception, complete the form and return it to us, and we'll make all the necessary arrangements.

NEWCASTLE EAST FOODBANK

Newcastle East Foodbank provides emergency food supplies to families facing a crisis. Local care services issue vouchers referring people to the foodbank, where they are given their supplies and, over a cup of coffee, are offered help in finding other professionals who can help them out of their crisis. The foodbank also provides food supplies to other agencies working with the distressed and destitute.

The foodbank offers an opportunity to local people to make a contribution to local well-being in a simple and practical way.

Next time you go food shopping, think about buying an item or two from the following list to give to one of the foodbank's collection points. These can be found in the Asda Supermarket at Byker and in Sainsbury's Supermarket at High Heaton.

- ◆ Milk (UHT or powdered)
- ◆ Tinned meat or fish
- ◆ Sugar (500g)
- ◆ Tomatoes (tinned)
- ◆ Tea bags or instant coffee
- ◆ Beans
- ◆ Fruit Juice (carton) (UHT)
- ◆ Pasta sauces
- ◆ Cereal
- ◆ Instant mashed potato
- ◆ Jam
- ◆ Rice pudding (tinned)
- ◆ Biscuits or snack bars
- ◆ Sponge pudding (tinned)
- ◆ Soup
- ◆ Tinned fruit

If you'd like to get involved, or simply want to find out more, you can telephone (0191) 447 4675, or check out the website at < www.newcastleeast.foodbank.org.uk >.

APPOINTMENTS FOR MEDICALS

If you need a medical examination for insurance or other similar private purposes, please contact Reception and ask for a special appointment. The time needed can vary depending upon the type of examination you require, and we need to check when the GP will be available. A fee is payable, as this service is not provided by the NHS. We'll give you full details when we offer you an appointment, and you will need to pay the amount due on the day you see the Doctor. Please make sure that all of your relevant paperwork is completed before your appointment.

MACMILLAN 1-2-1

Macmillan 121 is a service for people with cancer who need support on a one-to-one basis following treatment. The Macmillan Team can provide advice and assistance to improve quality of life, including –

- ❖ support to manage the symptoms and side effects of cancer and its treatment, such as ongoing tiredness, breathlessness, bowel problems, pain and anxiety;
- ❖ looking at ways to make modest lifestyle changes to help people to remain as well as possible, and
- ❖ providing access to information, self-management groups and other services that can provide help.

The service can be provided in-home, or elsewhere if preferred, and advice can also be obtained over the phone. It is available to people over 18 who have finished hospital-based treatment or are living with cancer, and also to their families or carers. The One-to-One service is provided by a partnership between Macmillan Cancer Support, The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and your GP Practice.

If you feel that you or someone you care for might benefit from this support, you can contact the service directly by phone at (0191) 238 0034 or by e-mail at < tnu-tr.macmillan121@nhs.nrt >; the office is open Mondays to Fridays (except bank holidays) from 8.30.am to 4.30.pm. Alternatively, you can ask here at the Surgery to be referred to the service.

Cancer is the toughest fight most of us will ever have to face – but you don't have to go through it alone!

HEATON ROAD HEALTH TIP No. 3

It would be hard to over-emphasise the importance of water to the body. We are always being encouraged to drink water, but it is often easier said than done and we can easily forget. So, if you take tablets regularly, how about drinking a full glass of water with them instead of just a mouthful to wash them down? And how about an occasional glass of water *instead* of a coffee or tea – it would probably mean you wouldn't have the urge for a biscuit!