

HEATON ROAD STANDS OUT!

If you are a regular attender at the Surgery, you've probably heard that our Practice was inspected by the Care Quality Commission in February. The clue was in the worried expressions on the faces of everyone working here as we prepared for the inspection and waited for the report to be published. But all turned out well, as the inspection team graded Heaton Road Surgery as outstanding!

The inspection team looked at the way our Surgery performs under five main headings: Are the services we offer safe for those who depend on them? Are they effective? Are they delivered in a caring and professional way? Are they sufficiently responsive to your needs? Finally, is the provision of those services well led and efficient at all levels? In order to put their report together, the members of the inspection team visited the surgery to observe at first-hand the way it operates on a day-to-day basis. They spoke to a number of patients attending for appointments and they had access to all of our medical and administrative records.

Our safety procedures were rated as good, being constantly monitored and improved and supported by enough staff to maintain a safe environment within the Surgery. We were also rated as good for the effectiveness of our services; the evidence showed that we were performing at a high level when compared to other Practices in Newcastle and Gateshead. In terms of caring provision of services, we earned an outstanding rating, with scores well above other Practices for most aspects of care. As an example, 93% of our patients felt that their doctor was good or very good at treating them with care and concern – well above the national average of 85%. Feedback from our patients about their care and treatment was consistently and strongly positive. The inspection team felt that here at Heaton Road we have a patient-centred culture in which staff are motivated and inspired to provide kind and compassionate care.

We were also rated outstanding for providing responsive services, with positive initiatives for service improvements, particularly for those who are more vulnerable. We had acted on suggestions for improvements from our Patient Group and had changed the way we delivered services in response to their feedback. In a national survey of GP services, 91.5% of our patients reported a good experience when making an appointment, far above the national average of 78%. We actively reviewed complaints and the way in which they were managed and responded to, and had made improvements as a result. As regards leadership and efficiency, where we were again rated as outstanding, the team found that the Practice had a clear strategy for development, produced in consultation with the entire staff and with quality and safety as its top priority. High standards were promoted and teams of staff worked together in all roles. Performance management arrangements were constantly reviewed and there was a high level of staff satisfaction.

This is just a brief summary of the report's findings; the entire document runs to 29 pages. You can access it at <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-571990671>, and we hope that you'll read it if you can. Everyone at Heaton Road is delighted by the result, but we won't be resting on our laurels. If there are things we could do better we'll carry on improving, but for this we need your help. If you have any comments – good or bad – about your experience at Heaton Road, or any suggestions about how things could be done differently, pick up a suggestions leaflet at Reception or (better still!) come along to our regular Patient's Group – details of the next meeting can be found overleaf.

SURGERY UPDATE

The surgery will be closed all day on:

Monday 31 August 2015 (Summer Bank Holiday)

and for staff training from 12.00.noon. on:

Thursday 2 July 2015

We will also close as usual for staff training between 12.00.noon and 1.30.pm. every Thursday.

If you need medical assistance at any time when the surgery is closed, please call the Out of Hours Service on 111 or, in an emergency, call 999.

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

Dr. Danielle Robinson joined the Heaton Road GP team at the end of March. Some of you will have met her before, as she did some of her GP Registrar training with us a few years ago. Dr Robinson has recently worked as a locum covering maternity leave at another practice, but she has joined our team on a permanent basis and will be working with us on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We wish her a long, happy and satisfying association with Heaton Road!

SUPERBUGS

Antibiotics are used to combat a wide range of illnesses caused by bacteria. When penicillin became generally available in the late 1930s, it seemed like a 'magic bullet', providing a cure for illnesses which had previously been serious and life-threatening. Since then, widespread overuse has led to the appearance of 'superbugs' – strains of bacteria which are increasingly resistant to antibiotics.

This is a huge problem – probably the greatest long-term threat to public health in Europe. It's vital to cut back the use of antibiotics to cases in which they are really necessary, in order to slow down the development of more strains of resistant bacteria, and allow time for research into alternative therapies. Here at Heaton Road we are committed to responsible prescribing of antibiotics, safeguarding not only the health of today's patients, but also the welfare of future generations.

ONLINE HEALTH SUPPORT

The NHS Apps Library was launched in 2012, upgraded in 2013 and now contains details of over 200 applications to help you monitor and improve your health. Ranging from heart disease to healthy eating, every listed app has been reviewed for clinical safety and is rated by users and the health care community. Full information on sourcing is provided, and many of the apps are free. Check it out at <http://apps.nhs.uk/>.

PATIENT ACCESS

If you are registered to use Patient Access for booking appointments or ordering repeat prescriptions, and you are a smartphone user, you can now download an app from the Patient Access website enabling you to deal with everything through your phone. Just go to the home page and click on the button for the operating system your phone uses.

If you can use the internet but are not yet registered for patient access, just ask at Reception and we'll sort it out for you. We are very grateful to those of you who use the online facility, as it frees up telephone time for those who don't have web access.

GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK

We are sorry to report that Dr Sally Peterson will be leaving Heaton Road on 31 July 2015. She is relocating due to family circumstances.

Dr. Peterson tells us that “... it has been a very difficult decision to leave as it is a wonderful Practice with fantastic patients. It has been a pleasure to be a part of Heaton Road family.”

Sally will be much missed, and we wish her well.

PATIENTS' GROUP

The next quarterly meeting of our Patients' Group will be held on Tuesday 23 June, starting at 6.00pm. As the Surgery is open late on Tuesdays the meeting will be held upstairs – please ask for directions at Reception.

Any patient registered with the Practice is entitled to attend and take part in the discussions – new faces are always very welcome. Just come along and take a seat!

SMOKING AND CHILD HEALTH

You may have seen recent media reports about research into the number of children under 14 with respiratory infections (other than asthma) serious enough to require admission to an NHS hospital in England and Wales.

Researchers analysed data on more than 1.6 million children who were admitted to hospital with such infections between 2001 and 2012, and discovered that there was an immediate reduction after the introduction of the smoking ban in 2007. Children are unlikely to be admitted to hospital with a mere cold or sniffle, so these children are likely to be suffering from illnesses such as bronchitis, pneumonia, laryngitis or tonsillitis.

Some reports were a bit exaggerated; the Daily Mail claimed that “90,000 children [had been] spared illness by the smoking ban”, which may or may not be true, but the study made no such specific claim. It did however show that hospital admissions of the kind described above fell significantly after the ban came into force in 2007. On average, there are currently 11,000 fewer admissions each year than in the years before 2007, and these numbers are still falling.

The figures were adjusted to take account of changes in diagnosis and treatment and other relevant variables over the period, so it is hard to resist the conclusion that the smoking ban has had a significant impact. If you are a smoker in contact with a child under 14, think hard about this – could now be a good time to give up?

HEATON ROAD HEALTH TIP No. 8

Visit the fish counter! Fish is a good source of protein and contains lots of vitamins and minerals. Aim to eat at least two portions a week, including at least one portion of oily fish. You can choose from fresh, frozen, canned or smoked, but remember that canned and smoked fish can be high in salt.

Oily fish, which includes salmon, mackerel, trout, herring (and kippers), **fresh** tuna, sardines, pilchards and whitebait, is high in omega-3 fats, which may help to prevent heart disease. Non-oily fish includes cod, haddock, plaice, coley, **tinned** tuna, lemon sole, halibut, skate, hake and whiting. If you eat fish regularly it's a good idea to try to eat as wide a variety as possible, to ensure that you get the maximum possible benefit.