



Strand Patient Participation Group

Newsletter – November 2017

Welcome to our latest Newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who completed questionnaires that members of the PPG handed out during PPG Awareness Week in June. The results and action plan are on the Strand Medical Group website.

We would welcome new members to join the PPG Committee. We meet every two months at the surgery. If you would like to join us please contact us at anita.nutt@nhs.net

Please do not use the PPG email address to send personal details, this email account is monitored ad-hoc by members of the PPG and not practice staff.



This is an annual national awareness week that focuses on embedding Support for Self-Care across communities, families and generations. Helping people to look after their own health and their family's health also helps to manage demand on GP's surgeries. This year's theme is "Embracing Self-Care for Life."

To mark Self Care Week 2017 (13 – 19 November) The Strand Medical Group wants to share ways for how you can embrace Self Care for Life.

Embracing Self Care for Life is about living well and being healthy. Being active, eating healthily and learning when to self -treat common ailments are all ways to embrace self-care. Many long- term conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) are avoidable. However, numbers are still increasing. It is important to embrace self -care, making healthy life choices now in order to look after ourselves in the future.

A statement from the local public health director says "There are some really simple changes you can make to help avoid getting a long- term condition."

- "Move more! If going to the gym isn't for you, try walking part of the way to work, taking the stairs or having a dance to your favourite songs!"

- “Stop smoking! One of the best things you can do for your health is to stop smoking. Ask your local pharmacist about stop smoking services. “
- “Sleep. A good night’s sleep is essential to good physical and mental health so don’t burn the candle at both ends, make sure you get at least 7 hours sleep a night!”
- “Eat well. It is vitally important that we get the nutrients we need and avoid excessive amounts of salt, fat and sugar. Try swapping chocolate and crisps to nuts and fruit for healthy snack options. Ask your pharmacist for advice on managing your weight. “
- “Relax. We have such busy lives that we sometimes forget to take time out to relax, but it is essential for our physical and mental wellbeing. Find time in the day to be still and quieten your mind. Consider mindfulness or yoga as these can be helpful.”

Pharmacists help

Also, don’t forget your health expert on the High Street – the community pharmacist. Pharmacists are highly trained health professionals who can give advice and recommend treatments for self-treatable conditions such as coughs, colds, sprains and strains. Many people still visit the GP or A&E for conditions that could be treated at home or with pharmacists’ advice. Using the wrong health service increases the strain on our NHS, so it is important to think about what is the best service for your health needs.

- People go to the doctor with common ailments because they are unsure how long symptoms last and need reassurance that it isn’t anything more serious. Instead of waiting for an appointment at your surgery, consider going to your local pharmacist first.
- Pharmacists will help you choose the right treatment for your ailment and can explain the normal duration of symptoms. They can also offer you help to stop smoking, manage your weight, as well as providing flu jabs and blood pressure checks. Many pharmacies even have private consulting rooms.
- If you have a cold or flu it is worth remembering that antibiotics won’t help. In fact, taking them can reduce their effectiveness when taken for ailments they can help with.
- In the UK most people are only 20 minutes away from an expert on the High Street. If you have a long -term condition and are worried how common ailments may be affecting you, or

just want some advice on managing your medicines, why not consider visiting your pharmacist first.

Accident & Emergency

Some health conditions such as sprains, colds and coughs can be treated without a trip to the GP. Treating self-treatable conditions at home, and using the right health services for your needs will help take pressure off the NHS.

One A&E consultant stated "The NHS constitution, which is the NHS handbook, says 'please recognise you can make a significant contribution to your own and your family's good health and wellbeing and take responsibility for it.' It is important to take some time to understand how you may be able to help yourself before accessing health services."

There are 3.7m visits a year to A&E for self-treatable conditions such as colds, flu and colic, which puts the NHS under unnecessary strain. This means less time for people with life threatening conditions such as severe bleeding or heart attacks who vitally need A&E services.

Before visiting A&E, consider whether there is a service better suited to your needs. Think about using information on NHS choices, calling NHS 111 or visiting your local pharmacist for advice. Don't spend four hours waiting for an A&E appointment for something you may be able to treat at home.

Feel confident in looking after your health, help your NHS and embrace Self Care for Life. Also save yourself the time and hassle of booking a GP appointment or visiting A&E. Choose to feel confident about managing your health and take a trip to your local pharmacist. During Self Care Week, and always, make time to think about the positive steps you can take to embrace Self Care for Life. Let's make Self Care a life-long habit. For more information on how to embrace Self Care for Life why not visit the self-care website or pick up a leaflet during self-care week from the surgery

Don't forget to have your flu jab.

Contact the surgery.

Parish Nursing

First let me introduce myself my name is Julie Ward and I was commissioned by Maybridge Community Church in June 2015 as their Parish Nurse. I worked with the NHS as a nurse and as a Health Advisor with the Prevention Assessment team. I have good knowledge of both statutory and voluntary services in the local area. The focus for my work as Parish Nurse is in the Castle Ward area. Recently I spoke at the Patient Participation Group at The Strand Medical.

A Parish Nurse is a registered Nurse with community experience who works as part of the local church offering holistic health care. Parish Nursing is for people of all faiths and none- and is a free service.

Parish Nursing is recognised by the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) and therefore everything I do as a Parish Nurse counts towards my professional registration.

My days are filled with home visits to do an initial assessment and maybe signposting to other agencies, Blood Pressure checks, maybe helping someone to understand a little more about their medical condition or medication. Other days I help people to fill in the DWP (Department of Work and Pension forms) or I have assisted people by taking them to GP appointments, Hospital or DWP visits. Sometimes it's simply to wash someone's feet and cream their legs and have a chat.

I have also supported people with their Mental Health who have just needed someone to help them navigate our complicated systems, or needed support with debt or housing issues.

I also have a small team of volunteers and we have been involved with helping clients to clean and tidy a room, befriending or take someone out for a coffee or shopping.

I can also offer spiritual support, prayer and home communion.

My working hrs are Monday am, Thursday all day and Friday am. I can be contacted on 7493116226 or email me Parishnurse@maybridge.org.uk

Please contact me if you think I might be of help to you or a friend.

Antibiotics: All You Need To Know

Antibiotics, also known as antibacterials, are medications that destroy or slow down the growth of bacteria. They are powerful medicines that fight certain infections and can save lives when used properly.

Infections caused by viruses, such as colds, flu, most coughs, and sore throats cannot be treated with antibiotics. Many mild bacterial infections also get better on their own without using antibiotics.

Taking antibiotics when you don't need them encourages dangerous bacteria that live inside you to become resistant. That means that antibiotics may not work when you next need them most. This puts you and your family at serious risk.



Why has the Strand advised me to take antibiotics?

At the Strand we will prescribe antibiotics to treat an infection that's caused by bacteria. Common bacterial infections include those affecting your ear, chest, urinary system and skin. Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs), for example gonorrhoea and chlamydia, are also caused by bacteria.

It is important to point out that some bacterial infections clear up by themselves, so on occasions we may want to wait before prescribing you antibiotics that you may not need. But don't worry we will advise you on other treatment and self-management that could help.

Many infectious illnesses are caused by viruses, not bacteria. These include flu, the common cold and chicken pox. Antibiotics don't work against viruses, so please do not expect us to prescribe them to treat these illnesses.

Sometimes, a viral infection leads to what's called a secondary bacterial infection, such as pneumonia. In circumstances like this, we may prescribe antibiotics to treat the secondary bacterial infection.

Conditions you DO need antibiotics for

Antibiotics work against bacterial infections, including:

- Skin infections
- Some sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia
- Urine and kidney infections
- Infected bites or wounds

- Pneumonia

Those you don't:

Antibiotics do not work against viruses, including:

- Colds and flu
- Most coughs
- Most sore throats

The cost of misuse

Each year the NHS wastes millions of pounds by prescribing antibiotics when they are not needed. According to WHO (World Health Organisation) About one in four prescriptions issued for antibiotics in England each year – about 10m in all – are likely to be unnecessary as some patients deliberately look to doctors to give into their demands for medicine.

The Strand have committed to helping the NHS reduce waste and costs by ensuring that only patients who truly need antibiotics are given them, so please do not expect us to prescribe you antibiotics if we do not feel it is clinically appropriate.

FAQ: Why won't the Strand give me antibiotics for a cold or flu?

Antibiotics only work against infections caused by bacteria. Flu and colds are caused by viruses, so antibiotics won't work and shouldn't be used for these infections.

Your body may be weakened after fighting a cold or flu infection. This can make you vulnerable to picking up a secondary infection caused by bacteria, such as pneumonia. Your body may find it difficult to fight this off so your doctor may have to prescribe antibiotics to help.

If you have flu, it can take a week or two to recover completely. The best treatment is to rest if you need to (but try and stay sitting up rather than lying down), drink enough fluids and take over-the-counter painkillers. However, contact us you're concerned about your symptoms, particularly if they get worse. If you're at risk of developing complications of flu, it's a good idea to have the flu vaccine each year to help prevent getting it, the surgery is still offering flu jabs to those patients that are eligible.