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“Your Practice, Your Voice” May 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to the May newsletter! We hope you find this and your loved ones in the best of health. Here's to the weather improving! As always plenty of awareness themes this month to cover, so without further ado let's look at everything to be mindful of.



Have you tried the NHS App recently? It is a brilliant way to request repeat medication, check forthcoming appointments & so much more! Registration is straightforward & the app can be downloaded & used for free via Google Play or Apple. If you wish to be able to access your medical record you will need access to SystemOnline which can be arranged at reception and requires photo ID.

Pharmacy First. The new Pharmacy First service, launched 31 January 2024, adds to the existing consultation service and enables community pharmacies to complete episodes of care for 7 common conditions following defined clinical pathways. Please do take a look at this service, it could well save you a trip to the GP & enable you to receive treatment sooner! The conditions are as follows:

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| Earache: 1 to 17 years | Shingles: 18 years and over |
| Impetigo: 1 year and over | Sinusitis: 12 years and over |
| Infected insect bites: 1 year and over | Uncomplicated urinary tract infection |
| Sore throat and a wider variety of other minor ailments | |



13th to 19th May is Mental Health Awareness week UK

This year's theme, set by the Mental Health Foundation, is “**Movement; moving for our Mental Health**”. The theme is supported by two primary charities, mentalhealth-uk.org and health-in-mind.org.uk. There are many other charities and websites dedicated to improving the mental health of as many people as possible, locally and nationally.

Exercise has been proven to reduce anxiety and depression, and it can help us to prevent physical illnesses. Sadly, people living with mental illness die on average 20 years younger than the general population, often from avoidable physical illness. This group is more likely to develop preventable conditions like diabetes, heart disease, bowel and breast cancer. Mobility and exercise are understandably very difficult for so many but there are many local organisations devoted to helping everyone as best they can.

Local and national charities/organisations:

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| www.mind.org.uk | www.scope.org.uk | www.youngminds.org.uk |
| jocarugby.co.uk (based in Welwyn Garden City!) | www.rethink.org | |



The green ribbon is the international symbol of mental health awareness

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Health Awareness dates & themes

"Painkillers don't exist" This is a new NHS campaign solely aimed at raising awareness of the role painkillers play.

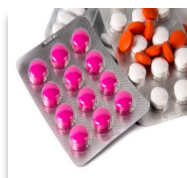
There are **FOUR** main types of pain medication: paracetamol, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) like ibuprofen, opioids that range in strength from codeine through to high dose examples like tramadol and morphine and other medicines such as anti-depressants and anti-epileptics. Each works in a different way. Most people only need to take painkillers for a few days or weeks. However many people will have different, medium to long term needs according to their conditions.

"Spot the signs":

Many people do not realise they are becoming addicted to pain medication. Here are just some signs to look out for:

- You have been taking the medication for more than three months.
- You are regularly taking the maximum dose or more than your prescribed dose.
- You do not feel like your usual self.
- You experience unpleasant side effects or withdrawal symptoms when you miss or reduce a dose. These could include anxiety, headaches, nausea, hallucinations or difficulty concentrating.
- You watch the clock waiting for the time of your next dose.
- You might be taking medication that has been prescribed to others.
- You get angry or upset if someone mentions how much medication you are taking or how often you are taking it.

If you recognise any of these signs then you might be becoming dependant on pain medication. Please do contact your GP or Pharmacist to explore any other options for reducing your pain. For more information please visit <https://painkillersdontexist.com/>



Just a reminder of services that can help when the practice is closed:

- **NHS 111**
- **Herts urgent care: QEII Hospital, Welwyn Garden City**
- **Any of the local pharmacies**

**See you
In June!!!**