



The Pink Tablet

THE OFFICIAL HARVEY PRACTICE NEWSLETTER – Spring 2015 ISSUE



Eczema

Eczema affects one in twelve adults and one in five children. It is important to look after your skin, combinations of dry weather and cold can cause skin to lose its moisture. This means that even people who do not suffer with eczema may experience flaky cracked skin. In some cases the skin may become red which may indicate an infection.

The symptom of eczema and dry skin is itching. Sometimes it can be mild but can escalate to severe itching which can break the skin. The areas affected can vary from the crease behind the elbow and knees to areas that are exposed directly to cold air or warm radiators/fires. Most people find that symptoms at night-time can keep them up and disturb sleep. When areas become infected they may become red, swollen and very tender to touch. There may be some fluid oozing from the site or a golden crust. In some cases people can become unwell and have a fever.

To look after your skin the most important thing is to apply moisturiser cream regularly. You can get these creams from any pharmacy or through your GP. It is not unusual to apply moisturiser cream several times a day. If this should fail then steroid creams can be applied, but you should seek medical advice before applying these. Try to ensure that you do not rub your skin excessively with perfumes, soaps or cosmetic products and try to wear natural cotton and silk whenever you can.

If you should have any doubt about infection please contact your GP.



Triage System



If you think you need to see a doctor on the day then please telephone the surgery as close to 8a.m as is possible to arrange a telephone call with a doctor who will assess the urgency of your treatment. After speaking with the doctor you may either be asked to attend the surgery, collect any necessary prescriptions and/or be given advice in regards to your treatment.

Launch of New Website

Our new website has been launched and is still ongoing in its development.

Please visit:-
www.theharveypractice.co.uk

CSR – Clinical Services Review

The Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have been working closely with GP members, other clinicians, staff, health and social care leaders, partners and patients, carers and members of the public across Dorset on The Clinical Services Review. The aim is to find a solution for delivering safe, high quality and affordable care for Dorset's population, not just today but into the long term.

Below is a link to the 'Need for Change' Document.

<http://www.dorsetsvision.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Dorset-CCG-Need-for-Change-Jan-2015-low-res.pdf>

Antibiotics

Antibiotics are a group of medicines that are used to treat infections caused by germs (bacteria and certain parasites). Antibiotics are sometimes called antibacterials or antimicrobials. Antibiotics are normally only prescribed for more serious bacterial infections - for example, pneumonia. When prescribed, it is important to take the entire course of antibiotics which helps to prevent resistance developing to that antibiotic. Most side-effects of antibiotics are not serious - for example, diarrhoea, or mild stomach upset such as feeling sick (nausea). Although some people develop a serious allergy to some antibiotics, this is rare.

Antibiotics can kill off normal defence bacteria which live in the bowel and vagina. This may then allow thrush or other bad bacteria to grow.

When are antibiotics usually prescribed?

It is important to remember that antibiotics only work against infections that are caused by bacteria and certain parasites. They do not work against infections that are caused by viruses (for example, the common cold or flu), or fungi (for example, thrush in the mouth or vagina), or fungal infections of the skin. Most common infections are caused by viruses, when an antibiotic will not be of use. Even if you have a mild bacterial infection, the immune system can clear most bacterial infections. For example, antibiotics usually do little to speed up recovery from bronchitis, or most ear, nose, and throat infections that are caused by bacteria.

So, do not be surprised if a doctor does not recommend an antibiotic for conditions caused by viruses or non-bacterial infections, or even for a mild bacterial infection.

Which antibiotic is usually prescribed?

The choice of antibiotic mainly depends on which infection you have and the germ (bacterium or parasite) your doctor thinks is causing your infection. This is because each antibiotic is effective only against certain bacteria and parasites. For example, if you have pneumonia, the doctor knows what kinds of bacteria typically cause most cases of pneumonia. He or she will choose the antibiotic that best combats those kinds of bacteria.

There are other factors that influence the choice of an antibiotic. These include:

- How severe the infection is.
- How well your kidneys and liver are working.
- Dosing schedule.
- Other medications you may be taking.
- Common side-effects.
- A history of having an allergy to a certain type of antibiotic.
- If you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

Even if you are pregnant or breast-feeding there are a number of antibiotics that are thought to be safe to take.

Doctors sometimes choose certain antibiotics if they know there is a certain pattern of infection in your community.

It is important to take antibiotics in the correct way. If you do not, this may reduce how well they work. For example, some antibiotics need to be taken with food and others should be taken on an empty stomach. If you do not take your antibiotics in the right way it will affect how much of them get into your body (their absorption) and therefore they may not work as well. So, follow the instructions as given by your doctor and on the leaflet that comes with the antibiotic you are prescribed.

Summary

Antibiotics are one of the wonders of modern medicine, and together with vaccination have saved millions of lives around the world. Resistance is becoming a real problem however and there is a distinct lack of new drugs coming to market. We all have a responsibility to use them wisely.

Dr J.R.Stephens

Appointment Lengths (GP)

Please respect the fact that you and your GP are allocated 10 minutes for your appointment.

We fully understand that there are times when this may be inadequate, but please accept that the GP may have to ask you to come back for a further appointment.

At The Harvey Practice we wish to provide a good service for all our patients and that means we have to ensure that waiting times are not too long.

Our work in the NHS means that medical emergencies do happen at unexpected times. Unfortunately on odd occasions this may mean a slight delay in you seeing your GP.

If we can all work in partnership we hope to meet your expectations.

Friends and Family

How likely are you to recommend us to your Friends and Family, please visit www.leavemyfeedback.com/4580 to cast your vote.

Diabetes

Lifestyle is one of the most important ways of improving the control of your diabetes. Whether you have type I or type II diabetes, and whether or not you take tablets or injectable medication, a healthy lifestyle is essential. As spring approaches and the weather is starting to warm up in Dorset, now is the time to become more active and spend more time outside exercising. Before you drive to the shops or visit friends, think about whether you could walk or cycle instead.

If you would like to go beyond this and participate in a local gym, we may be able to reduce the cost of your membership by referring you to a local gym participating in this scheme. One way of making exercise more enjoyable is to participate in group exercise, and this could include aqua fit in the swimming pool or 'spinning' (group cycling).

Maintaining a healthy blood pressure and cholesterol level are also essential. You can easily improve these by trying to eat a healthy, low-fat, balanced diet. It is beneficial for your cholesterol to include foods that are high in unsaturated fat, particularly oily fish (such as mackerel, salmon and tuna). Reducing your alcohol intake is also important, as well as trying to stop smoking. If you would like help in stopping smoking, please consider discussing this with your Diabetes Nurse, GP or Pharmacist who can talk to you about this and direct you towards the NHS Stop Smoking Service.

Some patients choose to take a more active role in monitoring their blood pressure. It's now easy to purchase a blood pressure machine (either online or in the supermarket), though I would recommend a machine that you fasten around your upper arm instead of your wrist. Our target with your blood pressure is for the vast majority of readings to be less than 140/80.

Further information about diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol can be found on the NHS Choices website and at Diabetes.org.uk.

Better Together—Transformation Challenge

Better Together is a Dorset-wide initiative that will radically change the way Health and Adult Social Care Services are delivered in the future.

It aims to secure:

- Improved Health and Care for residents;
- A more seamless service for people who access adult social care and health in the Dorset area;
- Greater efficiencies and improved value for money.

Key projects include early intervention and prevention, helping people to stay independent for longer and receive care and support in their homes or closer to their homes and delay the need for long-term care and unnecessary hospital admissions.

There is also a strong focus on extending the shared information and advice service open to everyone, shared signposting and support. This will include services for people leaving hospital and more help in arranging services for people who fund their own social care.

A number of initiatives are already underway, including those looking at urgent care, information and advice, services for people leaving hospital and developing integrated teams.

Lasting Power of Attorney

A lasting power of attorney (LPA) is a legal document that lets you (the "donor") appoint one or more people (known as "attorneys") to help you make decisions or make decisions on your behalf.

This gives you more control over what happens to you if, for example, you have an accident or an illness and cannot make decisions at the time they need to be made (you "lack mental capacity").

You must be 18 or over and have mental capacity—the ability to make your own decisions—when you make your LPA.

There are 2 types of LPA:

- Health and Welfare;
- Property and financial affairs.

You can choose to make one type or both.

Health and welfare lasting power of attorney

Use this LPA to give an attorney the power to make decisions about things like:

- Your daily routine, e.g. washing, dressing, eating;
- Medical care;
- Moving into a care home;
- Life-sustaining treatment.

It can only be used when you are unable to make your own decisions.

Property and financial affairs lasting power of Attorney

Use this LPA to give an attorney the power to make decisions about money and property for you, for example:

- Managing a bank or building society account;
- Paying bills;
- Collecting benefits or a pension;
- Selling your home.

It can be used as soon as it is registered, with your permission.

For more information visit: www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney/overview