

Patient transport and Hospital treatment

This information was supplied by West Berkshire PCT and is passed on by Thatcham Medical Practice.

Hospital transport is only provided if you have a medical need that prevents you from using private or public transport.

Finance is not a consideration. If you are on a low income, you may be able to reclaim expenses - details are available at Reception.

Even if you arrive at hospital by ambulance, it does not guarantee transport for your journey home

If you think that you have a medical reason that stops you using private or public transport, please discuss your concerns with your nurse or doctor.

Please make your own transport arrangements wherever possible to ensure that those who have a medical need are able to access the service.

Thatcham Volunteer Bureau (01635 862306) may be able to help with transport, there is a small charge.

Patient Doctor Action Group (PDAG)

The Patient Doctor Action Group has its membership taken from registered patients who have volunteered to be members of the Group.

The aims of PDAG are:

- Improve patient experience
- Improve customer relations
- Act as a 'communications' tool
- Suggest change to help solve problems
- Act as a pressure group to West Berkshire Primary Care Trust
- Link with other patient groups

The Chairman can be contacted via the Practice. The Group meets bi-monthly and an annual Newsletter is produced. The PDAG Annual General Meeting was held on 11 March 2011 but, unfortunately, only 10 patients from the practice attended.

Mr Mike Rees, from Thatcham Nursing Society, was the guest speaker. He explained that this charitable society was set up to provide grants or donations for Thatcham and district residents. The monies are specifically for the use of relieving cases of need for those who are sick, convalescent, disabled, handicapped or infirm. These grants can be used to provide or pay for items, services or facilities to help or assist the recovery of people who cannot access funding from other sources. Payment of national or local taxes is excluded. Applicants should be residents of the parish of Thatcham. In exceptional cases, Trustees may consider applicants residing immediately outside the parish.

Further information can be obtained from Diane Dalgarno (01635 867625) or the Chairman, Mike Rees (01635 864593)

Can you help?

Would you be willing to join an on-line reference group?

We need to obtain feedback from a cross section of the practice population, as representative as possible. This virtual group may be e-mailed on a regular basis but does not have to attend face to face meetings.

Please e-mail your name, DOB and contact e-mail address to signup@thatchammedicalpractice.co.uk

Useful Contacts

Doctors Appointments Only:
(01635) 871117

Switchboard:
(01635) 867171

Cancellations:
(01635) 295445

www.thatchammedicalpractice.co.uk

WestCall (Out of hours):
0118 978 7811

West Berks Community Hospital
(Minor Injuries Unit Only):
(01635) 273508

NHS Direct:
0845 4647

Stop Smoking

Thatcham Medical Practice offers a friendly informal Stop Smoking Service. It is provided as one-to-one counselling in 20 minute sessions, offered for up to nine weeks. Discussion centres on personal smoking habits and the various aids that are available to help with stopping smoking.

The service can provide a choice of nicotine replacement therapies or, if necessary, discussion and referral to a GP for any of the drugs that are available. Whichever option is chosen, the patient will be fully encouraged and supported.

Attending clinics on a weekly basis is difficult for many people. We try to help by offering telephone consultations and fortnightly clinic appointments.

Success can be just around the corner for every smoker with the desire and commitment to attempt to stop smoking.

Appointments can be made at Reception or patients can request a phone call from an advisor to discuss any queries that they may have.

Please telephone 01635 867171, and choose option 4.

Practice News

GP Changes

Last year, Doctors Smith and Thompson retired after many years of dedicated service to Thatcham patients and the NHS. We wish them a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Dr Sahota left in January and Dr Agyekum left in May. They have both accepted posts nearer to their homes. We wish them every success in their future careers. Dr Pongratz is currently on maternity leave and will be returning to work in August. Dr Razak is covering her absence. We are delighted to welcome Drs. Rachel Miller and Heike Veltzman as partners and Drs Sophie Conroy and Naomi Bryan as salaried GPs.

All patients are registered with the practice. A GP list system is used to enable patients to see their 'usual doctor', however, you may choose to see any doctor if appointments are available. The system gives better continuity of care in the long term. When a GP leaves the practice, their patients are allocated to another GP's list. Patient requests to change lists for other reasons are reviewed on an individual basis by the practice manager and doctors concerned.

Did you know that.....

- Appointments can be made up to 6 weeks in advance

- Advance booking allows for double appointments if you need extra time to discuss your problem
- Urgent appointments with a doctor can always be made on the day. Please contact the surgery as early as possible in the morning, especially if you think a house visit may be needed
- Appointments will be bookable on line soon. (For more information see www.thatchammedicalpractice.com)

We have changed our appointment system to offer more morning appointments for ill patients. By implementing this change, we can monitor patients and their conditions during the day and review treatment options as necessary. This should minimise unnecessary and inappropriate Westcall visits.

The Westcall Out of Hours Service should be used for emergencies only.

Surgery Opening Hours

Normal surgery times are Monday to Friday 8.00am - 6.30pm.

Since the beginning of May, the extended opening hours at the practice have changed in line with new Department of Health guidelines.

Urgent care clinics operate on two evenings per week for a trial period. All appointments are triaged to ensure patients are seen by either a nurse practitioner or doctor. Alternatively an appointment may be offered at a different time if appropriate.

Saturday morning clinic operates once every 4 weeks. We are aiming to provide a range of services and all appointments are bookable in advance. Please ask at Reception for further details.

On an average day, there are.....

- 237 booked appointments
- 67 booked telephone calls with a doctor
- 20 house visits
- 400 prescriptions issued
- 10 patients who do not turn up for a booked appointment

Please cancel your appointment on our dedicated line Tel. 01635 295445.

The current changes in government policies are creating many new challenges and a degree of uncertainty. However, we are fortunate to have such an excellent team who are looking forward to the opportunities that these changes will provide over time.

Mrs Linda Lawson.
Practice Manager.

Charity Events

Members of staff are taking part in two charity events this summer.

The first event is the London to Brighton cycle ride on Sunday 19 June, supporting the British Heart Foundation. We are also entering a team in the ladies 'Race for Life' at the Newbury Showground on Sunday 10 July, supporting Cancer Research UK.

If you would like to sponsor the teams, please contact Reception.

Any support, no matter how small, is gratefully received by these nationally important charities

Introducing Caroline Dyer - Chronic Kidney Disease Nurse Specialist

My name is Caroline Dyer and I started working at Thatcham Medical Practice in September 2010. Some of you may have met me in the Treatment Room, or in a clinic.

My background is in chronic kidney disease and during the last 10 years I have worked in Coventry and Reading. Most recently I have worked with patients whose kidneys were deteriorating and who needed help to prepare for renal dialysis treatment. At the Health Centre, I am helping people to look after their kidneys to try to prevent them reaching this stage. Careful and effective monitoring of symptomless patients with mild problems allows early referral to a specialist if needed. This ensures the best treatment of their condition and early referral (if necessary) to see a specialist to make sure they get the best treatment.

A new clinic has been opened to help patients with impaired kidney function. By carefully monitoring blood tests and urine, checking blood pressure and giving general advice on kidney disease, we can help reduce the risk of future problems. The clinic enables patients to discuss any concerns and ask questions about their kidney condition. The patients who may benefit from this service will receive an invitation letter from the practice. Blood and urine tests need to be performed a week before the clinic date. This allows time for the results to be available at the appointment.

If you receive one of these invitations, I really hope you will attend and I look forward to meeting you.