

# Maple



# View

Medical Practice

Newsletter Winter 2015

## **FIVE STEPS TO STAYING HEALTHY THIS WINTER**

**It may be cold outside, but winter needn't be the unhealthiest time of year for you and your family.**

Here are five ways to make sure that, even when your body is telling you to hibernate, you can keep healthy and fit, no matter what the weather's like.

### **1. Eliminate your sleep debt**

"On average we sleep six-and-a-half hours a night, much less than the seven to nine hours recommended," says Jessica Alexander, spokesperson at The Sleep Council, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of a good night's sleep for health and wellbeing.

But in winter, we naturally sleep more because of the longer nights. "It's perfectly natural to adopt hibernating habits when the weather turns cold," says Jessica. "Use the time to catch up."

### **2. Drink more milk**

You are 80% more likely to get a cold in winter, so making sure your immune system is in tip-top condition is important. Milk and dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are great sources of protein and vitamins A and B12.

They're also an important source of calcium, which helps keep our bones strong. Try to go for semi-skimmed or skimmed milk – rather than full-fat – and low-fat yoghurts..

### **3. Eat more fruit and veg**

When it's cold and dark outside, it can be tempting to fill up on unhealthy comfort food, but it's important to ensure you still have a healthy diet and include five portions of fruit and veg a day.

If you find yourself craving a sugary treat, try a juicy clementine or satsuma instead, or sweet dried fruits such as dates or raisins.

Winter vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, swede and turnips can be roasted, mashed or made into soup for a comforting winter meal for the whole family. Explore varieties of fruit and veg that you may not normally eat.

### **4. Try new activities for the whole family**

Don't use the cold winter months as an excuse to stay in and lounge around. Instead, get out with the whole family to try out a new activity – maybe ice skating, or taking a bracing winter walk on the beach or through the park.

Regular exercise helps control your weight, boost your immune system, and is a good way to break the tension that can build if the family is constantly cooped up inside the house.

### **5. Have a hearty breakfast**

Winter is the perfect season for porridge. Eating a warm bowlful on a cold morning isn't just a delicious way to start your day, it also helps boost your intake of starchy foods and fibre.

These give you energy and help you feel fuller for longer, stopping the temptation to snack mid-morning. Oats also contain lots of vital vitamins and minerals.

Make your porridge with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk or water, and don't add sugar or salt. Add a few dried apricots, some raisins, a sliced banana or other fruit for extra flavour and to help you hit your 5 a-day target.

**If you are eligible for a flu/pneumococcal or shingles vaccination take advantage of this protection. Check at Reception to see if you qualify.**

## **Did you have difficulty getting an appointment today?**

In October Maple View had 114 patients who did not attend their booked appointments with either the doctor or the nurse. These appointments could have been booked by people who genuinely wanted and needed to be seen. There is an average of 100+ appointments per month that are wasted this way. As a result we will now be running monthly reports and writing to people who have missed their appointments and we have implemented the following policy:

- If you fail to attend appointments without informing us we will write to you asking if you could inform the practice if you are unable to attend your appointment.
- If you fail to attend on 3 occasions throughout a 12 month period for appointments you may be removed from the practice list and have to find an alternative GP practice.

We hope that this will ensure that those people who genuinely need to see a gp will have more access to these missed appointments.



## Open letter to patients from the LMC

Dear Patient

**Re: General Practice in Crisis: A Statement from Worcestershire Local Medical Committee**

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Worcestershire GPs are aware that some patients are finding it increasingly difficult to get the appointments and services they need from us, and feel you should be made aware of the reasons.

Over the past few years, successive governments have reduced the investment in General Practice from around 10% of the NHS budget to nearer 7%.

In spite of this reduction in funding we still provide 90% of consultations carried out in the NHS. There is access to GP services 24 hours, 7 days a week and the demand to see GPs is rising dramatically. There are currently 340 million GP consultations a year, an increase of 40 million in the last 5 years. This has not been matched by an increase in GP and staff numbers or an expansion in the infrastructure. Added to this we are expected to take on more and more work previously carried out in hospitals and are obliged to attend meetings with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS England management and spend hours preparing for and meeting the Care Quality Commissioning. All of these means less time to see our patients.

In addition, we are faced with huge difficulties in recruiting new doctors and nurses to work in General Practice. Currently there is a shortfall of about 10,000 GPs across the country. It is impossible to see how this shortfall can be addressed when it takes a minimum of 10 years to train a GP.

The latest figures we have show currently there are 444 GPs working in the county. In 2014 the figure was 488. In addition, many GPs have reduced their hours of work. Our training scheme for GPs in the county has currently only filled 8 out of 23 places.

In short General Practice is in crisis!

We simply want you to know that we are aware of the problems you have accessing some services and that we are working as hard as we can to provide those services, We hope you will bear with us as we strive to continue to provide quality General Practice across the county.

*(Produced for distribution by Worcestershire GP Practices by Worcestershire Local Medical Committee Ltd)*

**TEXT MESSAGING**

Maple View has introduced a free patient messaging service. All patients who have mobile telephone numbers registered by the surgery will have been sent a text message to inform them of this new service and to give them the option of opting out of this service if they wish.

*What sort of messages will I receive?*

You will be sent a reminder of your appointment date and time the day before.  
You will be invited to have health checks or vaccinations that you are eligible for.  
We will text you if we need you to contact the surgery.  
You may be asked to provide some health information such as your smoking status to enable us to update your records.

*What messages won't I receive?*

You will not receive any advertising messages (the text service is for the use of the surgery only in relation to your healthcare).  
You will not receive test results via text.

*What are the advantages?*

You will receive a reminder for your booked appointment which we hope will help to reduce the number of patients not attending.  
You will have the option of cancelling your appointment by text if you no longer need it.  
It can save you a visit to the surgery for information that could be provided by text.  
It saves the NHS money in the cost of postage.

*What if I don't want to receive text messages?*

The introductory message that will be sent out to all patient registered with a mobile telephone number has the option to reply with 'STOP', this will automatically take the person out of the text messaging service. Alternatively if you ask at Reception to opt out of this service this will be done manually for you.