

Keeping Well?

The Newsletter of the Nuffield Patient Group

Summer 2016 Issue 13

Welcome!

We do hope that you are able to make the most of our lovely summer weather, but if you do find yourself in the surgery maybe **Keeping Well?** can provide some useful information.

Sometimes it takes a new pair of eyes to see the things that are all around us, and so I was really pleased when new patient Nadia reminded me about the good information right here on the walls of the surgery (see article, this page). Do take a look.

It's the time of year when our thoughts turn to holidays, so Practice Manager Catherine Simonini gives a welcome update on travel vaccines (page 2). Don't forget that you need to allow enough time to build immunity, so make sure you come along for your jabs in plenty of time before your holiday.

Whether or not you are going away this year, we have info about a really useful free smartphone app on health and care in Oxfordshire (page 3). Also in this issue, we have a mini-guide to Attendance Allowance (pages 4 and 5). This is necessarily a complex area so, if it is important to you, do seek advice and/or look for details on the internet.

And to round things off, Sarah Chapman from the Cochrane UK takes a look at some early research on the possible benefits of yoga on asthma (page 6).

New PPG member Nadia Browning marvels about all the good things displayed on the surgery's noticeboards

In October I arrived in the UK to work, and I came to live in Witney. It was my first time in England and as you can imagine, everything was new, including the health system. I was eager for all sorts of information, sometimes not even knowing what I really needed to know.

'On my first visit to The Nuffield Practice I was impressed with the information available on the noticeboards and could not stop myself from checking it all out. Today, I still do the rounds, checking all the boards in search of information that can be relevant to me. It is like browsing the shops on the way to the practice: you always find something you need. Lately I have also been entertained by the many good books offered very inexpensively.

What kind of information are you looking for? Is it something specific, like information on cervical cancer or where you can find support for your elderly parent with dementia? The noticeboards in The Nuffield Practice may help you find these answers. Or maybe you are just curious to learn new information! Well, checking out the noticeboards on your next visit to The Nuffield Practice may help, guide, entertain or even surprise you! Enjoy!



Continued overleaf

Travel vaccines - be prepared!

If you're planning to travel outside the UK, you may need to be vaccinated against some of the serious diseases found in other parts of the world.

Vaccinations are available to protect you against infections such as yellow fever, typhoid and hepatitis A.

In the UK, the childhood vaccination programme protects against a number of diseases, but doesn't cover most of the infectious diseases found overseas.

Which jabs do I need?

You can find out which vaccinations are necessary or recommended for the areas you'll be visiting on these two websites:

- www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
- www.nathnac.net

Some countries require you to have an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) before you enter. For example, Saudi Arabia requires proof of vaccination against certain types of meningitis for visitors arriving for the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages.

Many tropical countries in Africa and South America won't accept travellers from an area where there's yellow fever unless they can prove they've been vaccinated against it.

Where do I get my jabs?

You should get advice at least eight weeks before you're due to travel, as some jabs need to be given well in advance.

First, phone or visit your practice nurse to find out whether your existing UK jabs are up-to-date (they can tell from your notes).

Your practice nurse will also be able to give you general advice about travel vaccinations and travel health, such as protecting yourself from malaria.

Your practice nurse can give you a booster of your UK jabs if you need one. They may be able to give you the travel jabs you need, either free on the NHS or for a charge. Not all vaccinations are available free on the NHS, even if they're recommended for travel to a certain area.

Free travel vaccinations

The following travel vaccinations are usually available free on the NHS:

- diphtheria, polio and tetanus (combined booster)

- typhoid
- hepatitis A – including when combined with typhoid or hepatitis B
- cholera.

These vaccines are usually free because they protect against diseases thought to represent the greatest risk to public health if they were brought into the country.



Private travel vaccinations

You're likely to have to pay for travel vaccinations against:

- hepatitis B when not combined with hepatitis A
- Japanese encephalitis and tick-borne encephalitis
- meningitis C and other meningitis vaccines
- rabies
- tuberculosis (TB)
- yellow fever.

Yellow fever vaccines are only available from designated centres and the Nuffield Practice is one of these. The cost of travel vaccines at private clinics will vary, but could be around £50 for each dose of a vaccine. It's worth considering this when budgeting for your trip.

Things to consider

There are several things to consider when planning your travel vaccinations, including:

- **the country or countries you're visiting** – some diseases are more common in certain parts of the world and less common in others
- **when you're travelling** – some diseases are more common at certain times of the year; for example, during the rainy season

• **where you're staying** – in general, you'll be more at risk of disease in rural areas than in urban areas, and if you're backpacking and staying in hostels or camping, you may be more at risk than if you were on a package holiday and staying in a hotel

• **how long you'll be staying** – the longer your stay, the greater your risk of being exposed to diseases

• **your age and health** – some people may be more vulnerable to infection than others, while some vaccinations can't be given to people with certain medical conditions

• **what you'll be doing during your stay** – for example, whether you'll be spending a lot of time outdoors, such as trekking or working in rural areas

• **if you're working as an aid worker** – you may come into contact with more diseases if you're working in a refugee camp or helping after a natural disaster

• **if you're working in a medical setting** – for example, a doctor or nurse may require additional vaccinations

• **if you are in contact with animals** – in this case, you may be more at risk of getting diseases spread by animals, such as rabies.

If you're only travelling to countries in northern and central Europe, North America or Australia, you're unlikely to need any vaccinations.

When should I get my jabs?

If possible, see the practice nurse at least eight weeks before you're due to travel.

Some vaccinations need to be given well in advance to allow your body to develop immunity. Some also involve multiple doses spread over several weeks.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Speak to your GP before having any vaccinations if:

- you're pregnant
- you think you might be pregnant
- you're breastfeeding

In many cases, it's unlikely that a vaccine given while pregnant or breastfeeding will cause problems for the baby. However, your GP will be able to give you further advice about this.

People with immune deficiencies

For some people travelling overseas, vaccination against certain diseases may not be advised. This may be the case if:

- you have a condition that affects your body's immune system, such as HIV or AIDS
- you're receiving treatment that affects your immune system, such as chemotherapy
- you've recently had a bone marrow or organ transplant.

Your GP or practice nurse can give you further advice about this.

'Health and Care Oxfordshire' app

Where can you go if you are ill or injured in Oxfordshire?

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has launched a free smartphone app that uses GPS to help people to find a health service wherever they are in Oxfordshire.

The app provides digital maps that display the exact locations of pharmacies, GP practices, minor injuries and first aid units, as well as A&E departments, in Oxfordshire, together with details about the service and contacts. Users can then find opening times via the provider's website or NHS Choices.

The new app updates the Choose Well app, which was launched by Oxfordshire CCG in 2014.

The app also provides advice and information on a variety of issues:

- when to visit a pharmacist or GP, when to call NHS 111, and when to self-manage at home
- injuries and illnesses that are appropriate to be seen by minor injuries or first aid units
- locations and range of services of sexual health clinics
- local social care support
- a link to the Patient Access website, which lets people use online services provided by their GP practice.



From the Practice

GP News

Dr Anna Morrish had her baby on the 20th July. He is a healthy baby boy. Her locum, Dr Eoghan de Burca, starts with us on the 4th August and will look after all the patients on Dr Morrish's list until she returns from maternity leave.

Our new Registrar, Dr Tim Robson, starts on the 3rd August and will be with us for 20 months. He will replace Dr Abi Seriki, who has been with us for 6 months.

Dr Frances Carey left us to move to the North on

the 14th July. Her patients have been reallocated to the remaining GPs and they will all receive a letter informing them of their new GP in due course.

New staff announcements

We have two new members of staff, Nick Broom and Jim Bell. They are Emergency Care Practitioners and are trained paramedics. They will be working with the Duty Doctors seeing and treating patients who cannot wait for routine appointments.

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a benefit that helps with the extra costs of long-term illness or disability, which can be either physical and/or mental. It is for people aged 65 and over.

AA is paid regardless of your income, savings or National Insurance contribution record and it is a tax free benefit. If you are a carer who has care needs, you can claim Attendance Allowance for yourself and this will not affect your Carer's Allowance.

Getting AA does not reduce other benefits, it may even increase them. If you have a carer then claiming AA may help them to qualify for certain benefits (such as Carer's Allowance). AA may also entitle you and/or your carer to further help with council tax.

There are no restrictions on how you can spend your AA, and you do not have to spend it on paying for the care that you need. However, your council or trust can take AA into account when calculating how much you might need to pay for any care services you receive.

Who can claim Attendance Allowance?

To qualify for AA you must meet all of the following criteria:

- be aged 65 or over
- need help looking after yourself because you have a disability or illness
- have had the disability or illness for at least six months (you can make your claim before this time has passed, but you will not receive any

payment until it has)

- have no immigration conditions attached to your stay in the UK subject to some exceptions (if you have immigration restrictions on your stay in the UK, claiming benefits may affect your future right to remain in the UK, so seek specialist immigration advice before claiming)

- meet the residence and presence conditions.

You may need help with various activities because you have a physical disability or illness, a sensory impairment, a learning disability or a mental health condition. You may have multiple disabilities or conditions.

How much is Attendance Allowance worth?

There are two rates of AA. For 2016/17 these rates are:

Higher	£82.30
Lower	£55.10

You will be paid the **higher rate** of AA if you meet one of the following criteria:

- you satisfy both the day-time and night-time tests
- you are terminally ill (someone is classified as terminally ill if they are not expected to live longer than 6 months)

You will be paid the **lower rate** of Attendance Allowance if:

- you satisfy the day-time or night-time tests

Specific rules apply for some kidney patients undergoing renal dialysis at least 2 times per week.

Do I satisfy the tests for Attendance Allowance?

AA can be paid if you need help with your personal care or someone to check that you are ok. The legal term used for needing help with personal care is 'attention' and the term used for needing someone to check on you is 'supervision' – see below for more information.

Note: What matters is that you need either attention or supervision, not whether you are currently getting all the help that you need. So remember to think about the help you need, not just the help that you currently get.

Daytime test

To satisfy a daytime test, you need to show that you reasonably need either one of the following:

- frequent help with personal care throughout the day (i.e. about three times or more)
- someone to check on you continually (i.e. frequently or regularly) throughout the day to make sure that you are safe.

Night-time test

To satisfy a night-time test you need to show that you reasonably need either one of the following:

- help with personal care at least twice a night, or once a night for at least 20 minutes
- someone to check on you at least twice a night, or once a night for at least 20 minutes, to make sure that you are safe.

If no-one is currently helping you with personal care, you may be accepted as needing help if you have some difficulty coping.

If no-one is currently checking on you, you may still be accepted as needing supervision if you or another person may be in danger without it.

Attention - help with personal care

Personal care needs include help with things like:

- getting in and out of a chair
- bathing and washing
- dressing and undressing
- help with medication and treatment
- getting in and out of bed and sleeping
- communicating
- eating and drinking
- seeing (i.e. you need someone to see for you)
- breathing
- using the toilet
- walking.

The help must usually be given in your presence. Here are some examples of the help you may need.

- You have arthritis which makes movement difficult. You need somebody to help you with daily activities such as getting in/out of bed, washing and dressing, and getting in/out of chairs.
- You are profoundly deaf and British Sign Language is your first language. You need an interpreter when communicating without sign language, to interpret spoken announcements, and perhaps also to interpret written English.
- You have a mental health problem and you need prompting to look after yourself and to do things such as taking your medication, eating, washing and dressing.
- You are visually impaired and need someone to assist in situations such as selecting clothes to wear, using cooking appliances safely and preparing food.
- You have a learning disability and need help with activities including managing money, writing letters and looking after your health and your hygiene.

Supervision - needing someone to check on you

To qualify as needing supervision you must need someone to check on you regularly during the day. The checks must be to avoid a 'substantial danger' to yourself or others due to your disability.

For example, you may need such checks if you have memory loss, are in danger of falling, have poor awareness of potential dangers, have serious behavioural problems, lose consciousness or have seizures.

Substantial danger may include situations such as falling, leaving the gas on, self-harm, violence towards others or a serious risk to your health should you be left unsupervised. The potentially dangerous situation does not have to happen frequently, but you must need frequent checks to reduce the chance of harm.

How to claim Attendance Allowance

Contact the Attendance Allowance Helpline on 0345 605 6055 (textphone 0345 604 5312).

To find out how to claim and to download a claim form, visit their website:

- www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Evidence Matters

by Sarah Chapman

I work for Cochrane UK, the UK hub of an international network of people working together to help people make informed decisions about health care. It does this through doing systematic reviews, which bring together the results of clinical trials to answer questions about what helps or harms in health care.

Yoga may help people with asthma

Asthma is a common, chronic condition affecting 300 million people worldwide. Yoga has the potential to bring psychological and physical benefits to people with asthma. As its popularity has grown so have efforts to scientifically evaluate benefits for health and any potential for harm.

A Cochrane review has brought together the best available evidence, from 15 studies involving over 1000 adults with mild to moderate asthma, comparing the effects of yoga with 'sham' yoga or usual treatment.

It shows that:

- yoga probably has small benefits for quality of life and asthma symptoms
- there is little information about unwanted side effects
- it's still unclear how yoga affects lung function and medication use .

So there's work to do for researchers, and this review, like all Cochrane reviews, will be updated to take account of new research. Hopefully this will add to what we know.

Julie Wood, Cochrane's Head of Communications, is clear that yoga has helped her asthma.

She writes:

"My husband first convinced me to try yoga. From the first class, I was completely hooked. I was sleeping better and had finally found a way to work out and relieve my stress.

"An unexpected benefit was how much yoga helped my asthma. I have reduced using my inhalers and I find myself coping better when I experience tightness in my chest. I wake up in the night due to trouble breathing only once every two weeks. I honestly couldn't tell you if that is because there are so many breathing exercises in yoga that my lungs are actually getting stronger or that it has helped foster a greater awareness in my breath and so I feel more in control."

Commenting on the Cochrane review, Julie says:

"The strength of the evidence isn't at a point where we can definitively say whether it does help people with their asthma, but the initial signs are promising.

"I will keep doing yoga and enjoy the benefits that I believe it gives me. These initial studies reinforce what I think about yoga, but only more and better studies will prove whether this benefit exists for more people."



You can read Julie's story in full in her blog on www.evidentlycochrane.org/?s=asthma and see the review in full at www.thecochranelibrary.com Yang ZY *et al.* Yoga for asthma. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2016, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD010346. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD010346.pub2.

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