



### NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2009

#### Introduction

The nights have drawn in, the heating is on and it's still raining!! Autumn is drifting into winter and the usual increase in coughs and colds is being seen. For most people these are self limiting conditions. See our self management guide overleaf for advice.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr Roshina Gnanadurai. Roshina and her job share, Dr Alex Wilson, replace Dr Sarah Bird who has decided to remain in Australia (see further below).

Swine flu is still a concern. Although a mild illness in most people a minority can become very ill and even die. We have received our first batch of vaccinations and have started inviting 'at risk' groups to be immunised. **The vaccine supply is limited so please only present for vaccination if invited to do so.** Pregnant women appear to be particularly susceptible to more severe symptoms and we would strongly encourage them to be vaccinated. (In the US pregnant women are routinely given the annual flu jab without concern). The government has indicated that all children from 6 months to 5 years will be offered the vaccine. The details of how this is to be done and when the vaccine is likely to become available have not yet been finalised. No vaccine is currently available for under fives not in an at risk group. However, this is an evolving situation so please keep an eye on local press, our notice board and website to see when things change.

Finally, outlined overleaf is information about important changes to the Travel Clinic and the introduction of automated check-in at reception. We hope these changes, introduced in the New Year, will improve our service to you.

#### Welcome to Dr Roshina Gnanadurai



We are delighted that Dr Gnanadurai has joined us as a salaried GP to job share with Dr Alex Wilson. Roshina is a Bristol Graduate who qualified in 2000. She has had a diverse career to date including work in Darfur in the Sudan as a volunteer for Médecins Sans Frontières. She is a GP Registrar tutor and works one day a week in the GP Support Unit at the BRI. She brings a wealth of experience which we all hope to learn from. Her working days will be Monday and Tuesday, with Dr Wilson covering Wednesday and Friday. Roshina is currently recovering from knee surgery following a skiing accident so if she is hobbling a little you will know why! We wish her a warm welcome to Portishead and hope she soon feels at home.

#### Swine Flu Vaccination

**At risk individuals will be invited for vaccination by letter in the order of priority indicated below. Please only sign up at reception when invited to do so.**

##### At risk groups

- People aged between six months and 65 in the seasonal flu at risk groups.
- All pregnant women.
- People who live with someone whose immune system is compromised (ie people with cancer or HIV/AIDS).
- People aged 65 and over in the seasonal flu vaccine at-risk groups.

Children under 10 will need 2 half-strength doses at least 3 weeks apart. Over 10 years a single dose of vaccine is required (unless immunocompromised).

For those with a significant allergy to eggs an alternative vaccine is available. This will need to be specially ordered on a named basis. Please discuss with medical staff if you think this may be relevant to you.

**For more information please look at the NHS Choices Website on [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

# Automated Check In



In order to decrease the queues at reception we have decided to invest in an automated check in terminal. This will allow those that already have an appointment to quickly and easily register their arrival without waiting to speak to a receptionist. This will free up our team to help with more complex questions, arrange appointments and improve the flow into the waiting room.

As a consequence of altering the way you book in we have had to alter the way you are called to see your doctor or nurse. You will no longer be given a number and asked to look out for the appropriate light coming on. Instead, you will be called by means of a display board. Your name, the doctor or nurse you are seeing and the room they are in will scroll across the two displays that will be sited over each notice board in the waiting room. A buzzer sound will accompany each new call. The display is red on black which is most appropriate for those with visual impairments.

We appreciate the change may cause initial confusion, but having visited other practices where it is working well we are confident this will be a change for the better. At its introduction, receptionists will be available to help guide you through the new process. It really is very simple, all you need to remember is your gender and date of birth. Please remember that if you are uncomfortable using new technology you will still be able to check in at reception as at present.



## Changes to Travel Clinic

From the 18th January 2010 we will be changing the way our travel clinic works by asking you to help us provide a more extensive and convenient service. At present we ask you to fill in a travel form. Our nurses then use internet and other resources to determine what vaccinations and malaria medication you need. This is time consuming, delays your vaccination and has meant we have not been able to provide advice for prolonged trips, multiple destinations or business travel. After careful consideration we have decided to ask you to utilise the internet directly to produce a printout of the vaccinations you may need. You will then bring this printout to the travel clinic where our experienced nurses will interpret directly what vaccinations and medication are needed. This will speed up the service, increase capacity and allow longer trips, multiple destinations and business travel to be accommodated.

We are recommending the MASTA website [www.masta-travel-health.com](http://www.masta-travel-health.com) which charges £3.99 for a Travel Health Brief containing recommended vaccinations and travel advice (remember only one printout is needed per trip irrespective of the number of people on it)

We recognise this may not be a welcome change but we feel this new approach will have a number of clear advantages

- ⇒ Quicker more convenient service, often needing only one visit to the travel clinic (dependent on the vaccinations needed).
- ⇒ Multiple destinations, business trips and prolonged travel now included.
- ⇒ Charges are highly competitive in comparison to commercial providers.
- ⇒ Those without internet access can contact MASTA on 0906 550 1402

**For further information, (including vaccine costs) please pick up a leaflet at reception or visit our website at [www.pmg.org.uk](http://www.pmg.org.uk)**

## I can't get rid of this cough Doc....

A 'normal' cough can last for up to 4 weeks. In most cases there is little the doctor can do to help the situation. My advice is always the same; avoid expensive cough and cold remedies, simple paracetamol and ibuprofen is just as effective. Drink plenty of fluids (water is best). Raise your body position at night with pillows or lift the head end of the bed to stop pooling of mucus in the back of the throat. Try steaming with hot water and olbas oil, or similar, if congested. Eat regular nourishing meals. Sleep well (a sedating cough mixture may help – speak to the pharmacist – but watch that it does not sedate you too much the next day). Fresh air will help when you begin to feel better. See your doctor at 6 weeks if no better.



**All the staff at Portishead Medical Centre would like to wish you a Happy, Safe and Healthy Christmas and New Year**

