



Frithwood Surgery

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FRITHWOOD SURGERY PPG NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2017/18



LET'S PARTY!

Frithwood Surgery's senior patients enjoyed themselves at the Patient Participation Group's annual Christmas party for over 75 year olds. Festive songs courtesy of Carol, dancing doctors and plenty of food and drink ensured there was plenty of seasonal cheer to last throughout the afternoon.



FEEDBACK - We would love to hear from you on any aspects of the Newsletters or the services you receive from the surgery. If you have questions or ideas that could benefit our readership, please use the 'Suggestion Box' at the surgery reception or 'e' mail frithwood.enquiries@nhs.net or call 01453 882868.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is a long term illness with a range of symptoms, extreme tiredness being the most common.

It's also known as ME, or myalgic encephalomyelitis; the myelitis reference implies inflammation on the brain and nerve tissue, yet post mortem studies of CFS/ME sufferers have shown no convincing evidence of this. The number of post mortems carried out on these patients has been small, so the jury is out on the terms; nevertheless these are the names adopted for this condition.

The exact causes of CFS/ME are unknown, but there are a number of theories as to triggers:

- Viral infections for example glandular fever
- Bacterial infections such as pneumonia
- Problems with the immune system
- Hormone imbalance
- Stress, depression and emotional trauma
- CFE/ME is more common in some families

In addition to tiredness, the symptoms can include:

- Sleep problems
- Muscle and joint pain
- Painful glands
- Poor concentration
- Dizziness
- Palpitations

CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

There is no specific test for CFS/ME: diagnosis is based on symptoms and ruling out other conditions.

This is important as hypothyroidism, anaemia and vitamin B12 deficiency can cause similar symptoms. If these have been excluded and symptoms persist for more than four months in an adult or three months in a child, then CFS/ME should be considered.

CFS/ME can last for months or years, in some cases there is never a complete recovery. This makes predicting the course of the problem very difficult and there may be periods of remission followed by relapse, which can be particularly distressing.

There is no cure for CFS/ME and treatment is aimed at relieving symptoms. Medication can be used to treat pain, sleep problems and depression. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) can help with acceptance of the diagnosis and help patients feel more in control of the symptoms.

Graded exercise therapy is a structured exercise programme, which under the guidance of a trained specialist can improve tolerance to exercise over a period of time. Rest and relaxation is important and it is vital to pace any activity to avoid becoming over tired.

A Patient's Experience

I've had CFS/ME for five years and found it impossible to continue teaching.

It's difficult for family and friends to understand how you feel: you can look really well, but feel awful inside. They see you doing things one day and exhausted the next.

I was lucky to be referred to the CFS/ME service at Bristol Southmead Hospital

They were a great help and referred me on a course at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, which covered how to live with CFS/ME.

There was some important advice on understanding how to pace oneself and exercise, the importance of rest and relaxation and how to avoid the "boom and bust" situation. It covered being aware of the problems of unhelpful thoughts, coping with setbacks, stress, sleep and setting goals.

It has been such a support to have met other people who are experiencing similar symptoms. To be able to share how you are feeling and offer each other ways of coping as at times you can feel very alone with this illness.

The ME Association is a charity that provides information, support and practical advice for people with this condition. Or you can join a local support group.

DRUG WATCH

Proton Pump Inhibitors

The lining of the stomach produces acid as part of the first stage of digestion. The proton pump is the last stage in the chemical pathway in which the acid is created. The proton pump inhibitor class of drugs, as the name suggests, inhibits the proton pump leading to significant reduction in the acid in the stomach. A common example of a PPI is omeprazole or to give it its brand name, Losec

Excessive acid in the stomach can

- Dyspepsia or indigestion
- Ulceration of the stomach and duodenum
- Reflux oesophagitis

cause problems:

Since their inception in the 1980s, PPIs have been used successfully and have reduced the need for surgery on the stomach by a considerable amount.

They are generally well tolerated but needless to say there may be side effects:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain
- Fatigue
- Rash
- Constipation
- Anxiety
- Muscular pain

Reports from studies in the United States raise concerns about problems linking excessive use with PPIs to episodes of Clostridium Difficile. This is a serious infection in the gut producing profuse diarrhoea. In addition, there have been reports of increased rates of fracture in those on PPIs. This suggests that care is required in prescribing these drugs and only using them when the indications are clear. Many cases of indigestion can be managed with simple antacids, better diets and ending smoking.

HEALTH WALKS

We have suspended our fortnightly health walks, but will be resuming them in April. This is primarily because the winter months are not conducive to getting out and about.

The purpose of these walks is to promote health by offering a guided walk of 1.5miles on terrain which is as flat as possible given the hilly nature of our surroundings.

The walks are open to all. Including those who would just like some fresh air and company. Watch this space!

'Like' our Facebook page for the latest news:
<https://www.facebook.com/FritthwoodPPG/>

FRITHWOOD FACE



Name: Dr Ken Burke

Job: GP Partner

What I do: I'm a General Practitioner (GP). I treat all common medical conditions and refer patients to hospitals and other medical services for urgent and specialist treatment.

Why my work is important: it keeps people well and diagnoses and treats illness.

Top health advice: Get involved with taking a form of brief intensive exercise called HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training).

Most frequent thing you hear: "Google says..."

Favourite exercise: Cycling

When I'm not working: I like to cycle, read, ramble and go to the cinema.

Most surprising fact about me: My elder daughter is 19 now – no-one ever believes my age because I look young!

Favourite sport: Cycling – notice a trend here?

Favourite piece of music:

Symphony No 3 by the Polish composer Henryk Górecki.

WINTER PRESSURE

The NHS is currently suffering from unprecedented demand and many hospitals are at, or close to, maximum capacity.

There are many reasons for this, not least an ageing population with multiple and complex physical and social problems who are falling foul of the winter viruses.

So how can an individual patient respond to this?

Needless to say, serious symptoms such as severe pain or breathlessness need immediate attention.

Less serious symptoms will also cause anxiety and need to be addressed. Before resorting to an ambulance, Accident and Emergency Department or GP, there are some options that can be taken to help with the decision about the next step.

A Pharmacist can be a very useful source of advice. Alternatively a phone call to 111 may take time but will provide advice.

The internet is a minefield of misinformation, but NHS Choices is an official site and is reliable.

START PLOTTING

Allotment plots are available in Bisley. Call Lesley on 01452 770018 for more information.



Enjoy the snow, but watch the ice!

LOTTERY

A big thank you to everybody who has signed up to the Frithwood PPG Lottery.

All the money raised will support the Surgery with equipment that otherwise might be unaffordable given the financial constraints facing the NHS.

The monthly draw takes place at the beginning of each month. The first prize is £100, second £60 and third £40. Winners are notified by post and the winning numbers are posted on the Surgery notice board. Half of the income from the lottery goes towards prizes.

This year the proceeds from the lottery will go towards a new electrically-driven examination couch for the treatment room.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

There were 117 missed appointments in November and 168 in December – one of the highest figures ever.

As well as being frustrating for surgery staff and GPs, missed appointments represent time slots that could be given to other patients wishing to see a doctor.

While the surgery would prefer a little notice if a patient isn't able to make an appointment, it can re-allocate time slots even with half an hour's notice

VISITING SERVICE FOR OAPS

A visiting service for the elderly in Chalford is being planned by Chalford Parish Council.

If you feel that this service would be useful, Chalford Parish Council can be contacted either by phone on 01453 887204 or by e-mail on christine@chalford-glos.gov.uk

BOOKS AT THE SURGERY

Don't forget the second hand book shelves at Frithwood Surgery when you're looking to pass on a book. The surgery started selling old books on behalf of Longfield in the summer of 2013 and to date has raised £1,991.64 for the Minchinhampton-based charity that helps people with life-limiting illnesses.