

Data Protection

There is a new piece of legislation taking force in May called the General Data Protection Regulations, which modifies the Data Protection Act currently in force. The main changes are:

- You can now request a copy of your medical record without incurring a fee (although if the record is large we do have to charge printing costs). Remember that you can also view your record online if you are registered to use SystmOnline (ask at reception for details).
- We have to inform you how long your record will be kept. Medical records are stored centrally by NHS England for ten years after your death (but it may be longer for children).
- We may disclose information to third parties for healthcare reasons in the following circumstances:
- Referral to secondary care or emergency admissions: we will give them details relevant to your referral;
- Community staff treating you such as district nurses, health visitors, paramedics and minor injuries units. Our clinical system is set to *automatically* allow another health professional to view your medical record *with your consent at the time of treatment*; if you wish to opt out of this “Enhanced Share” please let our receptionists know or read the Dorset SystmOne Fair Processing Notice available at reception for more details.
- Insurance claims, provided you have authorised this disclosure and signed a consent form
- Safeguarding and public interest: we have a duty to disclose some information such as a Child Protection concern, or a communicable disease which we must report to the Health Protection Agency. We will always discuss this with the lead GP and senior manager first and we will try to contact you before making any such disclosure.
- Complaints: if you have a complaint about the care you receive from us we will investigate your concerns and may seek guidance from our professional bodies such as the British Medical Association, which may mean sharing the details of your complaint.

Please ask if you are unsure about any of this!



What a winter!

This has been the busiest three months that any of us can remember, and we are still seeing the effects on our waiting times as we struggle to keep up with the demand for appointments. The weeks after Christmas are always full-on as we try to catch up after the Bank Holidays and deal with winter's many viral infections (flu, chesty coughs and stomach bugs), but we have never known it carry on so long.

So we thank you for your patience when you ask for an appointment, telling us helpfully that “it's not urgent, any time in the next week or so will be fine” only for us to tell you that our next routine appointment is not for two weeks or more! However we have done our best to catch up by:

- adding extra GP and nurse clinics after Christmas and over Easter
- Adding extra appointments to existing clinics
- Improving our triage system which offers you a same day telephone consultation with the duty doctor to assess what you need (many problems can be sorted quickly by speaking on the phone directly with the GP, or we will add an extra appointment for you at some point that day).

In order to help us to prioritise the most urgent requests the doctors have asked our receptionists to ask for a bit more information. You don't have to disclose more information than you are comfortable with over the phone but it does help us if you can indicate the reason for needing to see the doctor or nurse.

Inside...

- **Important news about your annual medication review**
- **Letter from our Friends of the Practice Group**
- **New Data-sharing between healthcare professionals**

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Medication Reviews

From 1st April 2018 we are improving the safety of repeat medication prescribing by making sure that patients have a medication review at least annually. A note will appear on your prescription 30 days before your medication review is due (and you can check before this by looking at the line under each drug listed on your repeat slip). You need to make the appointment promptly to avoid delays in receiving your next month's medication.

Medication reviews are an important part of the care we offer you and it is the GP's clinical responsibility to ensure that we are prescribing safely, so we cannot go on issuing repeat medications without a review.

However, not all medications will require an appointment with a doctor. The dispensary team will be able to advise you whether you need to see a doctor or a nurse for your medication review, or whether it might be able to be done over the phone.

Some medications require regular monitoring such as blood tests, blood pressure checks or weight measurement. It will often make your medication review much quicker if you can arrange to have these tests done before your medication review is due. Again if you are not sure whether you need any monitoring, please speak to the dispensary team or your doctor.

If you are overdue your medication review you will be able to request a further one month's prescription to give you time to make the necessary appointments. Further medication will then only be issued at the doctor's discretion until you have had your medication review. This is to make sure your medication is being prescribed correctly and safely and you have not missed any of the necessary checks.

A Message from our Friends of the Practice group

My name is Jill Askew and I am a fellow patient at Portesham Surgery. We all know what an excellent high level of service the Practice provides for us all, for which I am sure, we are all truly grateful.

Providing this excellent service entails a great deal of hard work and commitment by doctors, nurses and practice staff who, without fail, go out of their way for every single one of us, their patients.

Our Surgery has a group of volunteer patients called 'Friends of Portesham Surgery', of which I am a member. The group meet on a monthly basis for approximately one hour, to discuss how we may be able to assist the practice in various ways (on non-clinical matters only).

Within the Group there are various members representing the different villages in the practice area. However, we are very keen to recruit and involve some of our younger patients and young families, to obtain a truly balanced representation for the patients. We are sure our younger members have a vibrant voice, and we are very keen to hear their views.

Patients of any age may wish to put forward a suggestion or an idea which you feel may not have been previously considered and may be of benefit for other Patients. It may be something that affects you directly or, a relative or, something more general. Please be assured that all correspondence is treated with confidence, and that we are not here to judge, but just to assist the Practice where we can.

Please do also remember that all medical matters must be directed to the Doctors and Nurses.

I am the nominated contact for young people and young families, but happy to put forward any general enquiries to the Group. You can contact me on j-askew@hotmail.com or 01308 898147.

Alternatively the general email for contact with the Friends is:
enquiries @friendsofporteshamsurgery.co.uk.