

GREYSTOKE GAZETTE

ISSUE 59

JULY—AUGUST 2015

As summer seems to have arrived here are some tips to enjoy it safely

Your eyes and the sun

Many people are unaware that ultraviolet (UV) light is harmful to the eye and may lead to cataracts and other eye problems. Light-coloured eyes (blue, grey or green) need more protection. Children's eyes are more vulnerable than those of adults. Wearing a hat with a brim or a peaked cap could shield you from as much as 50 per cent of the sun's UV rays. But wearing a pair of good quality sunglasses can block between 99 and 100 per cent of UV radiation. Sunglasses should carry the CE mark and have a label stating they block 99-100% of both UV-A and UV-B rays. Wraparounds prevent UV light getting in at the sides. Brown and amber lenses are the best as they reduce the amount of blue light getting through. Dark sunglasses are not necessarily better; it is the coating on the surface that makes them safe.



Stay cool this summer

Hot weather can be very dangerous and even kill. In one hot spell in August 2003 in England, deaths in those aged 75 and over rose by 60% with 2000 total extra deaths than would normally be expected. Staying hydrated and out of the sun are the best actions to take. If you need to be outdoors wear a hat and take a drink with you. Some people are particularly vulnerable: the elderly, babies and young children, those with chronic heart and breathing conditions, physically active people like roofers, builders, gardeners, manual workers, athletes and people on certain medications.

Sunscreens

Recent guidance from NICE suggested sunscreens with an SPF of 15 were adequate for most people in the UK. However, this assumes we apply it as the manufacturers advise at 2mg/cm², which requires 35ml every 2 hours for an adult, and is more than double what is applied in reality. It is, therefore, recommended that most people should use a cream with an SPF of at least 30. SPF relates to protection from UVB only. It is also important to have protection from UVA which is equally implicated in the risk of skin cancer. Sunscreens have a 5 star rating for UVA protection in addition to the SPF number and we recommend star 4 or 5.

But please do not forget your vitamin D levels, SPF 15 stops 99% of vitamin D production. You do need to have some unprotected sun exposure (without burning) to build up your stores for the winter. We recommend a weekly total of 60 minutes broken down into short spells of unprotected sun to your face and arms on fair skin, longer on darker skins.

Patient Participation Group:

Greystoke Surgery have an established patient led group, who regularly meet to work alongside the GPs and practice staff to provide a patient perspective on healthcare services. We are always keen to recruit new members. You can participate by either attending meetings or via email / telephone (whichever is easiest for you). Any contribution is most welcome. There is a leaflet in the reception area which contains more information, or please contact either Jenni Dollman, Practice Manager on 01670 511393 (jenniferdollman@nhs.net) or John Walton, Chair of the PPG on 01670 512087 (jhwalton@btinternet.com) for more information.

Cold Call Warning

The practice has recently been advised of an incident whereby a person claiming to be working for GP surgeries in Morpeth was telephoning patients advising they were carrying out a survey. This person enquired about the patient's medical conditions and then went on to say they could prescribe a high strength cod liver oil tablet at the cost of 29.99.

We wish to assure patients that we do not share your medical records or prescribing details with 3rd parties and would never ask anyone to contact patients on behalf of the practice. Although this is alarming, we believe such incidents are generally rare. We would, however, like to encourage patients that if they do get any such calls, to advise the practice and we will report it to NHS Counter Fraud.

Out of Area Registration

New arrangements introduced from January 2015 give people greater choice when choosing a GP practice. Patients may approach any GP practice, even if they live outside the practice area, to see if they will be accepted on to the patient list.

The new arrangements (which are voluntary for GP practices) mean GP practices now have the option to register patients who live outside the practice area but without any obligation to provide home visits.

If accepted, you will attend the practice and receive the full range of services provided as normal at the surgery. If you have an urgent care need and the surgery cannot help you at home we may ask you to call NHS 111 and they will put you in touch with a local service (this may be a face to face appointment with a local healthcare professional or a home visit where necessary).

We may decide that it is not in your best interests or practical for you to be registered in this way. In these circumstances we will advise you to seek to register (or remain registered) with a more local practice. If accepted but your health needs change, we may review your registration to see if it would be more appropriate for you to be registered with a GP practice closer to your home.

healthtalk.org

healthtalk.org is an online charity where you can find information on a range of illnesses and other health related issues from seeing and hearing people's real life experiences. Thousands of people have shared their experiences on film to help others understand what it's really like to have a health condition such as breast cancer or arthritis.

www.healthtalk.org



New support group Wansbeck area

Bipolar UK is a national charity dedicated to supporting individuals and their families affected by Bipolar. They provide a range of services to enable people affected by bipolar and associated illnesses to understand and manage their illness and take control of their lives. These services include support groups which are free to attend, and are open to all individuals affected by bipolar, their family members, friends and carers. You don't need a referral and you don't have to let anyone know in advance that you're coming – just turn up! A new support group has recently started in Wansbeck. The Wansbeck Bipolar UK Support Group meets on the second Tuesday of every month from 6.30 to 8.15pm at the Susan Kennedy Centre, South View, Ashington, NE63 0SF
If you would like more information on your nearest local support group, please visit the website: www.bipolaruk.org.uk

