

Welcome to the first edition of Bottisham Medical Practice's Dispensary Newsletter.

We would like to start by thanking all of our patients for your understanding and support over the last two years, it has been an extremely challenging time for the practice and we very much appreciate you working with us to ensure we can continue to deliver essential healthcare services to the local community. We have been overwhelmed by messages of support and thanks which have been a real morale boost for the practice team.

We have put together this newsletter as a way of updating patients on the latest news relating to our Dispensary Service. The combination of Brexit and COVID-19 has had a direct impact on our Dispensary and how we deliver our services and we thought it would be useful to update our patients on the latest issues and how it may affect the services we provide and what improvements we are making as a result of feedback from patients.

Medication and Supply Issues

Due to Brexit, COVID-19 and issues with sourcing raw materials there have been delays beyond our control in sourcing some drugs. This changes daily and the practice cannot predict from one day to the next what drugs may be out of stock. The local Clinical Commissioning Group provide regular updates regarding stock issues and the dispensary team work closely with the GPs to source suitable alternatives to ensure patients always have their medications. These supply issues are nationwide.

HRT is the one medication which we continue to have consistent supply issues with. There are particular issues with oestrogel and some of the patches. Where these items are not available, we are trying to source suitable alternatives. I know this is frustrating and we are working hard to ensure we keep stocks in when they are available to ensure there is no disruption to patients having their medication.

You may find that you have a different brand of medication, but please be assured this will be a suitable alternative.

Suppliers are also struggling with a shortage of delivery drivers so it does mean that there are sometimes delays to deliveries to the practice.

It is for these reasons patients will find that they may not always have all of their repeat order ready when collecting and is why we are still operating a **5 working day turnaround time**. This ensures that in the majority of cases when a patient comes to pick up their medication it is all there.

Due to patient feedback, we are looking at implementing a new system on how we dispense repeat prescriptions. We will keep patients updated on improvements being made.

We will keep patients updated by informing patients via text when medication is ready to collect.

We will, through this Newsletter, continue to keep you updated on supply issues.

Turnaround Times for Repeat Medication

We are having ongoing problems with patients attending the Practice before 5 full working days to collect their repeat medication. Working days relate to days the Practice is open (Monday to Friday). The Practice non-working days are Saturday, Sunday and all Bank Holidays. This means if you drop your prescription off Friday afternoon you need to attend the practice the following week on Friday afternoon to pick up.

Subsequent to patient feedback, we are implementing a text message service which will confirm when your medication has been dispensed and is ready to pick up. This should resolve the frustrations of medication not being ready when attending the Practice.

Medication Delivery Service

The Practice continues to run a delivery service 5 days per week (Monday to Friday) for the delivery of repeat medication. We deliver to over 600 patients and we have received extremely positive feedback about the service. This was introduced for the convenience of our patients and to reduce queues for collections at the Dispensary.

If you would like to use this service please do speak to one of the team in the Practice or complete an application form on our website. If you work during the day but you have a safe place to leave medication or it will fit through the letter box we can still deliver.

Dispensary Staff

We have this month increased the number of staff in the Dispensary Team to help improve the service we deliver to patients so you will see some new faces. They are all working very hard and we would ask that you are polite and respectful to the Team at all times.

Visiting the Dispensary

The Infection Prevention Control Guidelines were revised two months ago which means we can have more people in the surgery. We have reviewed these guidelines in conjunction with local risk assessments and we have taken the decision to continue to ask patients to come into dispensary one at a time. We have taken this decision in order to protect our most vulnerable patients and staff.

We ask that patients continue to wear a mask when visiting the practice.

The dispensary is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 12pm and 2pm to 6pm. We are working towards trying to open again throughout the day and will update patients when we are in a position to do this.

Your Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and as you can see from this newsletter, we have been making improvements because of this. If you have any feedback or ideas for service improvement which you would like to share with us, please use the Contact Us form on our website.