

Rydal Group Practice
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Issue 4

Rydal Group

Patient Participation Group (PPG) Newsletter



Patient Group



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Dr Diggines Role At Rydal

Dr Diggines is currently working across the three boroughs of Redbridge, Havering and Barking and Dagenham on a health transformation project. He has been helping local GP surgeries work together to share resources and work more efficiently. He has also helped to set up the extended hours GP surgeries which are now available in South Woodford, Newbury Park and Fullwell Cross. He is just starting work helping with a much larger project across the area to streamline access to urgent care through General Practice, out-of-hours services and the local hospitals.

As a result of these projects, he has needed to pass care for his patient list over to Dr Jo Price. However, he is still a partner at Rydal doing one or two sessions each week. These will normally be "on the day" clinics for people who need help urgently. He is also doing a once weekly minor surgery clinic on a Tuesday afternoon.

Evenings And Weekends GP Service

Healthbridge opened the third of its out of hours access points at Southdene surgery in South Woodford in July. This is the nearest of these access points for Rydal patients.

If you need to consult a GP at a weekend or a weekday evening phone: 020 3770 1888.

During the week the line is open for making an appointment after 2pm.

Test Results

It is a Department of Health directive for patients to have access to their test results and many feel reassured by this. Patients with ongoing conditions learn the meaning of their test results figures, for example cholesterol or glucose levels, and when these results signal the need for corrective action. Indeed keeping a reading at a particular healthy level can become a helpful focus for efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This can sometimes be particularly valuable in raising the alarm if the readings significantly change.

However although there is no routine access via the Rydal website there is nothing to stop patients asking for a print off of their results. If you are worried or confused by your test results, it is best to request a telephone call back with a doctor.

At present the onus is on the patient to phone the practice for results after they have been sent for tests. All results should be available two weeks after the test.

Doctors will have seen the results and classified them as follows:

- Normal – the results go straight onto the case file.
- Abnormal but the results are safe in the medical context of the particular patient – the results usually go onto the case file.
- Abnormal signalling a change to medication – the minimal response from the doctor will be a phone conversation with patient.
- Abnormal and immediate – the patient goes on the doctors' phone list to be dealt with straight away that day.
- Widely abnormal and dangerous – the hospital pathology laboratory phones these through directly to the doctor for urgent action.

Contact the PPG:

The PPG is your contact with the running of your Practice. Personal clinical matters must be dealt with through the existing system, but please let us know if you have any comments, suggestions or general complaints about the running of the Practice.

Email us: RydalPPG@gmail.com or write to us via our Mailbox in Reception

The Practice Contacting Patients

One of the issues the PPG has been debating is how best the practice can communicate important messages to its patients. We have tried to enliven a Facebook page with younger patients in mind but in truth this has not really taken off. Currently our thinking is as follows:

If you decide you need to find out something about the practice the place to look is the website. But if the practice wants to alert you to something then, in this day and age, the most efficient and surest ways are by emails and text messages. Currently sending out emails is cumbersome and time consuming for busy Rydal support staff. The PPG has therefore suggested that it will try to help by means of a volunteer to carry out this task with proper safeguards to protect patient confidentiality.

But the practice needs to have the email addresses of all its patients who use email and their mobile numbers. May we therefore urge all patients and carers of patients to ensure that the practice has these addresses and numbers. There are forms at reception for recording this information.

Patients Contacting The Practice

For the past several months the practice has been piloting an access portal on its website called “askmyGP”. This has had the great advantage of allowing patients to request a GP call-back without the need for a username and password. The developers of “askmyGP” described Rydal as the biggest user of internet communication in the country.

However, patients had mixed feelings about the preliminary diagnostic questionnaire and many simply preferred to use the free text box to describe their symptoms. In addition, doctors found that they could not make good use of this diagnostic questionnaire information, which rather negated a major point of the service. For this reason the practice may not continue with the system, particularly as it has to justify the high annual cost.

Although they propose to continue with “askmyGP” for the time being with the expectation that it might be improved, the practice may revert to SystemOnline, which does require a username and password. Rydal PPG are concerned that this will lead to a falling off of on-line access, with consequential additional pressure on telephones and reception staff. If you want to be sure of being able to ask for a call back from a doctor (or order repeat prescriptions) via the internet, we recommend that you make sure you get your username and password. These can be obtained from Reception either in person or over the phone. Rydal PPG urges you to use online access if you possibly can.

If we do revert to SystemOnline, remember that it is not immediately obvious to use as you have to go to a section called “Questionnaires” to register your request and symptoms.

However, the latest signs are that patients are using “askmyGP” very readily and that telephone contacts remain very high. This is putting pressure on administrative staff and doctors and is resulting in some slippage in being able to respond promptly. There is a very real danger that the easier access is, the more patients will use it. A significant number of these additional calls on the surgery have turned out to be fairly trivial.

Self-Help

There needs to be an understanding between patients and the practice that easier access to medical help must be accompanied by a responsible use of the service by patients. Particularly when you are suffering from a common complaint such coughs, sneezes, sore throats, grazes, and headaches we strongly urge patients to click on “Self help – Get advice from NHS choices” right at the beginning of the “askmyGP” pages on the Rydal website. The advice you may need is often at the end of a few clicks rather than having to wait for a call back.

Or, of course, get in touch with your pharmacist who often knows what is best and will tell you when a doctor is really necessary.

Reshaping Health Care At The Local Level

Increasingly this year the PPG has been talking about developing a health care system across the whole locality of Woodford and Wanstead rather than one based on Rydal alone. This idea is being taken forward by Healthbridge Direct through an initiative called One Care. A website has just opened up. See: www.onecare.london

The aim is to see if GP practices in Wanstead and Woodford can join up with other key players in supporting health care such as social care, nurses and pharmacists to pool resources and better coordinate their activities.

We know that when we have a new worry our priority is to speak to a doctor quickly and conveniently. Although it is nice to speak to your own doctor, the main thing is to get help quickly.

However if you have an ongoing health condition, such as diabetes or dementia, then seeing your own doctor who knows your health issues well is very important. And when you have several serious ongoing health problems having a familiar team of support for you is crucial. The present arrangements with practices and other services working in isolation cannot provide this. It is for this reason that this work is going on led by Healthbridge Direct.
