

# The Baronscourt News

Volume , Issue

March 2008

## Welcome to the Spring 2008 edition of the Baronscourt News

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## Public holidays opening times

The surgery times over the Easter Period are as follows:

Good Friday March 21<sup>st</sup> – Closed.

Easter Monday March 24<sup>th</sup> – Closed

Tuesday April 10<sup>th</sup> – Open as normal

We are also closed on May Day

Monday May 5<sup>th</sup>

It may be useful to keep a small supply of paracetamol and other over the counter remedies at home. This may help you cope with common ailments such as simple coughs, colds and sore throats. In the event of a medical emergency please phone NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24

## Do we have your correct information?

**Occasionally** we may need to contact you and it can be frustrating for both the Practice and its patient if the information we hold on our system is incorrect. If you have moved address and/or changed your phone number recently please let one of the receptionists know or inform your doctor at your next consultation.

## Protected Learning Afternoon

The next staff protected learning afternoon will be Wednesday April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Practice will be closed from 12 noon that day.

## Baronscourt Surgery Website

As part of the Practices ongoing development we are pleased to introduce our practice website, which has been up and running since December 2007. The website address is:

[www.baronscourtsurgery.co.uk](http://www.baronscourtsurgery.co.uk) The website was produced to increase patient awareness of services offered in the practice. You will find lots of useful information and be able to utilise the website as another way to contact the surgery to order your repeat medication.

## Feedback of GPAQ 2007/08

In June 2007 we issued questionnaires to some of our patients attending GP appointments. Some of the questions asked about specific experiences for example, satisfaction with receptionists, GP availability, opening hours, continuity and some asked for specific information such as your ability to understand and cope with your problem after your appointment. Patients were also asked for their comments on whether there was anything good about their healthcare and what could be improved about the practice.

The results showed us that patient satisfaction compared to 2006 was increased in terms of the availability of GP appointments and continuity of care. You told us that you felt that generally our practice staff and GPs were welcoming, friendly and caring towards you.

The practice is due to meet to discuss the results and agree on an action plan, which we hope once implemented will increase patient satisfaction further. We also reported in 2006 that we planned to produce a Practice website to increase patient awareness of the services that we offer as a Practice. Patients were asked for their views on its content. As you will note from the article above the website has been up and running since December 2007.

We received positive comments from patient who were pleased with the appointment system and felt that this was a noticeable improvement on our previous trial of book on the day appointments

Please remember that if you have any comments or suggestions on any aspect of the surgery or the care you receive, please put a note in the suggestions box or ask to speak to the Practice Manager.

## **Did Not Attend**

It was also fed back to us through your comments in GPAQ 2007/08 that many of you have found it difficult to organise an appointment quickly and that the amount of missed appointments could be improved. We do appreciate that there are occasions when patients, for continuity of care have a need to see the same GP and if this GP is on annual leave or has outside commitments there can be a delay in organising a suitable appointment. If you feel that your need to see a GP is urgent then we do have a system in place that attempts to accommodate you. In order to deal with urgent medical problems there is a "walk in" surgery between 8.30am and 10am each day. As we have no control over the number of people attending these surgeries you may find you need to wait some time before being seen. The GP rota for this surgery is not fixed and you will not be guaranteed to see a particular doctor. An on call "duty" doctor will also be available for any urgent problems that occur later in the day. You can discuss your condition with the duty doctor by telephoning the surgery. In this instance, the receptionist will ask for details of your symptoms and the doctor will call you back. Missed appointments are unfortunately out with our control and we can only rely on the patient turning up to their booked appointment or cancelling in advance if they are unable to attend. It was reported in October 2007 that since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 732 appointments have been wasted by patients who chose not to attend after making an appointment to see a Doctor here at the Practice. That is the equivalent of 7 weeks worth of appointments for a full time GP. If you no longer require your appointment please cancel it so someone else who requires to be seen can use it.

## **Patient Confidentiality**

Doctors and the staff here at Baronscourt Surgery have a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patient information and are

governed by the rules of confidentiality, which are there to help and protect our patients. We cannot divulge a patient's medical history, even to their closest family members of patients over sixteen years of age and in some cases under sixteen, without permission from the patient, no matter how much they might want to. This means that we will not disclose information to your family, friends, and colleagues about any medical matters or scheduled appointments at all, unless we know that we have your consent to do so.

We are however required by law to notify the Government of certain infectious diseases (e.g. chickenpox) for public health reasons. The law courts can also insist that GPs disclose medical records to them. Doctors cannot refuse to cooperate with the court without risking serious punishment. We are often asked for medical reports from solicitors. These will *always* be accompanied by the patient's signed consent for us to disclose information

Limited information is shared with the local health authority to help them organise national programmes for public health, such as childhood immunisations, cervical smear tests and breast screening. NHS staff can look at your Emergency Care Summary (ECS) on computer if they need to treat you when this surgery is closed. They must ask you if you agree to this before they look at your information. This is a summary of basic information about your health, which might be important if you need urgent medical care. The NHS stores your ECS electronically using the highest standards of security. If you do not want an ECS to be made for you, please let a member of the reception team know.

The Department of Work and Pensions and others may require medical reports on you from time to time. Failure to cooperate with these agencies can lead to your loss of benefit or other support.

Life Assurance companies frequently ask for medical reports on prospective clients from the GP. Your signed consent form always accompanies these. GPs must disclose *all relevant medical conditions* unless you ask us not to do so. In that case we would have to inform the insurance company that you have instructed us *not to make a full disclosure* to them. You have the right, should you request it, to see reports to insurance companies or employers before they are sent.