



# News from the surgery

## New Services introduced at the surgery

### 'Text Messaging'

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These are members of Dorridge Surgery Patients Participation Group, representing your views in the Practice. In the issues to come, each member will be highlighted illustrating their involvement in the group.

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The CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) is the independent regulator of all health and adult social care in England. Their aim is to make sure certain standards of care are met in hospitals, care homes, dental surgeries and GP surgeries.

Hospitals & Care Homes are already registered with CQC, Dentists registered in 2012, & GP surgeries by April 2013. Dorridge registered in November 2012. Practices cannot open without registration.

GP's have to register against certain regulated activities (such as minor surgery, diagnostics etc).

## Hayfever

It's that time of year again (a little later than usual) when hayfever symptoms start to cause misery for many.

Hay fever is caused by an allergy to pollen. Pollen is the fine powder that is produced by plants, trees or flowers to fertilise other plants, trees or flowers. Grass pollen is the most common cause and tends to affect people every year from May to July. However, the term hayfever is often used when allergies are caused by other pollens such as tree pollens. Tree pollens tend to affect people from March to May. Symptoms are due to your immune system reacting to the pollen. Cells on the lining of the nose and eyes release histamine and other chemicals when they come into contact with pollen. This causes inflammation in the nose and eyes. Sometimes the sinuses and throat can also be affected. Hay fever affects about 1 in 5 people in the UK. It often develops in school-age children and during the teenage years. Symptoms usually return each year. Thankfully the condition often improves or disappears eventually. Hay fever also tends to run in families & can be associated with asthma and eczema.

The symptoms of hay fever can vary. Some people only have mild symptoms that tend to come and go. Others can be severely affected with symptoms that are present every day during the pollen season:

Symptoms include a runny and itchy nose, a blocked nose, sneezing, itchy and watery red eyes and an itchy throat. Less common symptoms include loss of smell, face pain, sweats and headache. Asthma symptoms -

The CQC are 'outcome focused', rather than based on systems or policies, and evidence is centred on people who use our services. It focuses on whether care is safe and effective and whether it meets the needs of our patients. The CQC aim to visit GP practices once every 2 years. More information can be found out: [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

## MMR Vaccinations:

If you are the parent(s) of children registered with the surgery, aged 10-16, please check to see if they have had 2 MMR vaccinations.

If your child/children have only received one dose, or none at all, please contact the surgery to book an appointment with the nurse to receive the appropriate dose(s).



such as wheeze and breathlessness can also occur. Symptoms may be so bad in some people that they can affect sleep, interfere with school and examinations, or interfere with work.

Hayfever is diagnosed from history of typical symptoms that occur during the hay fever season. Other tests are not usually necessary.

It is impossible to avoid pollen totally. However, symptoms tend to be less severe if you reduce your exposure to pollen. The pollen count is often given weather forecasts on TV.

If the pollen count is high symptoms can be reduced by:-

- **Staying indoors as much as possible and keeping windows and doors shut.**
- **Avoiding cutting grass, large grassy places, and camping.**
- **Showering and washing your hair after being outdoors, especially after going to the countryside.**
- **Wearing wrap-around sunglasses**
- **Keeping car windows closed and considering buying a pollen filter for the air vents in your car. These should be changed at every service.**

## Treatment

The commonly used hay fever treatments include antihistamine nasal sprays, antihistamine tablets, steroid nasal sprays, and eye drops. These are available over the counter from the Pharmacist who will be happy to advise you. Always inform the Pharmacist of any other medications you are taking.

A combination of eye drops (e.g. *sodium cromoglicate*), nose spray (e.g. *beconase*- It takes several days for a steroid spray to build up its full effect.) and anti histamine tablets/suspension (e.g. *cetirizine* or *loratadine*) will usually control most symptoms - Chlorphenamine (*piriton*) anti histamine is also commonly used but can be a bit sedating. Ideally treatment should be started 2-3 weeks before hayfever symptoms start, if this can be predicted.

Steroid injections are no longer recommended as these can have serious side effects but the GP may prescribe a short course of steroid tablets where symptoms are severe and not controlled by usual preparations. If your hay fever symptoms are not controlled on the medication that you are taking after 2-4 weeks, you should discuss this with your doctor. If your hayfever medication is working it should be continued until the end of the pollen season.

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, it is advised to try to avoid antihistamines, if possible. Treatment with a steroid nasal spray is usually tried. An antihistamine may sometimes be used if your symptoms are not controlled.

## Immunotherapy (desensitisation)

This treatment is sometimes used, mainly in cases where symptoms are severe and not helped by other treatments. It is not suitable for everyone and requires a hospital referral. It is unlikely to totally cure hay fever, but will often greatly reduce the severity of symptoms.

Support group Allergy UK Allergy Helpline: **01322 619898**

**Web: [www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)**

