

GREYSTOKE GAZETTE

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Surgery News



Sadly, we had to say goodbye to receptionist Julie and Health Care assistant Ebony in June. We wish them both well in their new jobs. Adverts are out for a new receptionist. In Ebony's place we are delighted to welcome **Catherine Watson** from the district nurse team.

She introduces herself below:

Hi , I'm Catherine Watson a new healthcare assistant at the surgery , you may recognise me as I have worked with the district nurses for nine years and looked after many patients from the surgery.

I grew up in Morpeth and know the area well , My interests are running and have competed in the great north run , Edinburgh half and a mini triathlon and more recently just completed the three peaks at Yorkshire and raised some money for Alzheimer's and Macmillan.

Medical Student Teaching

We have been awarded a certificate of achievement for an outstanding contribution to medical student teaching. We could not do this without the help of you and wish to thank all our patients who agreed to be seen by these doctors of the future. Hopefully some of them will choose to be GPs after such a positive experience.



Patient Participation Group (PPG)

We currently have a number of projects going to make ourselves more Autism, young people and Dementia friendly. If you have any suggestions or are interested in joining the PPG please contact the Practice manager Jenni Dollman. As you can see the PPG is not just a talking shop, they make a real difference and help us to improve patient experiences in the surgery. Other examples include arranging educational events, being involved in our CQC inspections, fighting for a roundabout at the junction and reviewing wording on documents to ensure they are easily understood.



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

Your eyes and the sun

Many people are aware 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 like: 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 a week broken down into short spells of unprotected sun to your face and arms on fair skin, longer on darker skins.

Managing Mood Swings

People can experience mood swings as a result of hormonal changes, depression, feeling under intense stress or through other physical or mental health issues. Mood swings can be caused by an imbalance in the chemicals in the brain linked to mood regulation in people with bipolar disorder or hormonal cycles around the menstrual cycle, pregnancy or menopause in women or low testosterone in men. Mood swings can last for a few minutes, hours or days.

In addition, anyone can suffer mood swings due to stressful situations when we may have feelings of being overwhelmed. When we experience more stress than we feel able to handle we can suffer from physical and mental fatigue. At that stage, we can become more reactive and emotional and can lose our ability to cope with stressful events. Mood swings can also be caused by depression, especially where this is untreated, and can fluctuate from irritability to extreme sadness to anger.

To help to regulate mood swings naturally:-

- Take regular exercise to improve both physical and mental health
- Avoid, or cut down on, caffeine, alcohol and sugar
- Review your diet to make sure you are getting enough nutrients
- Try to get a restful sleep of around 6-8 hours
- Practice stress management such as meditation, mindfulness, yoga or deep breathing

Please contact your GP or nurse practitioner if you need more help.