

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD I VISIT THE SURGERY?

We are often asked this question by patients with longstanding medical conditions, or who are on regular medication. We hope you will find the following guide helpful and that it allows you to make best use of our services.

When first diagnosed, or when starting new medication, your doctor or nurse will tell you how often to attend. The following applies only to those who have **stable** conditions.

### **Blood Test Information**

You may be requested to fast before your blood test. When fasting, eat nothing for 12 hours before your blood test, but drink at least a large glass of water. Take your medication as usual. A doctor or nurse will let you know if you need fasting samples. Please call the surgery one week after your blood test for the results. We will not automatically contact you with the results unless any further action is required.

### **High Blood Pressure**

Once a year you should request a routine non-fasting blood test (kidney function). Please bring a urine sample with you. Every three years fasting glucose and fasting cholesterol should be checked if they were previously normal. Your doctor or nurse will let you know if this needs to be done more frequently.

One week after your blood test please visit the Practice Nurse for a blood pressure check up, if it has not been recorded in the past six months. There is no need to have your blood pressure checked more often than six monthly, unless you have been requested to do so by your doctor or nurse.

### **Heart Disease or Stroke**

*(Ischaemic heart disease, angina, heart attack or heart failure, stroke or transient ischaemic attack)*

Once a year you should request a non fasting blood test (cholesterol, U&E). One week later you should visit the practice nurse for a check up and to discuss the blood test results.

### **Diabetes**

Once a year you should request an annual non fasting blood test (full blood count, kidney function, HbA1C, thyroid function, lipids). Please bring an early morning urine sample with you. One week later you should visit the Practice Nurse for a check up and to discuss the blood test results.

You should also ensure that you have an annual eye test with an Optometrist who is approved to provide the diabetes screening tests. You should have another blood test (HbA1c, FBC) and blood pressure check after six months.

To diagnose diabetes a fasting blood test is required. If the result is normal then this should not be repeated before three years unless any symptoms are present.

## **Asthma and Chronic Airways Disease**

You should visit the practice nurse once a year for a check up and to review your medication.

## **Thyroid Disease**

If you are taking Levothyroxine you should have a routine non fasting blood test (thyroid function) every year. If the dose of medication is changed you should have a further test after two to three months. In those with no thyroid problems and who are feeling well, there is no need to routinely test thyroid function. If you feel you might have a thyroid problem please discuss this with your doctor or nurse.

## **Prostate Screening**

There is no national screening programme for prostate cancer. The advice from local specialists is to perform an annual PSA blood test and physical examination of the prostate to those men aged between 55 and 75 who are concerned about prostate cancer. Those men already under a specialist the interval is recommended on an individual basis. Further information can be found online at [www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/prostate/index.html](http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/prostate/index.html)

## **Cholesterol Screening / Cholesterol Lowering Treatment**

*(But not if you have cardiovascular disease e.g angina, heart attack or stroke)*

A fasting cholesterol is recommended for everyone aged over 40 years. If this is normal then retesting every three to five years is usually sufficient. For those taking regular cholesterol lowering treatments there is no need for regular cholesterol or liver function tests unless you have any problems or have stopped your cholesterol-lowering medication.

## **Kidney Impairment (CKD)**

A routine early morning urine test as well as non fasting blood test (kidney function, full blood count, bone profile) once each year.