

OCTOBER UPDATE

Welcome to this months update. Here are a few articles you may find interesting:

Early breast cancer treatment more effective, says charity

Posted on 07/10/2009 in Medical Government/ NHS related news

Women have been told to have regular screenings to ensure that breast cancer treatment can begin as early as possible, because this will give the best chance of survival, according to a medical charity.

The Breast Cancer Campaign's director of research and policy Arlene Wilkie pointed out that screenings save lives, so women are advised not to miss their NHS check-ups.

Last month, Cancer Research UK announced the results of research which indicated that 600 lives could be saved per year if every female attended appointments that they are invited to.

Ms Wilkie noted that the number of ladies attending these screenings is falling, which is of concern to her.

She said: "The incidence of breast cancer is rising and we know that the earlier breast cancer is detected the greater the chances of survival."

Women over the age of 50 who have not received an invite to a screening in the past three years should get in touch with their local GP to arrange an appointment, Ms Wilkie concluded.

NHS 'should make gastric band surgery more available'

Posted on 07/10/2009 in Medical Government/ NHS related news

The NHS needs to offer gastric band surgery more readily to Brits in order to stem the tide of people going abroad for surgery that could be inferior to that they receive back home.

This is the opinion of TV presenter Anne Diamond, who feels so strongly on the subject that she has established a new group ? Experts in Severe and Complex Obesity (ESCO) ? reports the Telegraph.

She told the National Obesity Forum this week that those who have exhausted all other options should be able to access surgery on the NHS.

The news provider quotes Professor Alberic Fiennes, head of a specialist obesity unit at University College of London Hospital, as saying that doing this could also help diabetes sufferers.

"Each type II diabetes patient costs the NHS 2,500 per year, bariatric surgeries cost 8,000 and 60 to 80 per cent of patients with diabetes go into remission. This will start saving the NHS money within three years," he added.

This news comes after a report commissioned by Ash Wales and the British Heart Foundation Cymru found that the NHS in Wales spent 386 million between 2007 and 2008 on treating smoking-related conditions.

DoH 'to sponsor the Simpsons'

Posted on 06/10/2009 in Medical Government/ NHS related news

The Department of Health (DoH) has announced that its Change4Life anti-obesity initiative will sponsor the Simpsons on Channel 4.

Characters created specially by Aardman Animations will feature around the show from this week onwards and will run for a total of three months in a bid to raise awareness of the benefits of improved health, reports Marketing Magazine.

Created by global advertising agency M&C Saatchi, the feature shows the animated Change4Life characters gathering around a TV, echoing the habits of the famous US cartoon family.

"The Simpsons provides an ideal opportunity to reach a big portion of our target audience," the news provider quotes Sian Jarvis, director general of communications for

the DoH, as saying.

In other health news, the department last month revealed statistics which indicated that people with hearing difficulties are not waiting for as long as they used to before being issued with the devices they need.

The figures showed that patients in England now wait an average of 4.9 weeks from GP referral to receiving treatment in direct-access audiology services.

A quick warning for those of you considering purchasing health insurance,

The 5 Biggest Mistakes People make when Choosing Health Insurance

The following are traps that are easy to fall into that, particularly those working to a strict budget must do everything in their power to avoid.

Failure to understand any one of these 5 could seriously increase the premiums you have to pay and the cover you get.

1. Not knowing what you specifically need to be covered for

I have seen some people end up with fully comprehensive medical insurance when all they really wanted was dental cover or a replacement income if they were off sick!

2. Not knowing what is important to you

Is it being seen quickly, is it having access to private facilities? What is it? You may want to be covered for all in-patient treatment but be happy with limited out-patient cover for example. 'Additional benefits' can also be reduced or removed in many cases. Both of these examples would dramatically reduce premiums.

3. Not knowing the private hospitals in your area

There may be perfectly good Trust Care hospitals in your area which would be available for private treatment. If this is the case you could get significant discounts on your premiums with some companies by choosing to be treated at these hospitals instead of those specifically registered on the list as private hospitals.

4. Not understanding the influence of excesses

Ideally we would never pay an excess when we come to claim and there are policies available where that is the case. And when it comes to relatively minor claims it is just as well! What would be the point of a course of physiotherapy costing £480, when the excess is £500? But if someone is only taking insurance to make sure the things they would find difficult to pay for such as heart bypass or hip replacement are covered. £500 as an excess might not seem too bad, especially if it drastically reduced their monthly payments.

5. Not using a specialist health insurance adviser

They will be able to review the market and choose the plan best suited to your individual needs

And to finish with a bit of a scarey thought....

Sex Degrees of Separation

05 Oct 09

According to Lloyds Pharmacy, the typical British adult has slept indirectly with 2,811,024 people. Their "sex degrees of separation" calculator works out, based average number of partners for your, and your partners age, the number of indirect partners you are likely to have had.

The point of this site is to highlight risks of unprotected sex. According to the Health Protection Agency, cases of sexually transmitted infections rose last year by 0.5%, to 399,738 and cases of Chlamydia increased by eight per cent between 2006 and 2008.

The average British man claims to have had nine sexual partners while the average women claims 6.3 partners, giving an overall average of 7.65. However, as the new calculator demonstrates, they are potentially exposed to the sexually transmitted diseases of hundreds of thousands of others.

Clare Kerr, head of sexual health at Lloyds pharmacy said: "When we sleep with someone, we are, in effect, not only sleeping with them, but also their previous partners and their partners' previous partners, and so on. It's important that people understand how exposed they are to STIs and take appropriate precautions including using condoms and getting themselves checked out where appropriate.

"A simple sexual health test will give both partners in a relationship peace of mind. The majority of STIs are easy to rectify, but if left untreated, the long term implications can be very serious."

The Sex Degrees of Separation calculator, and more information about Lloyds pharmacy's sexual health services, can be found at [online](#).

Catch you next time.

Penny Oates

