

# Crown Heights Medical Centre—Patient's Newsletter

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## Are you a carer?

### Practice Information

Do you look after someone who is ill, frail, disabled or mentally ill? If so, you are a carer. We are interested in identifying carers, especially those people who may be caring without help or support. We know that carers are often "hidden" looking after a family member or helping a friend or neighbour with day to day tasks and may not see themselves as a carer. We feel that caring for someone is an important and valuable role in the community, which is often a 24-hour job that can be very demanding and isolating for the carer. We further believe carers should receive appropriate support by way of access to accurate information on a range of topics such as entitlement to benefits and respite care and not least, a listening ear when things get too much.

As a Carer, you are also entitled to have your needs assessed by Adult Care Services. A Carer's Assessment is a chance to talk about your needs as a carer and the possible ways help could be given. It also look at the needs of the person you care for. This could be done separately, or together, depending on the situation. There is no charge for an assessment.

If you are a carer, this is an opportunity to let the Practice now so that we can update our records and pass on your details to the Carers Service who can provide relevant information and advice, local support services, newsletter and telephone linkline. We can also refer you to Adult Care Services for a carer's assessment.

### National Guidance

Getting assessed is the route to getting help and support

from your local authority. If you are providing regular and substantial care for someone, ask to be assessed by your local authority so that it can agree what support you need.

The social services department of your local authority may be able to carry out a community care assessment of the needs of the person you're looking after, as well as a separate assessment of your own needs as a carer. You will be able to find contact details of your local authority by searching our "Services near you" directory (above right).

### Community care assessment for the person you care for

Social services should carry out an assessment of the person you're looking after if it appears they may be in need of any community care services. They may need community care services because of a disability, health condition, or if they're frail due to old age.

In some cases, health services (such as the NHS) and social services will work with each other to ensure that there is a thorough assessment. As part of the community care assessment, you will normally be consulted, unless the person you care for has any objections to your involvement.

There is guidance relating to specific groups of people (including older people, people with learning disabilities and people with long-term conditions), which sets out how carers should be involved in the assessment and planning process for the person they are looking after.

### Community care assessment for yourself

If you need community care services (because you have a

disability yourself, for example) you may need your own community care assessment. Being a carer will not prevent you from having an assessment.

### Carers' assessments

Some carers have a right to a separate assessment of their own needs. You should be able to have a separate carer's assessment in the following situations:

Where you are providing regular and substantial care to someone. Social services will also check that you are over 16 and looking after a disabled child or someone over 18.

- That the person you are looking after is someone they may provide community care services for.
- As part of the process of assessment when the person you are looking after is being discharged from hospital.
- When you are looking after someone with mental health problems who is on the Care Programme Approach.
- As a parent carer of a disabled child under 18, you have a right to a separate assessment of your own if the assessment done for the child under the Children Act does not fully take account of your needs.

### If you are providing care If you are not providing care on a regular and substantial basis

Social services would still have the power to carry out a carer's assessment, although not a duty to do so. You should still have your views as a carer taken into account when social services carry out a community care assessment for the person you look after, as described above.



### Practice Opening Hours

#### Monday to Friday

08:00 to 18:30

#### Extended opening (by appointment only)

#### Monday to Thursday

18:30 to 19:30

#### Friday

07:30 to 08:00

[www.crownheightsmedicalcentre.co.uk](http://www.crownheightsmedicalcentre.co.uk)

Where can we find out more about the practice?

From this site, did you know that you can order prescriptions and make appointments on-line.

Even get this newsletter delivered on a regular basis straight to your home

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## What is Asthma

Asthma causes the airways of the lungs (the bronchi) to become inflamed and swollen.

The bronchi are small tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs. If you have asthma, the bronchi are more sensitive than normal and certain substances or triggers can irritate them.

Common triggers include house dust mites, animal fur, pollen, tobacco smoke, cold air and chest infections.

When the bronchi are irritated, they become narrow and the muscles around them tighten, which can increase the production of sticky mucus, or phlegm. This makes it difficult to breathe and causes wheezing and coughing, and it may make your chest feel tight.

The severity of the symptoms of asthma differs from person to person, from mild to severe. The narrowing of the airways is usually reversible – occurring naturally, or through the use of medicines. However, for some people with chronic (long-lasting) asthma, the inflammation may lead to an irreversible obstruction of the airways.

A severe onset of symptoms is known as an asthma attack, or 'acute asthma exacerbation'. Asthma attacks can be life-threatening and may require hospital treatment.

### Triggers

In 2005 in the UK, 1318 deaths were caused by asthma. Over 5m people in the UK have asthma. Asthma in adults is more common among women than men.

The cause of asthma is not

fully understood, but it is thought to be a combination of genetic (inherited) and environmental factors. Asthma often runs in families, and you can inherit the susceptibility to asthma, which is then triggered by certain factors in the environment.

Factors include exposure to air pollutants, such as cigarette smoke, or certain substances that can cause allergic reactions (allergens), such as pollen or animal fur.

There is no cure for asthma, but there are a number of treatments that can normally manage the condition. Treatment is based on two important goals:

- Relief of symptoms.
- Preventing future symptoms from developing.

Successful prevention can be achieved through a combination of medicines, lifestyle advice and identifying and then avoiding potential asthma triggers. The normal treatment is through the use of an inhaler.

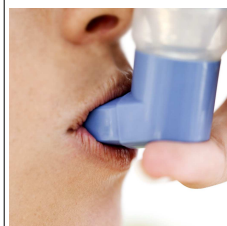
There are also different types of pre-existing asthma that can be made worse by certain activities:

### Work-aggravated asthma

is a pre-existing asthma that is made worse by dust and fumes at work.

fumes at work.

**Occupational asthma** is due to exposure to specific substances at work. Often



these substances are specific to certain occupations. For example, some nurses develop occupational asthma as a response to prolonged exposure to latex, and some workers in the food-processing industry develop occupational asthma as a response to prolonged exposure to flour.

### Exercise-induced asthma

is a pre-existing asthma brought on by physical exercise. However, for most people it is an indication of poorly controlled asthma.

The symptoms of asthma may occur for no obvious reason.

They may include:

- feeling breathless (you may gasp for breath),
- a tight chest (like a band tightening around your chest),
- wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), and
- coughing, particularly at night (this is less common in adults than in children).

The severity and duration of the symptoms of asthma are often variable and unpredictable, and are sometimes worse during the night or with exercise.

### Symptoms of an asthma attack

The symptoms of a severe asthma attack often develop slowly, taking between six and 48 hours to become serious.

You should remain alert for any signs of worsening symptoms. These include:

- a drop in your peak expiratory flow rate (see the 'diagnosis' section for more information),
- an increase in your pulse rate,
- an increase in wheezing, and
- feeling agitated or restless.

If you notice your symptoms getting worse, do not ignore them. Instead, contact your GP or asthma clinic.

Typical symptoms of a severe asthma attack include:

- your symptoms will get worse quickly,
- breathing and talking will be difficult,
- your pulse may race,
- your lips and/or your finger nails may turn blue,
- your skin may tighten around your chest and neck, and
- your nostrils may flare as you try and breathe.

You should immediately seek medical help if you have symptoms of a severe asthma attack.

**Car parking for Crown Heights Medical Centre now available in Festival Place—Level B1—direct access over the footbridge into Crown Heights Medical Centre.**