



## Dr Gardiner...

Our new monthly readers' medical questions feature.

*I have seen NHS Health Checks advertised. I am not sure what these are and why we should have one. Do you think I should ask for a health check?*

Everyone is at risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and some forms of dementia. Some people have a higher risk however, and the health check is designed to look at an individual's lifestyle, blood pressure, cholesterol and other factors to try to predict those at greater risk so we can offer treatment and advice on how to reduce your risk. Improving your lifestyle can be very effective. If your risk is over 20% (that is the chance of a stroke or heart problem happening in the next 10 years) and you have addressed any lifestyle factors then some medication may be appropriate for you. Everyone aged 40 to 74 years, who is not already suffering from cardiovascular condition (such as hypertension, diabetes or heart disease) and who is not taking a "statin" is entitled to a check. At East Quay the checks are performed by our Healthcare Assistants (HCAs). At the check you will be asked some simple questions about your family history and your lifestyle. Your blood pressure, weight and height will be measured and a simple blood test to check your cholesterol level will be done. After the check the HCA will discuss how you can reduce your risk and stay healthy and, if needed, will refer you to your GP or nurse

To send in a question for next month's edition e-mail [Rachel@eastquaymedicalcentre.com](mailto:Rachel@eastquaymedicalcentre.com)

Note, we cannot give personal advice. This is intended for general advice only.

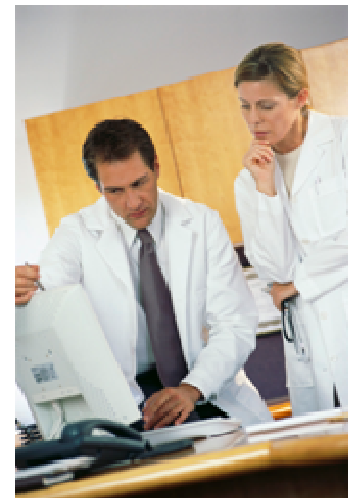
## Did you know that the NHS is changing how it shares your medical record?

All GPs will soon be required to share elements of your medical record, including some confidential personal and medical information, with the **Health and Social Care Information Centre** and **NHS England**. This will be managed through a system called **Care.data** and the **GPES (GP Extraction System)**. It was planned to be rolled out in September 2013 but was paused until March 2014. It has since been paused again until August 2014.



Where the NHS deems it appropriate, data will be automatically extracted electronically from the practice computer system then linked with other data extracts from hospitals and social care records. This data can then be used by the NHS for health planning or potentially, where appropriate, made available in an anonymised format to researchers outside of the NHS for health development. Sharing information should improve health and care

outcomes for all patients; helping to improve the way that health care is delivered, improving services offered by the NHS and carrying out research into the treatments that can be offered.



Your postcode or your NHS number will be used to link your records in a secure system. The majority of extracts will be anonymised and you will not be identified. However in special cases which have been fully assessed the system may want to identify patients. For example if research needs to be done regarding a very unusual condition and it is hard to identify patients. There will be an authorisation process and all practices will be able to decide whether to allow these non-anonymised extracts.

**If you are happy for your information to be used in this way you do not need to do anything, as the Practice is required by law to comply upon receipt of approved requests.**

**However, individual patients may instruct us to stop the transfer of their practice based data where they are not happy to share this information. If you do not want your records to be uploaded write to Practice Manager ASAP and she will ensure your records are not included.**

# News flash.....

## Healthy lifestyle avoids many diseases and helps you to live longer.

Living a healthy lifestyle is the most important thing you can do to avoid many diseases and instead lead a long, healthy and active life. Life today means that many people don't eat a healthy diet, only do minimal physical activity, drink more alcohol than they should or smoke even though they know they should quit. Making lifestyle changes is often really hard but it really is worthwhile and the sooner you do it the more benefit you get. Don't wait to develop diabetes or high blood pressure before you address your unhealthy habits.

Bridgwater Bay Health Federation (the group of local GP practices) have FREE healthy lifestyle clinics to help you. These are on a one to one basis, no group sessions and no fees. The clinics are there to help people who are overweight or obese to identify lifestyle changes they want to make and provide support and advice to ensure these are manageable and successful. All we ask is for you attend to be weighed on a weekly basis and continue to lose your weight. The clinics are held at East Quay Medical Centre on a Monday morning/Tuesday

late afternoon and Taunton Road Medical Centre on a Tuesday morning.

Interested? Call Sue on 01278 440406 (between 9-4 Mon to Fri) to make your first appointment.

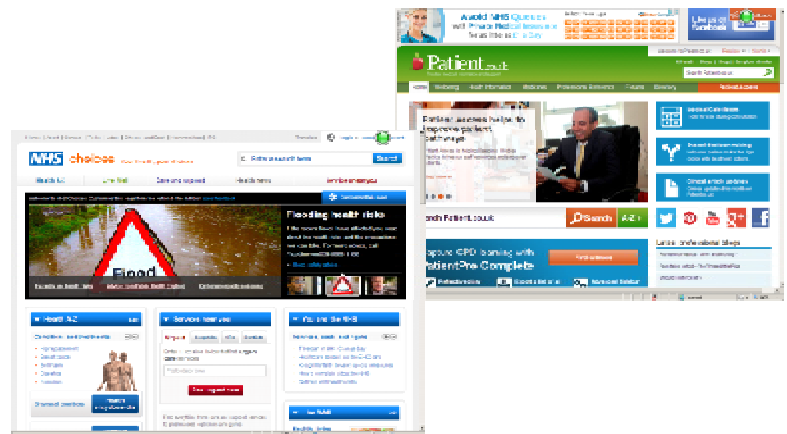
If this isn't for you but you want some motivation and inspiration you may like to try the new free Somerset healthy living website. Take a look at [www.zingsomerset.co.uk](http://www.zingsomerset.co.uk). It tells you all about local activities and exercise groups as well as helps you track your activity, weight and keep you motivated to live a healthy lifestyle.

### NHS Low Income Scheme

If you have a low income, you may be able to get help with NHS costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS). The scheme covers:

- prescription costs
- dental costs
- eye care costs
- healthcare travel costs
- wigs and fabric supports

You can apply for the scheme as long as your savings, investments or property (not counting the place where you live) don't exceed the capital limit. In England, the limit is £23,250 for people who live permanently in a care home £16,000 for everyone else. Any help you're entitled to is also available to your partner and any dependents. The rules governing who is eligible are broadly the same as those for Income Support. To apply for your certificate, you'll need to complete an HC1 form and return it in the envelope provided. You can order an HC1 form online or pick one up at your local Jobcentre Plus office.



When looking for medical advice on the web...

Don't use the Google Practitioner!

Use [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk) [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

These are the websites your GP trusts

The New Bridgwater Hospital has an open day on Saturday 5 April. Go along to see the new facilities. Everyone is welcome!

### Our new monthly readers' service question & answer section

*Isn't the NHS complicated at times? Who do I turn to if I get lost?*

Meet Christine, our 'sat-nav' to help you find your way if you get lost!

She has been a member of the team at East Quay for nearly ten years. She works closely with the GPs when patients need care outside of the practice – for example treatment at hospital. Her experience means she knows the NHS really well and this makes sure we get the best possible care for our patients. If you have been referred for further care and are finding it difficult to understand or if you are experiencing an obstacle in accessing the service you need, Chris may be able to help. She is available at the practice from Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. She usually can be found for drop in in Room 17 (just off the waiting room).

