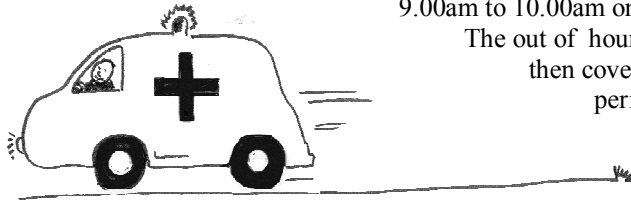


## Call the Doctor!

During the Christmas period my parents-in-law, who were staying with us, were both taken ill. Thankfully it was only minor ailments that laid them low but I was struck by their lack of knowledge about the out of hours cover



provided by their local Surgery. When I suggested that, on their return home, they should call the Duty Doctor I was met with the reply; *"We don't have a doctor on duty when the Surgery is closed."* This set me wondering just how many people in the Wychwoods are labouring under the same misapprehension, despite all the informative notices and leaflets.

### OOH Do We Call?

In this area we can still ring the usual number for the Wychwood Surgery: 01993 831061 and details of the Out of Hours (OOH) number will be on the recorded message. This number, **0845 345 8995** is on the Surgery website, in the Practice leaflet and displayed in the entrance to the Surgery. On dialling this number you will be put through to a hub where the call is triaged - a system of assessing the patient's priorities based on the urgency of their medical needs. Whoever makes the call will be advised what is happening next, for example, a doctor will telephone back, they need to go to Banbury or Witney to see a duty GP, a paramedic will come, etc. Out of hours periods are 6.30pm to

8.00am, Monday to Thursday and 6.30pm to 9.00am Friday night/ Saturday morning. The Wychwood Surgery is open for emergency patients from 9.00am to 10.00am on Saturdays.

The out of hours service then covers the period 10.00am on Saturday until 8.00am

on Monday, plus Bank Holiday periods when the Surgery is closed.

### Is it an Emergency?

Back to Christmas; my brother-in-law wanted to know whether to take Mum to the Accident and Emergency Department at their local hospital; she had a simple eye infection. So how do you decide if such a visit is necessary or not?

Are you dealing with an accident that requires medical attention? Is it an emergency that needs urgent medical attention? If the answer to either question is yes then head for the hospital but if it is something for which you would normally visit the GP then ring the Out of Hours number and get their advice. I can imagine nothing worse than sitting in a crowded A&E department, watching seriously ill people being treated ahead of me because my complaint was of a trivial nature.

If, however, it is something serious or potentially life-threatening do not hesitate - dial 999 immediately. This sounds very dramatic but in some cases there is no time to lose.

**Christine Halliday**

*Our usual grateful thanks to Jan Harvey for her illustrations on Page 9 and above*