

January 2021 Newsletter

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Over the coming weeks/months we will be participating in the mass vaccination programme. At the time of writing all the sessions are being held at the Totally Wicked stadium in St.Helens. There are two vaccines currently available – the Pfizer vaccine, which is unstable and needs to be stored at very low temperatures and the Astra Zeneca (Oxford) vaccine. We are being given extremely short notice regarding deliveries and vaccination schedules. The over 90's cohort will have completed their two dose vaccination by 8th January. The next cohort will be the over 80's, nursing home residents, and care home staff. Be prepared to be available at short notice.

Due to the vaccination programme, we will be pulled off general practice duties to vaccinate as many patients as quickly as possible. We have arranged additional locum cover but it is extremely important to choose wisely if needing medical help. For self-limiting and minor illnesses contact the pharmacy and not the GP. For minor injuries needing assistance attend the minor injuries unit. If offered GP appointments outside the practice for routine problems, please accept what is offered if appropriate. Do not contact the practice over dental issues.

2020 has seen a huge change in the way general practice is performed and we are immensely grateful for your ongoing understanding and embracing of the new system. However, we still need your help.

1. If completing an e-consult about a rash/skin lesion etc, please attach a photograph. This saves having to request it separately.
2. If you know you need to speak to the GP, please ring reception/go online and book a telephone appointment directly.
3. Please remember the 'repeat script' function is to request prescriptions on your repeat list or prescribed very recently. If you want to discuss medication, request an item last issued three years ago, book a telephone appointment.
4. If after an outpatient appointment you are advised to contact your GP to discuss a new medication, please book a telephone appointment to request the medication so this can be discussed properly with you – side effects, risks etc. We don't know what was said in secondary care and cannot issue safely without the discussion taking place.
5. Please answer your phone when you have booked a telephone appointment.
6. Please collect blood form envelopes from the porch when requested to do so.
7. Please do not drop off unasked for samples with no clinical details – these will be destroyed.

The surgery upgrade has been completed (barring some tidying up) and this has increased capacity to see patients face to face when necessary – but please arrive on-time (not early or late) and wear a mask which covers your nose and mouth.

Please use the practice website to access help and advice. Many of us are suffering increased stress/anxiety/depression after a long and difficult 2020 and there is a lot of help available via the COVID-19 icon or the Well-being Centre icon on the home page.

2021 is going to be very difficult also, especially the first six months but there is light at the end of the tunnel. The kindness and consideration shown repeatedly in the local community is awe inspiring. We can get through this by pulling together and supporting each other.

Huge thanks to all for the Christmas gifts and cards – especially appreciated after such an awful year. Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2021.