



Three Shires Medical Practice Newsletter

Summer 2026

Practice Update

In our Spring newsletter, we said that we were waiting to hear from the Government about the GP contract for 2026/27. The new core GP contract was announced at the end of February and was imposed on GP Practices without any negotiation from the start of April. Nearly 60% of GP's responded to an invitation to vote on whether to accept the new contract and 99% of those GP's have overwhelmingly rejected the new contract. The BMA is seeking negotiations with the Department of Health to achieve a more financially viable contract. This current contract will not relieve the financial pressure on our practice, and we are reviewing our operations and services with the money we have available.

Due to operational issues at Colerne Surgery we will be closing on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11th May 2026. Patients can still access medical care at other branches for example Marshfield on those days. We apologise for the inconvenience that this will cause. A Q&A document has been prepared for patients and is available via our practice website or in surgery.

We continue to be extremely grateful to everyone who've supported the Friends of Three Shires whose fundraising for equipment has made an immense difference to our ability to provide the levels of medical services we are able to offer. £30,000 has been raised and vital equipment has been purchased which we would not otherwise have been able to afford.

We hope that you will continue to be understanding with Practice staff as we work our way through the challenging months ahead.

Friendship in Grief

A Bereavement group meets regularly in Marshfield, although it is not restricted to Marshfield residents.

For those who have experienced loss, this group provides a friendly, safe environment to talk freely about one's feelings and emotions. Real coffee is served liberally, and experienced listeners are on hand.

A new group has recently been launched called the Carers' Forum, for those who have loved ones in a Care Home or who care for loved ones at home. Again, the group provides a listening ear and an opportunity to share experiences with others going through the same thing. There is liaison with the Carers Advisory Partnership and the Carers Support service for South Gloucestershire, who provide practical advice on issues such as finance, choosing a Care Home, etc.

If there is anyone in Wick or Pucklechurch who has the expertise to start similar groups locally, do please get in touch. For example, retired counsellors or psychotherapists.

For dates and further information, contact: Janet Spence (chair, PPG)
07813-963251 or 4patientparticipation@gmail.com

Tension Headaches

Tension headaches are the most common type of headache. The most common symptoms include a dull ache or pain on one or both sides of the head and/or neck or feeling as if something is pressing on your head. You may also feel some tenderness in your neck and shoulders although this can be an indication of a slightly different type of headache.

Tension headaches can last for an hour or for days and but can persist.

Common causes of tension headaches include:

- Stress and anxiety
- Sleep problems
- Fatigue
- Excess caffeine or caffeine withdrawal
- Muscular tension
- Poor posture
- Dehydration.

Painkillers like paracetamol, aspirin and ibuprofen can treat tension headaches. Relaxations exercises, yoga and massage may also help.

It may be helpful to consult a pharmacist as some medications such as ibuprofen are not advisable if you are pregnant.

If you are having headaches several times a week and/or they are persistent and/or moderate to severe, and painkillers or relaxation exercises do not relieve the headache, or you experience throbbing pain or nausea, then it is wise to speak with your doctor, as these may not be tension headaches.

At an appointment with your GP, you will be asked about any previous history of headaches, the regularity, intensity and longevity of the headaches, the possible causes of the headaches and what you have done so far to manage them. Alternative prescribed painkiller options will be considered with you. Your GP may want to seek more specialist testing and advice from a neurology specialist to confirm diagnosis and consider other potential treatment options such as physiotherapy or reflexology.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Your PPG continues to meet quarterly. Our role is to offer constructive ideas to the Practice on behalf of Three Shires patients, to improve and support health care provision within the Practice, improve communication between the Practice and patients and develop new support. We support the Practice vaccination programmes, in the past couple of years we've lobbied our MP's and local councillors about improved funding for our Practice. Support developed from the PPG includes the Bereavement Group based in Marshfield and the Doynton based Memory Café.' The Friends of Three

Shires fundraising to buy essential equipment came from the PPG. We will be supporting two events for carers during the second week in June and hope to be starting up a Type 1 Diabetes support group soon. If you would like to become involved on the PPG, please contact us on 4patientparticipation@gmail.com or leave a letter addressed to the PPG at your local surgery.

Hay Fever

Hay fever is a nasal inflammation caused by the immune system overreacting to allergens in the air. Hay fever tends to be worse between April and September when the pollen count is at its highest.

Hay fever symptoms include:

- sneezing and coughing
- blocked and/or runny nose
- itchy, watery eyes, nose, mouth throat, and/or ears
- headache and tiredness.

While there is no cure for hay fever, symptom relief can include

- Vaseline around the nostrils to trap pollen
- Wearing wrap around glasses
- Showering and changing clothes if you have been outside and staying indoors where possible, keeping doors and windows closed
- Avoid walking on, cutting grass, or keeping fresh flowers at home
- Not drying clothes outside as they can trap pollen.

Speaking with a pharmacist may help as they can offer advice and suggest treatments such as antihistamine drops, tablets or nasal sprays. There are several types of antihistamine, some of which can cause drowsiness and others that have few or no such side effects. You may have to try different antihistamines to find what works best for you.

For more information see www.allergyuk.org or www.nhs.uk/condition/hay-fever.

Village Agent

South Gloucestershire Village Agents link people in rural areas with advice and support services to support independent living, health, and well-being. This is a free confidential service for anyone over age 18, with one-to-one support signposting you to appropriate professionals. Our Village Agent is Sharon Wood, and she covers Marshfield, Doynton, Dyrham, Tormarton, Wick and Pucklechurch. She can be contacted on 07985 018550 or sharon@wern.org.uk

Scam Aware!

If you get a phone call from your bank claiming to be from your bank's fraud team, don't give any information. Wait for perhaps 15 minutes finding in the meantime a phone number for your bank, then phone them ideally from another phone and explain the call that you have had.

Cataracts

A cataract is an age-related eye condition, where the lens in your eye becomes cloudy, causing blurring of vision, some sensitivity to light, poor night vision and reduced definition of colour. If you wear glasses, you may find that you need to change your glasses prescription more often. It is more likely that a cataract will develop after the age of 60, if you have another eye condition, or a parent, brother or sister has needed cataract surgery and/or you experience high blood pressure.

Cataracts do not usually need immediate treatment. Regular monitoring by an optician or eye specialist, will determine when a cataract requires more attention.

If your visual problems are affecting your day-to-day life, your GP, optician, or eye specialist will probably suggest surgery.

Cataract surgery is straightforward and is done in a hospital or clinic under local anaesthetic, meaning you remain awake, but you should not be in any pain. The cloudy lens is replaced with an artificial lens, and you should be able to go home on the same day.

Recovery from cataract surgery is normally quite quick. You will be advised about pain relief, and you will need to use eye drops for four to six weeks to assist healing and avoid infection. You will also be given an eye shield for use at night and if you go out in windy weather.

While you recover for at least six weeks, do not:

- rub your eye
- drive until your vision is back to normal
- do any heavy lifting or any sport
- put on eye make-up
- get water in your eye or go swimming!

Complications are unusual but visit your optician or GP if your vision becomes cloudy, you find it hard to focus, your eye becomes painful or you experience dark and light areas within your field of vision.

Carers Week 2026

Calling everyone who is a carer for a relative, friend or neighbour who could not manage without your help. During National Carers week from 8th to 14th June, we are running information and support events, one in Pucklechurch and one in Marshfield. Please see the enclosed poster for more details.

Memory Café

Our Memory Café meets on the first Thursday of each month at Doynton Village Hall from 2-4pm. It is an informal drop in café for people living with a dementia along with a family member, friend, or carer. Each month has a theme. In June we have a Zoo talk, in July there'll be a sporty theme, August's theme is holidays and a small brass band and in September Marshfield male voice choir will be with us. For more information please phone or text 0781 731 1001.