



Three Shires Medical Practice Newsletter

Spring 2020

Easter Opening Arrangements

It seems only a very short time ago that we were wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Easter is at the end of the second week of April this year nevertheless the doctors, nurses and staff at Three Shires would like to wish all our patients a very happy Easter. Over the Easter holiday period, there will be some days when our surgeries will be closed.



All four of our Practice surgeries will be closed on Friday 10th April and Monday 13th April.

All our surgeries will close for routine matters and medicine collection by 5.00pm on Thursday 9th April so please ensure that you collect any prescriptions, preferably by the end of the day on Wednesday 8th April, and order medication by Monday 6th April if needed before Easter.

Please telephone 111, if you need a doctor over the Easter holidays.

CORONAVIRUS

If you feel unwell and need advice on potential Coronavirus infection, NHS 111 has an online coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> that can tell you if you need medical help, and advise you.

Everyone is being reminded to follow the public health advice on the NHS website to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Stay at home if you have coronavirus symptoms

Stay at home for 7 days if you have either:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

Message from the Managing Partner

Clearly, we are in the midst of difficult times with the current Coronavirus Pandemic, and the unknown risks for staff and patients. We are fortunate in having four surgery sites. It is our aim to keep operations running at all sites, but it is foreseeable that one or more sites may have to be temporarily closed. The situation is changing daily, and we will try to keep our website and phone messages updated with current advice. We have IT and phone systems now that allow patient records to be visible at all sites, and phone calls transferred which helps enormously. We are likely to need to do much more telephone triage when patients ring to make appointment, which will mean asking patients questions about their current condition over the phone prior to being given an appointment. We are also being asked to do less face-to-face work to avoid risk of virus transmission –so we will be starting to do video consultations, and have increasing use of phone calls and SMS messages.

It would really help our practice if patients who need to contact our practice to order medicines, or book appointments do so online.

The NHS app <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-app/> allows anyone with a smartphone to verify their own identity using a government service, and get quick access without visiting the surgery. It also allows us to ensure that your details (particularly mobile phone numbers) are up to date.

Aside from this, we have some extra resources coming into our practice from our Primary Care Network which will be welcome. We are now members of a 4 practice network, known as Network4. This is a government initiative to deliver some service and staff to groups of patients. We welcomed a new Social Prescriber who will be doing sessions in our 4 surgeries to help support needy patients. We are expecting to have a small central Pharmacist resource to help with large projects.

Please re-order medication normally, and try not to “panic order” additional medication. We are being advised that the normal medication supply chain will cope –but will do so better if demand is fairly normal.

Dr Richard Greenway

Managing Partner

Care Quality Commission

Following the Practice Annual Regularity Review (ARR) in January we are happy to say that CQC were satisfied we are continuing to do a good job. We will have another ARR in one year.

Staff Update

At the end of March I will be taking early retirement after working as a nurse for nearly 40 years. I have spent the last 8 years of my career working as a Practice Nurse with The Three Shires team, job sharing at Colerne surgery and also working at Marshfield surgery.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and feel very lucky to have shared the role at Colerne with the lovely Rachel Legg. I would like to thank my wonderful colleagues, GPs, Nurses and receptionists and feel proud to have been part of this fantastic team. Lastly a big thank you to the patients for allowing me the privilege of participating in their care, I have loved it.

I wish everybody well in the future.

Charlie (Practice Nurse)

We wish Charlie much happiness in her retirement she will missed.

We also said goodbye to Trish Campbell and welcomed Lisa Overton a receptionist based at Colerne Surgery.

How's Your Prostate? Time for a Check-Up?

The prostate is a small gland found only in men. It surrounds the tube carrying urine out of the body, (the urethra). The prostate gland is about the size of a walnut and tends to get larger as you grow older. Simple tests can indicate if you have a prostate problem; these can be undertaken at the GP surgery; men over 50 are encouraged to take advantage of testing. The tests may include a urine test to rule out infection, a PSA (prostate specific antigen) blood test and/or a DRE (Digital Rectal Examination).

If you notice any changes when you urinate, this could be a sign of a problem with your prostate. These changes include, needing to pee more often than usual especially at night, straining to start, weak flow, feeling that you bladder hasn't emptied properly, sudden urgent need to pee, and leakage after you've finished.

The best known prostate conditions are prostate cancer, now the most diagnosed cancer in England, an enlarged prostate (not caused by cancer), a common condition associated with growing older and prostatitis (again not caused by cancer) which is when the prostate becomes inflamed sometimes due to infection.

There's a general view that men are slow to respond to health problems; as far as prostate conditions are concerned, there's nothing to fear from the tests and given the treatment and support that's available, there's all to gain by asking your GP about keeping your prostate healthy!

SO DON'T PUT IT OFF, GET YOURSELF TESTED

Patient Participation Group

Three Shires Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) has now been in operation for almost two years. The Group has twenty members representing each surgery site. The Patient Reference Group (PRG) which is an email contact group, currently has 58 members. The PPG consults the PRG a few times a year for ideas and suggestions. The PPG has tried this year to put into action a few of the suggestions that were made in the patient survey that the PPG with the help of the Practice partners and staff, completed at the start of the year.

Bereavement support is one of the initiatives that has commenced across the whole Practice area while a Good Neighbour Scheme is being developed in Marshfield. Both initiatives operate separately from the Practice. By attending and speaking with carers at the flu clinics in the autumn, we've helped the Practice to increase the number of carers on the Practice Carers Register to 260. We've also raised the issues of making the waiting areas at the surgeries more patient friendly, enhancing patient confidentiality at surgery reception and keeping repeat prescription forms up to date. We will be discussing our plans for 2020 at our AGM (March); we're thinking about a health event in the summer. If you would like to know more about the PPG please look at the Practice website www.threeshiresmedical.co.uk and the Have Your Say icon. Alternatively our email address is 4patientparticipation@gmail.com. If you don't have internet access or email please write to the PPG secretary at Pucklechurch surgery, 12, Becket Court, Pucklechurch BS16 9QG.

Accessible Toilets

A RADAR key gives you access to accessible toilets all over the UK. You can buy a key from the Vassall Centre in Fishponds for £5, (phone to check availability) telephone number 0117 965 9630.

In South Gloucestershire you can get one accessible toilet key free of charge from any of the Council's One Stop Shops the nearest of which for the Practice catchment area are in Kingswood and Yate. You can also order a key online at www.radar.org

Changing Places Toilets

Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all disabled people. Changing places toilets provide extra equipment and space including a changing bench and a hoist. You can find registered toilets and a map on their website www.changing-places.org

Just Can't Wait Toilet Card



The Bowel and Bladder Community produce a card using the universally acknowledged WC signage. It can give peace of mind knowing that you can use the card to explain why you need to access a toilet quietly without having to actually say what is wrong. They also produce a phone app to help you

locate the nearest public facilities.

Website www.bladderandbowel.org telephone 01926 357220

Patients Who Did Not Attend Their Appointment

A big thank you to all our patients who let us know if you cannot keep an appointment that you have made. It is so important that you let us know as it means that other people who need to see a doctor or nurse can take that appointment. Many patients have told us that having appointments texted to you and receiving a reminder a day or two beforehand has been very helpful.



If you need to cancel an appointment please contact the surgery that you are due to attend as soon as possible.

Unwanted Medication

The best way to dispose of both prescribed medication and medicines bought from a pharmacy that are no longer needed or are out of date, is to return them either to your local surgery or a local pharmacy. It is best to return unwanted medicines in their original packaging when possible as some medication needs special handling. Please never dispose of medicines down a sink or toilet or with waste that is taken away by refuse collectors because they can become a hazard both to the environment and the water supply.



One of the principal reasons that we only issue prescription medication as a one month supply is to reduce the amount of medicine which is currently not used and therefore wasted.

Congratulations Pucklechurch School

Congratulations to the students, staff and volunteers at Pucklechurch School for their successful well-being week in February. This included a variety of activities, such as origami, Pilates, cooking, music, singing, sports and games, all designed to enable positive attitudes towards health and wellbeing. It was a great pleasure to participate on behalf of Three Shires Medical Practice and support flourishing in our community. The students and I explored how we can thrive by eating, moving, soothing and sleeping well. Sleeping well is often underappreciated but especially important for our physical-emotional health, relationships and learning in growing children. It was fantastic to share the children's warmth and enthusiasm to learn. I wish them all the best and look forward to seeing what follows. **Dr Bhatia**



Looking After Our Mental Health

Having good mental health helps us relax and enjoy our lives more. There are simple things that we can all do to look after our mental health and well-being. Trying to look after our mental health is not something we should just be doing when we are struggling, or feeling low, anxious or depressed. In fact it is at difficult times that it is far harder to care well for ourselves.

Caring about our mental health is actually something that we should be thinking about all the time. Good mental health can help us sleep better, manage our physical health better and enable us to do things that we want to do more effectively and pleasurably. It also helps us to have more positive and healthy relationships. Looking after our mental health is not only good for us now but it can help us manage difficult times in the future.

Finding out what helps us maintain good mental health can be a real asset when life gets tough. It will be different for everyone – anything that gives us positive energy - such as yoga, walking, meditation, taking up a new hobby or interest, nature or some other enjoyable activity. Life affects us all differently. We all go through difficult times but as many as one in four of us each year will experience mental health problems. Being aware of what can affect our mental health and using strategies that we've already developed will help to preserve good mental health and make it easier to understand and manage when we struggle. Some of us are more deeply affected by events than others. How we deal with our struggles, fears, anxieties and times of depression, will also depend on how well other parts of our lives are going and /or how well supported we feel.

If you feel that things have got on top of you, do seek help rather than struggling on your own.

Your GP may suggest referring you for Talking Therapies, or another appropriate service that could be helpful.

Organisations that may be able to help will include

- CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) for practical advice on such as financial entitlements and rights
- Law Centres (e.g. Bristol Law Centre) for legal advice
- MIND and Rethink for help with mental health support
- Relate for some aspects of relationship issues
- CRUSE for bereavement support
- Carers Support Centre for support of people caring for someone
- Childline for children experiencing various distress particularly abuse
- Silverline and Age UK for older people experiencing loneliness
- Samaritans for someone to talk with particularly when life feels overwhelming.

For the contact numbers for the organisations mentioned above, please see the final page of this newsletter.

Looking After Our Mental Health continued

Locally there are Bereavement Support Groups happening in the Three Shires Practice area and Dr Ashish Bhatia runs a four session Really Wellbeing course several times each year which are open to every patient in the Practice. For more details of the Bereavement Groups please contact 4patientparticipation@gmail.com and the Really Wellbeing groups please contact ashbeing@gmail.com.

Travel Information

Since 2018 we have not been able to offer private travel vaccinations, malaria tablets or a full travel assessment service. Please see the travel section on the Practice website.

The NHS Fit for Travel website at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk gives all the information you need to identify any vaccines advised for trips abroad. At least three months before departure contact a high street travel clinic and book an appointment for your vaccinations. There will be a charge. The Practice can ONLY offer a limited list of vaccines free of charge. Please see the travel section on the Practice website for the available vaccines. At least 6 weeks' notice is required, appointments are subject to availability and please complete a 'Travel Risk' assessment form.

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is a means of enabling GP's, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer patients to a variety of local non-clinical sources. The aims of social prescribing include helping patients to take greater control of their own health and reducing the number of GP and primary care appointments that are focussed on social problems. GP's and colleague primary care professionals can refer to social prescriber link workers who can connect patients to community and voluntary groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support.

For Three Shires we now have a social prescriber for one day a week employed by the Primary Care Network for the next three years.

Referrals to the service will be:

- People age 18 and over;
- People who are socially isolated;
- People with poor self-care, hygiene, nutrition, fitness;
- People experiencing family related problems;
- People who have experienced bereavement;
- People who are or have experienced abuse and trauma and
- Anyone who could benefit from additional support to enhance the positive outcome of the clinical prescription and enhance the daily wellbeing of the patient for the long term.

Telephone Numbers That May Be Useful

Age UK South Gloucs	01454 411707
Age UK Wiltshire	01380 727767
Alcoholics Anonymous	0800 917 7650
Alzheimer's Society Bristol & South Glos	0117 961 0693
Alzheimer's Society North and West Wiltshire	01249 443469
Bristol Law Centre	0117 924 8662
British Heart Foundation	0300 330 3322
Care Forum	0117 965 4444
Carers Support Centre Bristol & S Glos Helpline	0117 965 2200
Carers Support Wiltshire Helpline	0800 181 4118
Carers Centre Bath & NE Somerset Helpline	0800 0388 885
Childline	0800 11 11
Chippenham Hospital	01249 447100
Citizens Advice Bureau	03444 111 444
CRUSE (Bereavement) Bristol	0117 926 4045 or 0808 808 1677
CRUSE Bath & West Wilts	01761 417250
Domestic Violence National Helpline	0808 200 0247
Dorothy House Hospice Winsley	01225 722988
Epilepsy Society	01494 601400
Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 0000
Marie Curie Support Line	0800 090 2309
MIND (Mental health)	0300 123 3393
Motor Neurone Disease Helpline	0808 802 6262
Multiple Sclerosis Helpline	0808 800 8000
NHS Smoking Helpline	0300 123 1044
Parkinson's Helpline	0808 800 0303
Pregnancy Advisory Service	0117 3426824
Relate Avon	0117 942 8444
Relate West Wiltshire	0300 003 1781
Rethink (Mental health)	0845 456 0455
Royal United Hospital Bath	01225 428331
Samaritans	116123 / 0117 983 1000
Silverline (Older people support national helpline)	0800 470 8090
Social Services (South Gloucs Adults)	01454 868007
Social Services (South Gloucs Children)	01454 868008
Social Services (Bristol Adults & Children)	0117 922 2700
Social Services (Wiltshire Adults)	0300 456 0111
Social Services (North Wiltshire Children)	01249 707900
Social Services (West Wiltshire Children)	01225 718555
Southmead Hospital	0117 950 5050
Stroke Association	0303 3033 100
Stroke (Bristol after Stroke)	0117 964 7657
St Peter's Hospice	0117 915 9400
United Bristol Healthcare (BRI)	0117 923 0000
Well Aware (Health and welfare information)	0808 808 5252

(As at July 2019 taken from each organisations internet sites)