

# Close Farm Surgery Patient Newsletter



## **Winter edition 2020**

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## **Annual reviews**

It is that time of year again when we call our patients in for their annual reviews. You may receive a text message from us (if we have your mobile number) asking you to book in an appointment with one of our clinicians or a telephone call from the practice. The aim of annual reviews is to ensure patients are receiving adequate levels of treatment to control their symptoms, are aware of measures they can take to help manage their condition and are being prescribed the most up to date and effective medication.

## **Changes to doctor working days**

As you are aware, at Close Farm Surgery we have always advocated seeing the same doctor for continuity of care. Continuity of care happens when a patient and a doctor see each other repeatedly and get to know each other. This leads to better communication, patient satisfaction, greater adherence to medical advice and much lower use of hospital services. We would therefore encourage you to see the same doctor for your ongoing care. With this in mind, please note that some of our doctors working days have changed. From January our doctors normal working days will be:-

- Dr Luke Parker – Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
- Dr Lesley Haynes – Monday, Thursday (morning) & Friday
- Dr Ash Singh – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
- Dr Gill Degens – Tuesday & Friday
- Dr Jody Craft – Monday, Wednesday & Thursday (morning)
- Dr Jennie Wallace – Wednesday & Thursday

Some of our doctors work part time and as such have slightly longer waiting times for routine pre-booked appointments. In addition, our doctors rotate the duty doctor role each day. Therefore when your usual doctor is on-call, they will have less pre-bookable appointments as they will be busy seeing patients who are acutely unwell and requiring urgent attention. Please can we ask that you bear this in mind when booking appointments. Please also remember that you can visit your local chemist for advice on many conditions that don't need a prescription or a referral for further care. This allows us to keep GP appointments free for those who really need to see a doctor.

## **Sick notes**

If you require a continuation of a sick note you do not always need to see a doctor to obtain this. Please contact our reception team who will take the details of the dates and medical condition and a note will be sent to the doctor. Sick notes are usually available within 48 hours but please check with reception first before attending to collect. If the doctor feels you need to be seen they will ask reception to arrange you an appointment. Please note we are unable to produce sick notes in advance of illness.

## **Vita Minds**

Vita Minds is the new provider of counselling services for conditions such as depression or anxiety. Patients can self-refer to their services without seeing a GP by telephoning 0333 200 1893. Their phone lines are open from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and from 9.30am – 12.30pm on a Saturday. You can also visit their website <https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/nhs-services/nhs-mental-health/bristol-north-somerset-south-gloucestershire/>

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## **Why we ask you to present with only one problem at a time**

Have you ever wondered how your doctor approaches a 10 minute consultation? This is just a brief run-down of the consultation process. The doctor first takes a history of your complaint, listening to your symptoms, concerns and expectations. The questions they ask will vary according to what you describe and what they may think the issue is. They will then examine you if appropriate. The doctor will then consider the possible causes or reasons for your condition, before considering any other factors or potential diagnoses. They will then arrive at the most likely diagnosis and explore with you the effects of this on you, discuss other problems with you and come to a shared understanding of the issue. Tests or investigations may have to be ordered, forms may have to be completed. The doctor will then involve you in the management of your condition, discussing possible treatments, counsel you on the side effects and likely outcomes. If a prescription is necessary, the doctor will consider potential interactions with other medications, and effects of the new medication on your existing conditions before printing it out. For conditions that could persist or get worse, they will then advise on what symptoms to look out for, give a timeframe to expect and what you need to do if such symptoms appear.

Following your departure from the consultation room, the doctor has to then make comprehensive notes in order to provide a clear record of your consultation. And that is just for one problem only!

Research has shown that presenting multiple problems to the doctor increases the risk that mistakes will be made. The stress of not completing one task, before having to move on to the next, risks distracting the doctor and may cause important things or serious conditions to be missed. In a climate where clinical risk and patient harm are at the forefront of everyone's minds, we would therefore kindly ask that all patients only **present with one problem per appointment**. If you think you will require longer for an appointment please speak to reception to ask for a double appointment which we will try to accommodate.

## **Flu vaccine**

We still have flu vaccines available and it is not too late to be protected against the virus. Eligible patients are:-

- Anyone over 65 years old
- Women who are pregnant
- Carers
- Children aged 2 & 3 and pre-school 4 year olds
- Anyone working in health and social care

We would particularly encourage those who have one of the following medical conditions to have the flu vaccination:-

- Asthma (if taking regular inhaled steroids)
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Heart failure or ischaemic heart disease (angina or previous heart attack)
- Chronic kidney disease or chronic liver disease
- Diabetes, stroke or TIA's (transient ischaemic attacks)
- Immunosuppressed patients and their families

The flu vaccine is the best protection we have against an unpredictable virus which can be very unpleasant. If eligible, you may also be offered the shingles and pneumococcal vaccination. Please speak to reception who can arrange your appointment with one of our nursing team.

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## **Stop smoking clinics**

Did you know that our Healthcare Assistant, Sarah, is a trained stop smoking advisor who can offer patients advice on how to stop smoking? Stopping smoking can make a drastic improvement to your lifestyle and health in ways you might not consider. Once you stop smoking the benefits are immediate and long term. Did you know that by stopping smoking:-

- After 20 minutes your pulse rate returns to normal
- After 8 hours nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood reduce by more than half and oxygen levels return to normal
- After 48 hours carbon monoxide will be eliminated from the body. The lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris
- After 48 hours there is no nicotine in the body – the ability to taste and smell is improved
- After 72 hours breathing becomes easier. The bronchial tubes begin to relax and energy levels increase
- After 2-12 weeks your circulation improves
- After 3-9 months coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve as lung function increases by up to 10%
- After 1 year your risk of heart disease is about half compared with a person who is still smoking
- After 10 years your risk of lung cancer falls to half that of a smoker
- After 15 years your risk of a heart attack falls to the same as someone who has never smoked

Appointments are available on a Monday evening from 6.30pm – 8pm. Sarah will discuss with you the various options and agree which is the best way forward.

## **Staff training afternoon**

The practice will be closed from 1pm until 6.30pm on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January so we can undergo our annual CPR training and other essential training. We will however have a bank receptionist available to assist with routine enquiries by telephone and an on-call doctor for emergencies.

## **Travel vaccinations**

At this time of year patients are often busy planning their holidays. If you think you may require travel vaccinations, please see reception or download a copy of our travel vaccinations form from our website [www.closefarmsurgery.co.uk](http://www.closefarmsurgery.co.uk) Your travel form will be reviewed by one of our Practice Nurses who will determine if you require any vaccinations. Please note, not all travel vaccinations are covered by the NHS and some may incur a charge.

## **NHS-111 service**

Did you know that the NHS-111 service is a useful source of information for medical queries? The NHS-111 service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calls are free from both a landline and mobile telephone. Not only can they direct you to appropriate services when we are closed, but they can also advise you on the best place to seek treatment when we are open too!

## **Staffing**

It is with much sadness we advise patients that our Practice Secretary Lynne Mould passed away in November after a short illness. Lynne worked for the surgery for over 20 years and was a valued member of our team. Secretarial cover will be provided by Cheryl Morgan and Michelle Matthews who are available Monday 1.30pm – 4.30pm and Tuesday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm.

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## **Medicines corner**

Frequent questions asked of our clinical and dispensary team:-

- Why is medicine out of stock?

Recently two manufacturers have had problems making their medicines which means that they cannot be sold. Some medicines are now in short-supply. Also, recent changes in the exchange rates means that stock sold to pharmacies in the UK may now be being sold in other countries meaning there is less stock available.

- I can't get my medicine from my usual pharmacy but another pharmacy has it – why is that?

There are 2 main reasons for this; different pharmacies use different suppliers and it will depend on whether their wholesalers have stock or not. Some manufacturers restrict the amount of a specific medicine that a pharmacy can order. This is known as quota. Once a pharmacy has used their quota for the month it can be really hard to get anymore until the start of the next month.

- What is the difference between brands and generics?

Medicines will often have more than one name; a generic name which is the ingredient of the medicine (for e.g. Ibuprofen). Often generic medicines are made by a number of manufacturers. - A brand is the name the manufacturer or pharmaceutical company gives to the medicine (e.g. Nurofen). Only that manufacturer can make that brand. If your doctor prescribes by brand name the law says we have to supply that brand. If your doctor prescribes using a generic name we can supply any manufacturer's generic product. Generic versions will be the same as the branded medicine because they contain the same ingredients and are used more often by the NHS because they are just as effective but cost far less.

- Why are my new tablets a different size, shape & colour?

Because some medicines are in short supply your usual tablets may not be available. In this case, to make sure you don't go without medication your pharmacist may supply you with the same medicine but from a different manufacturer so your tablets may change their appearance. If you have any queries, talk to your pharmacist.

- What can I do to help?

Order your medication in plenty of time (but no more than 7 days before it is due). Only order what you require. If you have unused medicines in your cupboard use these first (remember to check the expiry date). Your pharmacist is trying really hard to source these items so please bear with them if they are having difficulty getting medicines for you.

- Why can't I always be given antibiotics?

Antibiotics are important medicines for treating bacterial infections. However, bacteria can adapt and find ways to survive the effects of an antibiotic. This means antibiotics are losing their effectiveness at an increasing rate. The more we use antibiotics, the greater the chance bacteria will become resistant to them and they can no longer be used to treat infections. Antibiotic resistance is one of the most significant threats to patients' safety. It is driven by overusing antibiotics and taking them inappropriately. To slow down the development of antibiotic resistance, it is important to use antibiotics in the right way. Antibiotics should be taken as prescribed and never saved for later or shared with others. Unfortunately there is also a lot of medication wastage, to help this cause we ask you to check the medication in the bag that you are given by the pharmacy as any medication that is incorrect or not ordered/needed can be given back to the pharmacy but cannot be returned once it has left the pharmacy.

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- Which medicines can I buy without prescription?

Some medicines for minor illnesses can be bought over the counter without a prescription, so you can treat yourself without needing to see a GP. Simple painkillers and cough remedies, for example, can be bought directly from supermarkets and other stores. Other types of medicine, such as eye drops or emergency contraception, are available without a prescription but need a pharmacist's supervision, so are only available to buy from behind the pharmacy counter. Prescription-only medicines, such as antibiotics, must be prescribed by a qualified health professional. This may be a GP, hospital doctor, dentist, nurse, pharmacist, optometrist, physiotherapist or podiatrist.

- Can you help your local NHS tackle the problem of medicine waste?

Yes you can! Medicine waste is a serious and growing problem within the NHS. Sometimes, patients or their carers continue to request more repeat medicines than needed and stockpile them at home. This wastes millions of pounds and huge quantities of medicines. How can you help? • Check what medicines you have at home before ordering more and only order what you need. • If you need to go into hospital please take all of your medicines with you. • Please check your prescription is correct before leaving the pharmacy as once the medicine has left the building they are not allowed to accept it back and will have to dispose of it.

## **Medication reviews**

Getting your medication reviewed is not only important for you, but also allows the NHS to maintain a good level of service across the board. By regularly reviewing your medication, you can help the NHS save a considerable amount in terms of wasted medication. Medicine waste accounts for £300 million of NHS costs per year, but regular reviews ensure that you are only prescribed what you really need. We have a Clinical Pharmacist Derrick Heffter who works with us on a Tuesday and alternative Thursday mornings. Derrick can provide medication reviews in the late afternoon/evening for those patients who are working. **We are unable to safely prescribe your medication without you undergoing regular reviews and we would ask you to check your medication review date and book an appointment before you request further prescriptions.**

## **Electronic prescription service**

EPS is a much safer and more cost effective way for prescriptions to be sent from the surgery direct to the chemist. We would like to send more prescriptions electronically. When requesting your medication you may be asked to nominate a chemist that we can send your prescriptions direct to. Local chemists include Asda, Billings (Kingswood), Boots (Cadbury Heath), Boots (Longwell Green), Dudley Taylor (Oldland Common), Ideal (Warmley) and Shaunaks (Hanham). You may however want to use a chemist closer to home or work or an on-line chemist which will post your medication directly to you.

Paper prescriptions will gradually be phased out by the NHS, so we advise patients to register for EPS sooner rather than later to help you become accustomed to the system.

## **On-line medication requests**

Did you know that you can request your medication on-line rather than dropping off your counterfoil at the surgery? To access this service patients can download the NHS App (available from Google Play or the App Store) and register online. You don't need to come into the surgery or provide any details. You can also use the App to book appointments!

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## **Our doctor team and their normal working days**

- Dr Luke Parker – Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
- Dr Lesley Haynes – Monday, Thursday (morning) & Friday
- Dr Ash Singh – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
- Dr Gill Degens – Tuesday & Friday
- Dr Jody Craft – Monday, Wednesday & Thursday (morning)
- Dr Jennie Wallace – Wednesday & Thursday

Our doctors rotate the on-call clinician and our partners offer extended hours surgeries on either a Monday or Thursday evening each week.

When the surgery is closed, out of hours cover is provided by the NHS-111 service. Calls to the NHS-111 service are free from both a landline and mobile phone.

## **Useful telephone numbers to help you**

Age UK	0117 929 7537
Alcoholics Anonymous	0117 926 5926
Alzheimer's Society	0117 961 0693
Bristol Autism Support	07787 452 164
Butterfiles Haven (autism support)	0117 329 0123
Care Forum (similar to Health Watch)	0117 965 4444
Carers Line	0117 965 2200
Citizen's Advice Bureau	0844 826 9688
Cossham Hospital	0117 340 8400
CRUSE Bereavement	0117 926 4045
Diabetes Education (local)	0117 959 8970
Domestic Violence Unit Thornbury	0117 945 5984
Kingswood Community Travel (Dial & Ride and Green Community Travel)	0117 961 6016
Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 0000
National Dementia Helpline	0845 300 0336
NHS Smoking Helpline	0800 022 4332
Pregnancy Advisory Service (Marie Stopes)	0845 300 8090
Relate	0117 942 8444
Royal United Hospital, Bath	01225 428 331
Samaritans	0845 790 9090
Samaritans, Bristol office	0117 983 1000
Silver Line (helpline for older people)	0800 470 8090
Social Services (South Glos)	01454 868 007
South Glos Drugs Project	0800 073 3011
Southmead Hospital	0117 950 5050
St Peter's Hospice, Brentry	0117 915 9400
The Carers Support Centre	0117 965 2200
United Bristol Healthcare Trust (BRI, BCH)	0117 923 0000
Well Aware	0808 808 5252
Yate Minor Injuries Unit	01454 315355

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