

# Close Farm Surgery Patient Newsletter



## **Spring Edition 2021**

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### **Message from our Practice Manager, Carlos Rosa**

Thank you for your patience over the last year. It has been incredibly tough for everyone but you have all been amazing in your support of the surgery. You have been patient and understanding with us when we had to change the way in which we operated and respectful of the reason why it was necessary for us to do so – to keep both our patients and staff safe.

I am incredibly proud of how our surgery team have coped over the last 12 months and for their professionalism, commitment and the unwavering support they have shown throughout the pandemic and now during the vaccination campaign.

The response to the Covid-19 vaccination programme has been overwhelmingly positive and we would like to thank North Common Village Hall for letting us use their venue so often. We have been very grateful for the volunteers from our Patient Participation Group who have helped us with marshalling at the hall. So far almost 4,000 patients have had a first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine and we have completed all of the top 9 priority groups as set out by the JCVI. This has been a joint effort between us and the members of our Primary Care Network of Kingswood Health Centre, Cadbury Heath Health Centre and Hanham Health Centre and the mass vaccination sites.

If you have not been vaccinated yet and are in cohorts 1-9 we would ask that you e-mail us at [Close.Farm@nhs.net](mailto:Close.Farm@nhs.net) and we can add you to our list and arrange for you to attend a clinic. To ensure that our phone lines are kept free for patients requiring medical attention we would ask that you do not call the surgery.

To help us with contacting patients we would ask that you advise us if you change your telephone number and ideally let us have your mobile number as it is often easier for us to send out text messages to patients.

As the restrictions are slowly being lifted we would continue to ask that patients wear a face covering when they attend the surgery and they arrive on-time and not early for their appointment so we can ensure the waiting room is kept safe for all patients.

Did you know that we have a new functionality on our website called eConsults. This allows patients to e-mail us if they require help or advice and our team of receptionists will direct you to the most appropriate service, arrange a sick note or book an appointment with a member of the clinical team. We aim to respond to requests within 24 hours.

Our practice Facebook page (Close Farm Surgery) now has over 400 followers. This a good way to learn what is going on in the practice and we regularly post information about our vaccination clinics and various health campaigns.

We have also updated our practice website [www.closefarmsurgery.co.uk](http://www.closefarmsurgery.co.uk) which contains useful information about the practice and the services we offer.

Carlos Rosa, Practice Manager

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## **Staffing update**

Dr Craft is now on maternity leave and will not return to the practice until April 2022. We welcome Dr Laura O'Hare as her locum replacement who will be working on a Monday, Tuesday and a Wednesday morning looking after her patients.

We have a Physicians Associate Catherine Atkinson who works with us all day on a Monday. She is a medically trained, generalist healthcare professional who works alongside the GP's to provide medical care. Catherine is a dependent practitioner working with a dedicated medical supervisor but is able to work autonomously. Catherine is able to:-

- Speak to patients on the phone with a minor illness
- Take medical histories from patients
- Carry out physical examinations
- See patients with undifferentiated diagnoses
- See patients with long-term chronic conditions
- Formulate differential diagnoses and management plans
- Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures
- Develop and deliver appropriate treatment and management plans
- Request and interpret diagnostic studies
- Provide health promotion and disease prevention advice for patients

Another new addition to our team is Physiotherapist Ellie Gardner who works with us on a Tuesday. Ellie has pre-bookable appointments for anyone presenting with a musculoskeletal problem. If a patient telephones with a new MSK problem which they have not consulted with another GP before, they may be offered an appointment with Ellie in the first instance. She will ring the patient and triage over the phone and if necessary can bring in the patient for a medical examination in the afternoon.

## **Let's talk about cancer**

Over the course of the pandemic there have been many ways in which our health has suffered. One concern nationally has been the reduction in cancer detection rates. Cancer has not gone away because of Covid. It remains vitally important that everyone takes part in the national screening programmes when called. Bowel and breast screening programmes continue to operate. Cervical screening has continued to be undertaken in the practice throughout the pandemic.

Screening is important for the early detection of cancer but it is equally important to contact us if you have any symptoms or concerns. Things to look out for include but are not limited to:-

- New lumps
- Blood in your pee or stool
- Change in bowel habit
- Persistent cough or shortness of breath (especially if you have ever smoked)
- Weight loss
- Abnormal fatigue

If you are concerned about your health in any way please contact us.

Dr Wallace is the Macmillan Cancer GP for Bath and North East Somerset and participates in local audits and campaigns to increase cancer detection rates.

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## **Medicines corner**

**Increase to NHS prescription charges** - NHS prescription charges increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April - Please note, in England NHS prescription charges have increased to £9.35 per item. A prescription pre-payment certificate (PCC) may save you money. The currently cost £30.25 for 3 months and £108.10 for 12 months which means if you have 4 or more items in 3 months or 13 or more items in 12 months a PCC is a cheaper way to pay for your medication. You can buy a PCC online at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pcc](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pcc) or telephone 0845 850 0030 for the form you need to complete.

**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 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.**

**Over the counter medication** - Your GP will not generally give you a prescription for over the counter medicines for a range of short-term, minor health concerns. Instead, over the counter medicines are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket in your local community. The team of qualified healthcare professionals at your local pharmacy can offer clinical advice to manage minor health concerns safely and effectively. Please note we are unable to prescribe antihistamines for hayfever.

**Prescription ordering** - Our preferred method of prescription ordering is online via Patient Access or our dedicated prescription email account: [Close.Farm@nhs.net](mailto:Close.Farm@nhs.net) For safety we are unable to take prescription requests over the phone. You can also drop in your paper prescription to the surgery. You should only order your prescription when you have a week's supply of medication left. Please allow at least two full working days for a dispensed prescription to be collected and 2-3 days for a prescription collected from a pharmacy.

**What is the difference between brands and generics?** - Medicines will often have more than one name. A generic name is the ingredient of the medicine (for example 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 (for example Nurofen). Only the manufacturer can make that brand. If your doctor prescribes by brand name, the law says that the pharmacy has to supply that brand. If your doctor prescribes using a generic name the pharmacy can supply any manufacturers generic product.

## **Medical students**

Did you know that we are a teaching practice for year 2 medical students from Bristol University? Dr Haynes and Dr Wallace teach, mentor and support students and meet with them on a monthly basis. Sometimes as part of the students training they have to speak to patients about various conditions. If you would be willing to be interviewed by the students please let reception know and we will arrange a time for you to attend the surgery.

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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 Jennie Wallace – Wednesday & Thursday
- Dr Gill Degens – Wednesday & Friday
- Dr Pam Curtis – Monday (mornings), Tuesday & Friday
- Dr Jody Craft – Currently on maternity leave (due back April 2022)
- Dr Laura O'Hare – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (morning) – maternity cover locum for Dr Craft

Our doctors rotate the on-call clinician and our partners offer extended hours surgeries

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
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	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 (relationships)	0117 942 8444
Royal United Hospital, Bath	01225 428 331
Samaritans	0845 790 9090
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, Bredon	0117 915 9400
The Carers Support Centre	0117 965 2200
United Bristol Healthcare Trust (BRI, BCH, BEH)	0117 923 0000
Yate Minor Injuries Unit	01454 315355

**If you would like this newsletter in a large print, please let us know**