



Autumn 2023

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FLU & COVID CAMPAIGN

Our Covid and flu campaign begins at the end of September with smaller vaccine clinics being held at the surgery and then much larger clinics at the Village Hall. With the increase in cases and the new variant which has been found, NHS England are encouraging all patients who are eligible to have the vaccine. We will be contacting patients by text message in batches to spread the workload. The message will have a link to click on to book your appointment. If you would like help booking your appointment, please contact the surgery after 11am when our main rush in the morning has lessened.

Close Farm Surgery

- Monday 25th September, Tuesday 26th September, Wednesday 27th September & Thursday 28th September (6.30pm – 8pm)

North Common Village Hall, Millers Drive

- Sunday 15th October (8.30am – 3pm)
- Sunday 29th October (8.30am – 3pm)

Eligible groups are: -

- Those patients over the age of 65 years
- Those aged 6 months to under 65 years in a clinical at-risk group (such as diabetes, chronic respiratory illnesses, heart disease, kidney or liver disease, neurological disease, patients who are immunosuppressed and those patients who are morbidly obese)
- Pregnant women
- Those in long stay residential care homes
- Carers
- Close contacts of immunosuppressed individuals
- All children aged 2 or 3 years on 31st August 2023
- Frontline healthcare workers in social care settings



We would encourage patients to support the surgery and have their vaccinations here with us. We depend on the income the vaccines bring in to continue to offer the services we can. When patients attend the chemists, this means that we lose out on vital funding and risk having to reduce our services as a result. Thank you for having your vaccine with us.



CHANGES TO PRESCRIBING PROTOCOLS

Medications for fear of flying; why we don't prescribe them anymore

People sometimes ask the doctor or nurse to prescribe diazepam, or similar drugs like lorazepam, temazepam or clonazepam, for fear of flying or to help sleep during flights. Prescribing these drugs is not recommended any more for these reasons:

- 1.** Although plane emergencies are rare, taking Diazepam reduces awareness and reaction times for patients so you risk not being able to react to save your life if you have to escape quickly. You may also put other people in danger by getting in their way or making them help you.
- 2.** The use of these drugs can make you sleep in an unnaturally deep sleep. This means you won't move around as much as during natural sleep so you have a bigger risk of getting a blood clot (Deep Vein Thrombosis – DVT) in the leg or lungs. Blood clots are very dangerous and can kill. This risk is bigger if your flight is longer than 4 hours.
- 3.** They have short term bad effects on memory, co-ordination, concentration and reaction times, and are addictive if used for a long time, with withdrawal leading to fits, hallucinations, agitation and confusion. They have also become widely used drugs of abuse since they first came on the market. Diazepam in the UK is a controlled drug. The prescribing guidelines doctors have to follow say that use to treat short-term 'mild' anxiety is inappropriate. They are only to be used short term for a 'crisis in generalised anxiety'. But if you are having such a crisis you are not likely to be fit to fly. Fear of flying in isolation is not a generalised anxiety disorder.
- 4.** Some people get agitated and aggressive after taking diazepam and similar drugs, and behave in a way that they would not normally, which can pose a risk on the plane. This affects everyone's safety and could get you into trouble with the law. A similar effect can be seen with alcohol, which has led to people being removed from flights.
- 5.** There is evidence use of these drugs stops the normal adjustment response that would gradually lessen anxiety over time, and may increase anxiety in the long term, especially if used repeatedly.
- 6.** Diazepam and similar controlled drugs are illegal in a number of countries. They may be confiscated or you may find yourself in trouble with the police.
- 7.** Diazepam stays in your system for some time. If your job or sport needs you to have random drug testing you may fail this having taken diazepam.
- 8.** It is important to tell your travel insurer about your medical conditions and medications you take. If not, there is a risk of your insurer not paying if you try to make a claim.

We will no longer be providing Diazepam or similar drugs for flight anxiety. Instead, please try one of these aviation industry recommended flight anxiety courses.

Fly And Be Calm™

Fly And Be Calm™ is an instant download and comes with a money back guarantee (Guarantee does not apply to app versions). 6 MP3 tracks which include instructions, the fear removal tool and two hypnotic tracks. The least expensive option, takes very little time, works on the root cause of your problem. If you are not 100% happy you can get a full refund. <https://flyandbecalm.co.uk/>

Easy Jet Courses

www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com

British Airways Courses

<https://www.flyingwithconfidence.com/venues/london-heathrow?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI3Lq>

Hayfever medications

We are also now unable to issue prescriptions for hayfever medication as this can safely and effectively be purchased over the counter from pharmacies or even supermarkets. Your local chemist can advise on suitable medications to take.

Medication to delay a period; why we don't prescribe them anymore

It is now possible to purchase medication to delay a period. As such, we are also unable to prescribe this as it easily available elsewhere. We would encourage patients to talk to a chemist who will assess them, explain how and when to take the medication and offer medications to help.

Simple painkillers: why we don't prescribe them anymore

We would ask that patients who take occasional paracetamol or ibuprofen for pain relief buy this direct from the chemist and do not request this on a prescription. If you require a larger pack size, please speak to the chemist who can sell this to you in larger quantities.

Why are we doing this?

These changes came about in 2018 when the NHS spent around £569 million a year on prescriptions for medications that can be easily bought from a pharmacy or supermarket such as Paracetamol. By reducing the amount it spends on over the counter medicines, the NHS can give priority to treatments for people with serious conditions such as cancer, diabetes and mental health problems.

Your local pharmacy team are qualified healthcare professionals with the knowledge and skills to help with many health concerns.

Pharmacists can give clinical advice, right there and then, and help you choose the most appropriate treatment. If your symptoms suggest it's more serious, they'll ensure you get the right care you need.

PHARMACY CONSULTATION SERVICE

Below is a list of conditions that can be managed via self-care, by contacting NHS-111 for advice or by visiting a community pharmacy. Patients who present with any of the following conditions may be referred to a local pharmacy who offer consultation services.



Our reception team will send a referral direct to a local chemist who will contact you and arrange for you to be seen by them. Chemists are able to prescribe medications direct or suggest over the counter medications which may be cheaper than a prescription charge. By using this service for minor ailments will free up appointments for those patients who need us the most.

Acne	Athletes foot	Back pain (less than 6 weeks)
Chickenpox	Colds, coughs and flu	Cold sores
Conjunctivitis (less than 3 weeks)	Constipation	Emergency contraception
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Croup	Eczema
Earache	Hayfever/allergies	Mild headaches
Hemorrhoids	Insect bites/stings	Menstrual problems
Headlice	Threadworm	Stye's
Viral illnesses	Thrush	Sunburn
Rashes	Mouth ulcers	Warts and verruca's
Nail issues	Heartburn/indigestion	Urine infections

CHARITY WORK

So far this year we have raised almost £200 from our book and jigsaw sale in the waiting room. We are very grateful to those patients who have bought a book and donated to our charity of the year for 2023, The Alzheimer's Society. In order to keep things fresh, we would welcome donations of up to date and new(ish) books which we can add to our book corner for sale. Any books which we cannot sell are passed to the National Trust at Dyrham Park for their book shop, so nothing goes to waste.



Staff from the surgery are also taking part in our now annual sponsored walk to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society in September. We will be walking along the cycle path to Saltford, stopping off for some lunch (!) and walking back. We have set up a Just Giving page on <https://www.justgiving.com/page/closefarmsurgery> if you would like to sponsor us. We are hoping to raise £500 from our walk.



FRIENDS AND FAMILY TEST

If you have visited the surgery recently you may have been sent a text message asking how you would rate our service. Over the past 3 months almost 950 responses have been received of which an average of 83% of patients stated that we were very good, 14% good, 1% fair, 1% poor and 1% neither good nor poor.

We have been really pleased with the results because of the comments also received. These have been very constructive and have allowed us to look at the areas where you feel we can do better and address them. As a result of a few comments, we are introducing a card machine for payments of prescriptions or private work. This will allow patients to pay by card and the machine also takes Apple pay. We now also tell patients if the clinician is running late, so they are kept informed of any delays. The results also show that patients are pleased with our new phone system with patients preferring to know where they are in the queue or to use the new call back facility.

It has been very humbling to read the very kind comments regarding our clinicians and please be assured that these have been shared with the team.

GP PATIENT SURVEY RESULTS

We are very proud to say that Close Farm Surgery was also voted the second top practice in Bristol in the recent national GP Patient Survey. This is an independent survey which is commissioned by MORi each year to rate each practice in the country. We scored a satisfaction rate of 92% which was really positive and we are very grateful to those patients who took part. The full results can be accessed via <https://gp-patient.co.uk/patientexperiences?practicecode=L81050>



FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE PRACTICE



Over the past first quarter of the financial year 2023/24 between April and June we: -

- Offered 4,669 GP appointments
- Offered 2,682 Nurse and HCA appointments
- Had 135 patients who did not attend their appointments meaning these went to waste and were unable to be offered to other patients
- Received 5,555 telephone calls to the practice
- Gave 469 Covid spring booster vaccines
- Welcomed 85 new patients to the practice
- Issued 3,952 prescriptions
- Dispensed 1,529 medications
- Processed 108 online consultations via our eConsults facility on our website
- Made our staff several cups of tea.....!!!

STAFFING NEWS

At Close Farm Surgery we have a team of 7 doctors who cover our core hours of Monday to Friday 8am – 6.30pm. We encourage patients to see the same GP for ongoing problems so we can continue our ethos of continuity of care. Studies have shown that where patients see the same clinician over a period of time, they have better outcomes and this can reduce admissions and referrals to hospital.



We are also supported by a fantastic nursing team. Jessica McPherson is our Nurse Practitioner who works with us on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Jessica can see patients on the day presenting with minor illnesses. Jessica is a prescriber which means that she can issue medications appropriate to care.

Janet Wells is our lead and respiratory nurse. Janet works all day Monday to Thursday. Dawn is our diabetes nurse who took over from Maxine Spreadbury who retired early this year. Dawn works Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays. Dawn previously worked as a diabetes specialist nurse so has a wealth of knowledge about diabetes and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. We would encourage all patients due a diabetes review to book an appointment to see or speak to Dawn so she can ensure that their medication and care is being managed correctly. Bryony Kay is our treatment room nurse who also sees patients for asthma review and undertakes cervical screening (smear) tests.

The clinical team are supported by a team of admin staff. Natalie Parish is our Practice Manager and Jennifer Lumsden is our Assistant Practice Manager. We also have a team of secretaries, administrators, and 7 receptionists who cover both the front desk and answer the telephones upstairs.

Derrick Heffter is our Clinical Pharmacist who works with us on a Tuesday and alternative Thursday mornings. Derrick undertakes our medication reviews for patients and has a special interest in pain management. Michaela Coles is our Pharmacy Technician and can undertake medication reviews for certain conditions.



eCONSULTS

Did you know that for routine appointment requests you can submit an eConsult. This is a safe and effective way to request an appointment or a continuation of a sick note. All referrals are triaged by our clinical team who will either provide advice or an appointment. eConsults can be submitted at any time of the day and over the weekend or bank holiday when the surgery is closed. Requests are monitored throughout the day and patients are contacted within 48 working hours. We would encourage patients who are unable to telephone us to request an appointment to use this service. To access this service, go to our website <https://www.closefarmsurgery.co.uk/> and click on the consult with your doctor online button. You will be asked a series of questions, your name, address and date of birth, press send and we receive your request.

VOLUNTEER DRIVING SERVICE

We offer a volunteer driving service for patients who find it difficult to attend the surgery and who live locally. Registered patients of the surgery will come and collect you from home, bring you to the surgery, wait for you and take you home. Patients are asked to make a £3 contribution towards the cost of petrol and to cover expenses of the volunteers. To access the service, we ask that patients sign a consent form so this can be passed on to our driving coordinator. Our volunteer driver service is proving very popular, and we are looking for more volunteers. If you are available to help, please speak to Jennifer Lumsden our Assistant Practice Manager who can explain about what volunteering entails. Volunteer drivers must hold a UK driving license, have valid motor insurance and undergo a DBS check.



HEALTH & WELLBEING - THE BENEFITS OF WALKING

Did you know that walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Sometimes overlooked as a form of exercise, walking briskly can help you to build stamina, burn excess calories and make your heart healthier. You do not have to walk for hours, a brisk 10-minute walk has lots of health benefits and will count towards your 150 minutes of weekly exercise, as recommended in the physical activity guidelines for adults aged 19 to 64.

The easiest way to walk more is to make walking a habit. Think of ways to include walking in your daily routine. Examples include: -

- Walk as part of your journey to work
- Walk to the shops
- Use the stairs instead of the lift
- Take a regular walk with a friend for a nice chat and a catch up
- Go for a stroll with family or friends after dinner

Walking in a group is a great way to start walking, make new friends and stay motivated. The Ramblers organises group walks for health, leisure and has a means of getting around for people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of fitness. For details of many locally organised walks in towns and cities, as well as the countryside, visit the Ramblers website: -

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/what-expect-when-you-join-ramblers-group-walk>