

The Practice, patients and how we move forward together in what is still a Pandemic.

As we are all aware we are still very much living with the Coronavirus Pandemic and none of us know how long this will be the case. The Government have relaxed some of the regulations that we were all abiding by and we in General Practice are being advised by NHS England and Improvement to resume as many of our normal activities as we can safely undertake. What we once considered normal is no longer the case and we are advised that a realistic and cautious approach to balancing Covid and non-Covid capacity is needed. We along with Practices up and down the Country are being asked to encourage patients to "Talk before you Walk". We still need to protect both our patients and staff; even more so as we approach the Autumn/Winter months. During the Pandemic we have worked according to advice and guidance given by NHS England/Improvement and our CCG.

Our latest advice to our patients is:

- The Practice is still very much open and we encourage people to get in touch for any health concerns that cannot be dealt with by the individual, their family or friends, or the local pharmacy
- Routine vaccinations and immunisations are important and are available at the practice.
- Blood tests are being arranged at the practice as well as dressings, cervical smears, women's health clinics, baby immunisation clinics/post-natal clinics and minor ops. These are all being done in a Covid-safe way.
- Chronic disease management reviews are taking place over the telephone where appropriate or being done here at the Practice if a physical examination is needed.
- Medication reviews are being undertaken by our Clinical Pharmacists over the phone where necessary. Any face to face contact is being carried out in a Covid-safe manner in order to ensure patient and professional safety.
- If you think you need to see a doctor please use the askmyGP system if you have access to online services. You can leave a brief description of your issue. A GP will respond to you with the appropriate advice either by email or phone and may arrange for you to be seen face to face.
- Patients who don't have access to online services please speak to a member of our Reception team who will then arrange for your query to be sent to a GP via askmyGP. The GP will contact you via telephone or arrange for you to be seen face to face if necessary. Again, we can then ensure that all face to face appointments are provided in a Covid-safe way.
- Make prescription requests using SystmOnline or leave any paper prescription requests in the outer post box to prevent the need for you to come into the surgery.
- Collect your medication only after you have been sent a text message to let you know that your medication is ready as this helps to prevent queues forming. If you don't have access to text messaging please ensure that you have left 3 full working days from request before collecting.
- Please only visit the surgery in person if you have an appointment.
- We want to discourage people having to queue outside the practice and waiting in the waiting area, to reduce the spread of coronavirus

- **Whilst not yet mandatory we would encourage patients to wear face coverings when coming to the Surgery, this helps us help you in trying to reduce the possible spread of coronavirus.**

If you have coronavirus symptoms DO NOT come into the practice – self isolate and seek help via NHS 111 or 111.nhs.uk

These changes have been necessary to help keep patients and staff safe. We are working hard to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and prepare to stay as safe as we can for the winter months. Our next challenge will be to ensure that we successfully undertake this year's Influenza campaign maintaining strict Covid-safe practices and social distancing measures. We are finalising plans for the campaign and will be releasing details very shortly. There is no doubt that we will need your continued help and support in order for us to get everyone vaccinated as quickly and safely as we can this year. We are confident that having seen how much support we have received so far, this will not be any different.

We would ask as we have before, that you pass this information around especially to those patients who don't have access to the internet/social media.

Everyone at the Practice would like to thank all our patients for your patience, kindness, help and support to date and to let you know that we continue to be dedicated to providing you with the best care and service we can.

Drs Longfield, Watson and Montague