

## **Long Bennington Medical Centre – April 2021**

Dear Patients – I am sure you, like we at the Practice, are welcoming spring wholeheartedly and hoping that better times are on the way for everyone. We are all looking forward to experiencing some level of normality and sincerely hope that you will all get to see loved ones, friends, get out and about more, and feel lighter in yourselves. It has been a long, hard winter but hopefully better times are on their way.

### **Covid Vaccinations:**

GP surgeries in the Grantham and Sleaford area have been working together to deliver the Covid-19 vaccination campaign since mid-December 2020. This has been hugely successful up to now, with just short of 40,000 vaccinations administered at the main vaccination centre running at The Meres Leisure Centre in Grantham, in nursing and residential care homes, to our housebound patients and also at ‘pop-up’ sessions in the Sleaford area for those patients unable to travel to Grantham. With the Assistance of our Primary Care Network – K2 Healthcare Ltd Grantham and rural we are working through the cohorts and at the time of writing are inviting the 60-64 age cohort.

We ask that patients who are still to have their vaccination remain patient as we will get to you very shortly. If you have decided that you do not wish to have the vaccine then please let a member of our Reception team know and we will record your wishes and remove you from the invitation system.

We understand that things change very quickly and really do appreciate it if those patients who have access to our Facebook page and website can pass on any information to friends and neighbours who may not have access to social media – thank you for helping to spread the word!

Website - [www.longbenningtonmedicalcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.longbenningtonmedicalcentre.nhs.uk)

Facebook - @LongBenningtonMedicalCentre

### **Top Tips for Blood tests:**

Over the last few months we have noticed an increase in patients who have required a second appointment for a blood test due to unsuccessful attempts on their first appointment. This can happen for various reasons and we have put together a few top tips to help us help you.

- Drink plenty of water before your appointment. When you’re hydrated, your blood volume goes up, and your veins are plumper and easier to access.
- Wear warm clothes, being cold can actually cause your veins to constrict, making it harder for our Nursing team to find a vein.
- Talk to us – this probably sounds a bit daft, but if you are anxious it can cause your blood pressure to spike temporarily which narrows your blood vessels. Our team can talk you through the process and provide advice on how to relax.
- Breathe! It sounds simple but halting your flow of oxygen can make you more anxious. If necessary ask the person taking blood how long they are likely to take and then count down or up from that number.

If you know that you are a “difficult” bleeder then let Reception know when you book your appointment and they will allocate a bit of extra time. This will make you feel less pressured to “get on with it” and will also help the blood taker.

### **Blood Pressure**

Despite there being a pandemic we still need you to keep an eye on your blood pressure, especially if you have a pre-existing condition which requires you to provide us with regular readings. A number of patients have asked us about buying their own blood pressure monitor as well as asking for advice on how to take their blood pressure at home.

The British and Irish Blood Pressure Society have a website with a really useful section on BP monitors and publish the only independent, peer-reviewed list of blood pressure monitors that is not governed by commercial interest.

If you decide to purchase a home blood pressure monitor there are some top tips for taking your BP effectively.

- **Measure your blood pressure twice daily.** The first measurement should be in the morning before eating or taking any medications, and the second in the evening. Each time you measure, take two or three readings to make sure your results are accurate
- **Don't measure your blood pressure right after you wake up.** You can prepare for the day, but don't eat breakfast or take medications before measuring your blood pressure. If you exercise after waking, take your blood pressure before exercising.
- **Avoid food, caffeine, tobacco and alcohol for 30 minutes before taking a measurement.** These can all raise your blood pressure temporarily.
- **Go to the toilet before taking a measurement.** A full bladder can increase blood pressure slightly.
- **Make sure your arm is positioned properly.** Always use the same arm when taking your blood pressure. Rest your arm, raised to the level of your heart, on a table, desk or chair arm. You might need to place a pillow or cushion under your arm to elevate it high enough.
- **Place the cuff on bare skin, not over clothing.** Rolling up a sleeve until it tightens around your arm can result in an inaccurate reading, so you may need to slip your arm out of the sleeve.
- **Keep still and quiet while you take your reading.** Moving, chewing, talking and laughing can affect your reading. Make sure you don't cross your legs, as this will raise your reading too.
- **Take a repeat reading.** Wait for one to three minutes after the first reading, and then take another to check accuracy. If your monitor doesn't automatically log blood pressure readings or heart rates, write them down.

Blood Pressure UK also has a very useful website providing advice on how to measure your blood pressure at home. <http://www.bloodpressureuk.org/your-blood-pressure/how-to-lower-your-blood-pressure/monitoring-your-blood-pressure-at-home/how-to-measure-your-blood-pressure-at-home/>

#### **Domestic Abuse:**

If you are experiencing domestic abuse you can seek support by ringing the national domestic abuse helpline on **0808 2000 247** or if an emergency dial **999**

#### **Awareness Days – April**

- Bowel Cancer Awareness Month - <http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/>
- Stress Awareness Month - <https://www.stress.org.uk/>
- 7 April – World Health Day - <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2021>
- 20 April – 26 April, Allergy Awareness Week
- 29 April – On Your Feet Britain - <http://onyourfeetday.com/>

Stay safe and remember Hands, Face and Space - **The Team at Long Bennington Medical Centre**