

Sixpenny Handley and Chalke Valley Practice newsletter
March-April 2021

With the successful rollout of Covid-19 vaccinations, the latest wave in the pandemic continues to show signs of easing and we can cautiously start to enjoy a little more freedom. We hope you managed to spend time outdoors over Easter with friends or family.

Please remember we must all remain vigilant and follow the Covid-19 laws and government guidelines. If you have any concerns about covid-19 vaccines please read the information on the NHS website or contact us if you are unable to access this or still have questions about vaccination.

We are delighted that we are able to resume some face to face support for our carers. If you are a carer and would like to know more about our carers group please contact us via our website or ring the surgeries on 01725 552500 or 01722 780282.

Shielding for people clinically extremely vulnerable and high risk if they caught Covid-19 has, for now, been discontinued. However for those who still wish to remain mostly at home or anyone required to self- isolate there continues to be support available.

The NHS volunteer responders service can help anyone who lives in England and who needs to self-isolate for any reason. They can also help people who choose to stay at home as much as possible because they are cautious about going out during the coronavirus outbreak.

To arrange support for yourself or someone else call [0808 196 3646](tel:08081963646) (8am to 8pm, 7 days a week)

Here are some of the reasons you may be self-isolating or staying at home as much as possible

- You have ever been advised to shield by a health professional.
- You are vulnerable for another reason, (for instance, due to disability, pregnancy, aged over 70, you have a long-term condition such as Parkinson's or epilepsy, or are vulnerable due to a mental health condition).
- You have caring responsibilities.
- You are self-isolating because you have been diagnosed with coronavirus or have symptoms, or you've been in contact with someone who has.

- You have been instructed to self-isolate by the ‘Test and Trace’ service, because you’ve been near someone infected.
- You are self-isolating ahead of planned hospital care.
- You have been instructed to self-isolate following entry into the country.

For Wiltshire residents there is also support from the Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub for people self-isolating.

Email: wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 003 4576

They can:

- Put people in touch with community groups who can help collect and deliver essential supplies such as shopping or medication.
- Help to access a priority online shopping slot for some supermarkets.
- Signpost to sources of financial support and food banks.
- Provide support for those experiencing loneliness.
- Help speak to the right people if someone is on a low income and eligible for financial support. For more information, visit [GOV.UK: Claiming financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme](#)

For residents of Dorset or Hampshire similar services are available.

Dorset Council

Phone 01305 221000 or online application

Hampshire Council

Phone 0333 370 4000 or online application

NHS England has confirmed that we are to continue to work under the pandemic regulations which were due to lapse at the end of March. This means we continue to assess all emergency and urgent health related problems as usual and some routine care is still suspended or available, but with a longer wait for an appointment. We want you to come forward if you have symptoms you are worried about. Please be assured the NHS wants to help you identify the cause of anything in your health concerning you. If we assess your enquiry and ask you to wait longer for an appointment please understand this is so that we can prioritise helping people with worrying symptoms.

We are working together to reduce rates of cancer and diagnose people with cancer earlier. Spotting cancer early saves lives. Although the pandemic has changed the way we work at the surgery, we still want to hear from anybody - of any age - who has discovered something that looks or feels unusual. There is a leaflet on our website about cancer signs. If you cannot access this and would like a copy please contact the surgery.

We are pleased to be able to resume NHS Health Checks. If you are between **40** and 74 years of age and do not already have a pre-existing condition you are able to have a check every five years. This is designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. We have started sending out invitations each month, but if you would like a check and have not been invited yet, please contact the practice to find out when you can be booked in.

Please remember we continue to offer face to face appointments in the surgery when that is the safest and best way of providing your care or the only way of doing so. For example, acute illnesses where the doctor needs to examine you, all appointments for blood tests, immunisations, removal of stitches etc or if you have a disability that means this is the best way for you to receive your care. All requests for face to face GP appointments continue to be assessed remotely such as by telephone or video first. This is what NHS England expects us to do at this stage of the pandemic to help keep everyone safe. We all still need to socially distance, wear face coverings when instructed to, unless exempt, and wash our hands. By doing these simple things we can all help bring an end to this extraordinary time in our lives.

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