

Three Shires Medical Practice

Colerne, Marshfield, Pucklechurch and
Wick Surgeries

Practice Newsletter Winter 2022

Christmas and New Year Opening Arrangements

Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of our newsletter. Three Shires Medical Practice would like to take this opportunity to wish all our patients and your families a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Over Christmas and the New Year holiday period, there will be some days when our surgeries will be closed. If you need a doctor during the Christmas and New Year holiday period, **please telephone 111.**



All four Practice surgeries will be closed on Monday 26th December, Tuesday 27th December 2022 and Monday 2nd January 2023. We are not open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Please let us have repeat prescriptions either via the NHS app, Patient Access or on your paper prescription by MIDDAY Monday 19th December and make sure that you collect any prescriptions, preferably by the end of the day on Thursday 22nd December.

Medication Supply Shortages

You are probably aware that we have been asking you to allow 72 hours from the time you order medication to the time you collect it. The longer wait to collect medication and unavailability of familiar brands of medication have caused frustration for many of our patients.

This is a national problem and not something going wrong at our surgeries. In August, the Department for Health and Social Care advised that medication supply problems are being caused by manufacturing difficulties, issues with the supply of raw materials, distribution issues and increases in demand for certain medications worldwide.

The pharmacists at our Practice spend many hours trying to source the medication that our patients need and often have no choice but to order alternatives which have the same effects as the items usually prescribed. Please be assured that we are doing our very best to provide you with the medication that you need. **We ask, please, for your understanding and patience with all members of staff at this challenging time.**

Practice News and Partner Update

As another challenging year approaches its end, we would like to wish you all a peaceful, safe, and happy festive period and new year.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding while we work through turbulent, difficult times for the NHS. Since the Autumn Newsletter another new Health Secretary has been appointed. COVID-related adapted working conditions, waiting-list backlogs and staff illness continue to add extra strain on already-stretched Health and Social Care Services.

This winter has been predicted to have much higher levels of flu and other respiratory illnesses. We are already seeing evidence of this in the practice in ALL age groups. **With this in mind we continue to request face masks, if possible, when visiting the surgery. They reduce everyone's chances of becoming ill.**

We really appreciate the ongoing work of the staff, volunteers, and PPG members at the COVID/Flu vaccination centres in Marshfield and Downend. Thank you also to the volunteers and staff who gave up their Saturday mornings to run two successful Flu vaccination clinics at Pucklechurch surgery.

If you are eligible for an NHS Flu vaccination (www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine) please contact your surgery to book an appointment.

November month has been well established as the '**Movember**' global community fundraising month for men's health. Have a read on [Movember - Movember](#) site for interesting articles on men's health issues – prostate cancer and mental health in men. It is also **Lung Cancer** awareness month. If these issues resonate with you and you would like to discuss your symptoms and your wellbeing, please get in touch.

16 days of Action against Domestic Violence November 25th-December 9th is aimed at business to support them to take action about domestic abuse and violence. If you are a business owner and wish to get involved - have a read - [16 Days of Action Against Domestic Violence 2022 - Awareness Days Events Calendar 2022 & 2023](#). Anyone can witness or experience domestic violence and the staff at the surgeries are trained in enabling our patients to talk about and help them to access the resources available.

December month reminds us of **World AIDS Day on December 1st** and how far the research has come, enabling those with the condition to live

full and long lives since its identification in 1984. Approximately 105,000 people live with HIV in UK, estimating 38 million globally. 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS related illness since 1984, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in 211,000 deaths in the UK and 6.62 million worldwide.

[Home - World AIDS Day](#) site has lots of interesting information on the condition.

Disabilities awareness day on 3rd December, National Grief awareness week December 2nd -8th are the other dates worth pausing for and thinking about. 1 billion people worldwide live with disabilities, and we have all experienced grief in our lives. These weeks raise awareness of the smaller front-line organisations in the UK to give them a national platform to reach those in need for timely and tailored support for those affected within the local communities across the UK. CRUSE, Winston's Wish, Sue Ryder, and Mind are few amongst others you might have heard of.

In staff news following the retirement of Dr John Seddon, in October Dr Keira Prince became GP Partner for Pucklechurch Surgery, after over 7 years based largely at Wick Surgery. We also welcomed Dr Dana Parr, also a GP Partner, to the Three Shires team. She is based at Wick Surgery. Thank you for making them both feel welcome.

Lastly, a reminder that during these stressful times of recession/increased costs of living there are support staff available via your surgery who can potentially offer various avenues of practical, financial, and emotional help and support. Our staff in the role of Social Prescriber and Care Coordinator are here to help you. Please call us if you are struggling.

Hoping that the end of the year and the festive Christmas season will be as peaceful and restful as possible for all of you, despite the current difficulties, allowing time for walks in the beautiful surroundings of Three Shires countryside, with some much-needed reflection and kindness for us all.

Best wishes,

Dr Keira Prince & Dr Dana Parr

Health Click Workshops

Healthwatch is delighted to be running face-to-face workshops across Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire to help older adults develop their confidence and gain the skills they need to use online health services. All abilities for these workshops will be welcome.

Healthwatch will be running drop-in sessions, and working with individual GP practices to help people manage their health needs independently. These HealthClick workshops will enable people to find trustworthy health advice and provide information about staying safe online.

Through one-on-one support, the workshops will help people learn how to use services such as the NHS app and Patient Access. They will talk you through connecting with your GP practice, and demonstrate how to:

- book GP appointments,
- order prescriptions,
- access online consultations by telephone or video,
- view medical records,
- receive test results,
- download your COVID-19 pass,
- find trustworthy health advice and
- find information about staying safe online.

For more about HealthClick Digital Workshops, please contact Luke Millward on 03300 553251 or email Luke@healthwatchbnssg.co.uk or go to <https://www.healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk/>

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is a legal document enabling a person to appoint one or more people to help him/her make decisions or make decisions on that person's behalf. The person making the appointment is the 'donor,' the people appointed are 'attorneys. You must be 18 and be able to make decisions at the time you make an LPA. There are two types of LPA, property and financial affairs and health and welfare.

A property and financial affairs LPA enables an attorney to manage property and finances for the donor, such as run bank or building society accounts, pay bills, collect pension /benefits, or sell a property.

A health and welfare LPA enables an attorney to make decisions such as medical care, moving into a care home and life sustaining treatment

To register / activate an LPA, costs £82 for each LPA.

The Office of the Public Guardian can offer help and guidance, via email on customerservices@publicguardian.gov.uk or by telephone on weekdays between 10am and 5pm on 0300 456 0300.

When a health and welfare LPA has been registered with the Office of the Public Guardian, here at the Practice we can add it to your patient record. The "certificate provider" can be anyone who has known you for at least 2 years, or a solicitor. Full details on the www.gov.uk website.

Being a Green Practice - Steps to Reduce our Carbon Footprint through Medication Prescribing

Did you know that approximately two thirds of a general practice's carbon footprint, comes from prescribing? To support the green agenda the practice team are looking at ways of safely reviewing our prescribing of individual medicines and processes to reduce the carbon footprint for example:

Inhalers:

Inhalers are a key part of treating asthma and other breathing difficulties. The most important thing is that your condition is kept as well controlled as possible, using inhalers that suit you well. However, some types of inhaler have a bigger carbon footprint than others.

Some types of inhalers contain a propellant (gas) to carry the medicine into the lungs. The propellant has a greenhouse gas effect, which contributes to climate change (global warming). Some brands of inhalers such as the Ventolin Evohaler have a similar carbon footprint in each inhaler to a 175-mile petrol car journey.

Other types of inhaler do not contain propellants and for many patients, effective and more environmentally friendly alternatives are available – such as dry powder or “Easy-Haler” or “Soft-mist” inhalers. By contrast, these inhalers typically contain the same carbon footprint as a 4-mile car journey!

We are in the process of reviewing patients on inhaler devices with high carbon footprints and where appropriate discussing alternatives with you, either as part of your annual asthma/medicines review or part of a targeted review.

If you would like to read more, have a look at www.greeninhaler.org.

If you wish to discuss your choice of inhaler please make an appointment to discuss with the practice nurse or practice pharmacist.

Reusable and refillable devices:

Where possible we are reducing plastic use by switching to reusable and refillable devices such using products that come with re-usable applicators (such as Vagirux instead of Vagifem) or refillable devices (such as Spiriva Respimat refills rather than the combi pack).

Reducing medicines wastage:

Only order what you need and do not stockpile medicines. If you no longer require an item on your repeat medication list, please let us know.

Wendy Fletcher. Practice Clinical Pharmacist

What To Do If Someone Collapses in Front of You

It is rare but can be really scary if someone collapses in front of you or you find someone unconscious. The good news is you can make a difference to someone's survival with a few simple actions. Recently Dr Ashish Bhatia ran a seminar for some patients in our Practice and the picture shows that seminar in progress. This article is not medical training but is here to help make it easier to do your best. For more information and support perhaps join a First aid for basic life support course. Here is a link to a free online education; <https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life/how-to-do-cpr/cpr-training-videos>

Here are some first steps:

1. **STOP**- Take a deep breath - a deep breath can help you think more clearly and calm panic.
2. **SAFE** - Check it is safe for you and others to approach.
3. **SPEAK** - Ask "can you hear me" shaking them if needed to see if they are responsive. Feel if you can for a pulse or other signs of life.
4. **SEEK**- Help - shout for help and call 999, leaving the person if you must.

The emergency services will talk you through what to do. This may include checking for signs of life (a pulse and breath) and asking you to start CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation by performing chest compressions. This is described in the link above.



If possible, send someone to collect a defibrillator while CPR is underway. This is publicly available electrical equipment which can be used to restart someone's heart. The location of your nearest defibrillator can be found using this web link. <https://www.defibfinder.uk/>

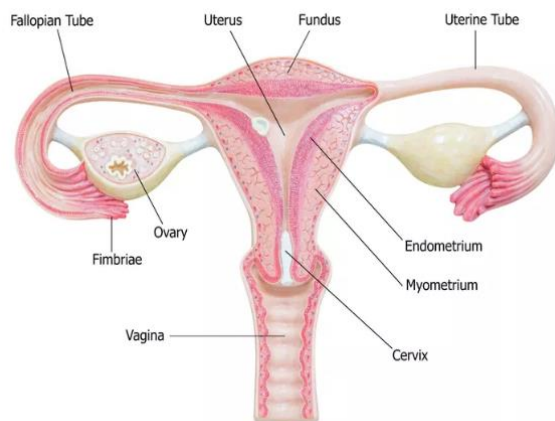
If you manage to do any of these steps you have done really well. It is a horrible situation, and your best is good enough.

For a more detailed explanation of what to do in some other emergency circumstances, anaphylactic shock (allergic reaction to insect sting or certain foods), heavy bleeding, burns and scalds, chemical burns, choking, drowning, electric shock, fractures, heart attack, poisoning, shock or strokes, it is worth looking at the NHS website page <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/first-aid/>

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a condition which is hard to diagnose, making women's lives a misery if not recognised and treated correctly. Its main symptom is pain – both during and preceding a period, so it can easily be written off as bad period pains. However, if you have pains that are adversely affecting your life and ability to work or study, do seek medical advice.

Endometriosis is where cells from the inner lining of the uterus, called the endometrium, escape into the pelvis via the Fallopian tubes and grow outside the uterus, instead of passing out with the menstrual fluid in the normal way. The cause of this is uncertain and it is likely that the condition is caused by a combination of different factors. Endometriosis most commonly occurs in women aged 20-45 but can affect teenagers and women older than 45.



The endometrium thickens and enriches in blood in the first half of the menstrual cycle ready to receive a fertilised egg. If this does not occur, part of this layer is shed off causing menstruation.

If endometriosis is present, the endometrial cells which have escaped and seeded on other organs, such as the ovaries, bladder, or bowel, also react to the hormonal changes, swelling and then bleeding, causing pain.

Endometriosis can be difficult to diagnose as symptoms can vary considerably and there are other conditions which can cause similar symptoms. Women living with endometriosis may experience one or more of the following:

- abnormal and/or heavy menstrual bleeding,
- moderate to severe abdominal pain and/or lower back pain,
- pain during and/or after sex,
- pain when passing urine or faeces,
- feeling nauseous,
- constipation.

Examination of the pelvic cavity by laparoscopy is the only way to diagnose endometriosis with certainty, but ultrasound and possibly MRI may also be helpful. Treatments will depend upon how the symptoms present. Painkillers offer some relief and hormonal drugs to prevent menstruation may be prescribed; local removal of endometrial deposits can be achieved with laser treatment.

Endometriosis is a difficult condition to deal and live with both physically and emotionally. As well as advice, treatment and support from your GP, a support group such as Endometriosis UK may be helpful. Their helpline number is 0808 808 2227 and their website is www.endometriosis-uk.org

Memory Café

Our memory café continues to meet on the first Thursday of each month from 2.00pm until 4.00pm at the village hall in Doynton. We are already enjoying the company of 10 people living with a dementia attending with a family member or friend. We aim to have a theme for each meeting. So far, we have reminisced about seaside summer holidays, harvests, and festivals and enjoyed some yoga, and we always find some time for some music and some singing. We are already in the process of planning a programme for 2023 which we hope will include themes on nutrition and healthy eating, musicals and the 50's 60's and 70's.

The memory café gives people living with memory issues and family members / carers an opportunity to meet together and enjoy a variety of activities while sharing experiences. We provide information for carers and have a link to the Carers Support Centre.

If you and a family member or friend would like to join us, please contact us on 0781 731 1001.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help at each of our meetings and / or if you would like to join our group that plans and organises each meeting, again please contact us on 0781 731 1001.

Patient Participation Group (PPG) Update

Your PPG has held its AGM in July and a further meeting in Colerne in October. Principal achievements in 2022 have been the creation of the memory café which meets on the first Thursday of every month from 2pm at Doynton Village Hall, the continuation of a COVID and flu vaccination programme at Marshfield, support to the vaccination programme at Downend and the continuation of the bereavement group which now runs independently of the PPG.

In October we had a speaker from Healthwatch seeking to promote patient care through use of online services (see the HealthClick article from Healthwatch earlier in the newsletter) and we discussed running a further patient questionnaire in 2023.

If you would like to know more about the PPG or perhaps would like to join us, please contact us on 4patientparticipation@gmail.com ; if there are issues you would like us to raise at a PPG meeting please contact us at this email address or leave a written message and contact details at your local surgery for us to pick up. There is also a Patient Reference Group (PRG) which operates online only, which we contact occasionally for patient viewpoints. You can sign up for the PRG and obtain more information about both the PPG and PRG on the Practice website.