

## **Burwell surgery update 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022**

### **Autumn Booster vaccination programme**

There is approximately another 2 weeks to go in our local 'Primary Care Network' Covid and flu vaccination programme. If you are eligible you should have been contacted by us, but please try to book in before the programme ends. After this date you would need to book Covid jabs in the national booking service <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

According to our records 15% of our diabetics and just under 20% of our asthmatics have not had Flu jabs yet. If we go the way that Australia did a few months ago, then we could be in for a heavy Flu season bearing in mind that we are all likely to have reduced immunity having had very little exposure in the last couple of years.

If you are eligible for an NHS flu jab but have not had it yet ( see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/> for details), and you have already had your Covid booster, then please contact reception and they may be able to arrange the Flu jab at the surgery. We are unable to undertake Covid boosters here.

### **Other Covid/Flu related issues**

We are towards the end of the current spike in Covid infections. So, as we speak, the prevalence is not too bad – I am sure that there are more spikes to come. There are significantly more Flu cases (and general coughs and colds) than last year but as yet these are below the number we would normally see this time of year.

Generally the peak in Flu cases is over Christmas/January/February so it is not yet clear how this will play out – we are a bit apprehensive as they have had what they have called a 'Twindemic' in Australia and we often follow their pattern of illness prevalence.

At the surgery we have therefore continued to make it optional for staff and patients to wear Face masks. Whilst we still have isolation processes available and full PPE available I would say that most consultations are currently being conducted without masks.

Please do feel free to continue wearing a face mask if you would like to. Also if you would feel more comfortable for the clinician that you are seeing to be wearing a face mask, then please tell reception when you arrive (or the clinician as you are called through) and we will be very happy to put a mask on.

### **Local NHS services**

Everything is up and running but I am afraid that the waiting lists are long for pretty much every 'non urgent' issue. Waiting lists are prioritised on the basis of clinical need. The main thing is to let us know if your circumstances change (for example if your symptoms get worse). We can then write an 'expedite' letter to ensure that these changes are reflected in the hospital's management of the waiting list. These letters can really make a difference.

## Your GP Practice team – Here to Help

I wanted to share some thoughts with you about how the workforce here in Burwell Surgery has changed in recent years. We sometimes find that a few patients feel that their care needs are always most appropriately addressed by speaking to a doctor.

- Depending on your needs, you may be seen by a member of the wider general practice team.
- Having a range of professionals at your general practice means you receive the most appropriate care as quickly as possible.

In Burwell our process is that each patient contact we have is via AskmyGP (either placed directly onto it via the website [Introduction \(askmygp.uk\)](https://askmygp.uk) or via ringing reception). A clinician will then 'allocate' the call to the most appropriate staff member to address whatever the issue or problem is.

Currently some of the workforce that we have in our team include:

- **Reception team:** Staff in our reception team are specially trained to know about the services available to you at your GP practice and in your area. They will listen and talk to you in confidence about your health problem, to understand your needs so they can book you an appointment with the right healthcare professional or service.
- **Paramedic:** We are very fortunate to have an extremely experienced Paramedic working as part of our team. She has undergone additional specialist training and is able to assess, treat, diagnose, refer and prescribe medication.
- **Practice nurses:** Nurses undertake a wide range of activities. They assess, screen and treat people of all ages including those with long-term conditions such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes who may need regular health checks. They also provide services such as immunisations, fit notes, contraception and assess and manage some minor illnesses including urinary tract infections.
- **Clinical pharmacists:** Clinical Pharmacists are experts in medicines and can support those with long-term conditions like asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure, or anyone taking multiple medicines, to make sure their medication is working. In Burwell surgery they complete the medication reviews for people on more complex medication regimens.
- **Healthcare assistants:** Healthcare Assistants work under the guidance of a nurse or another healthcare professional. They help with routine health checks including blood pressure monitoring or taking blood samples, and can give certain vaccinations. In Burwell they also do health checks, the 'hands on' part of diabetic checks and warfarin (anticoagulant medication) blood testing and dosing.

- **Social prescriber:** Social Prescribing Link Workers help people to focus on their social, emotional, and physical wellbeing, working alongside their medical team. They help people to connect with local groups and services for a range of practical and emotional support. This could include physical activities and social groups, volunteering and gardening, or even debt and housing advice. We have an excellent Social prescriber who is able to support our team in managing many of the social and emotional issues that complicate many chronic medical conditions in a way we were not able to before.

## **NEW – Pharmacy referral scheme**

Along similar lines to the above, I wanted to flag up the many medical conditions that can be appropriately addressed by speaking to a pharmacist. Patients are always able to approach clinical pharmacists directly for advice and we would encourage you to do so directly if you think that they can assist you.

If we receive a patient query here in Burwell Surgery that we think could be appropriately addressed by a clinical pharmacist, Burwell Surgery is now working closely with several local pharmacists to manage these requests in a new way.

If we receive such a request, we will send you the following message:

*'Thank you for your message. We have reviewed your case and believe that it could safely and effectively be managed by one of our local pharmacies. We are working closely with our local pharmacies to deliver an enhanced service with a face to face appointment if needed in the pharmacy for a range of conditions with a pharmacist.'*

*If you agree we will send a referral to a pharmacy of your choice. Once sent, you can either simply turn up and you will be seen within 15 minutes by a pharmacist or you can call the pharmacy for a phone consultation. The pharmacies that are available are:*

- *Lloyds pharmacy, 57 High St, Burwell, Cambridge CB25 0HD. Telephone 01638 741214*
- *Lords Pharmacy Newmarket, The Guineas-Shopping Centre, Newmarket CB8 8EQ. Telephone: 01638 428022*
- *Tesco Pharmacy, Fordham Rd, Newmarket CB8 7AH. Telephone: 01638 460083*

*Please can you reply if you are happy for a referral and tell us which pharmacy you would like to use. We will then send the referral and you can go ahead and contact'*

Clinical pharmacists are extremely experienced professionals who are well placed to assist with a wide variety of medical conditions in addition to dealing with medication related queries. These include:

Acne (first presentation)	Mouth Ulcers
Allergic Reaction (not anaphylaxis)	Nasal Congestion
Athlete's Foot	Rash first presentation
Bites or Stings, Insect or Spider	Rectal Pain
Blisters	Scabies
Constipation	Shoulder Pain
Diarrhoea in Gastroenteritis	Sleep Difficulties
Ear Discharge or Ear Wax	Sore Throat
Earache	Spots and pimples
Eye, Red or Irritable	Toe Pain or Swelling
Eye, Sticky or Watery	URTI Cold/cough/flu like. Short history
Eyelid Problems	Vaginal Discharge
Hay Fever	Vaginal Itch or Soreness
Hearing Problems or Blocked Ear	Vomiting in Gastroenteritis
Itch (simple)	Wound Problems - management of dressings
Lower Back Pain	Wrist, Hand or Finger Pain or Swelling

Of course you can decline to follow this pathway if you would rather not.

### **'We don't like Mondays!'**

We work very hard here to try and deal with any request that we receive on the same day. On that basis we don't have a waiting list for appointments unlike some practices in other areas.

What this does mean however is we are put under a lot of pressure if there is heavy demand at particular times of the week.

Mondays have always been the busiest days of the week. We have more clinicians working on a Monday than other days to try to match this demand.

Recently we have been finding demands on a Monday to be increasing – on average we get about 230 patient contacts compared to about 120 on a Friday. We will continue to try and

deal with your calls as quickly as we can but please be aware that delays on Mondays may be longer as a result of this demand. You may get a quicker response later in the week'

Of course there are other alternatives like <https://111.nhs.uk/> , community pharmacies, the Ely Minor Injuries Unit <https://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-services/minor-injury-units-and-urgent-treatment-centres/>

I also wanted to flag up here the excellent Minor Eye Treatment Services see <https://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-services/minor-eye-conditions-service/> . The nearest service is run by the Specsavers branch in Newmarket (tel 01638 565270) and other services are available. People are sometimes surprised when we suggest this service and I do appreciate it is a bit further away. However they can see people quickly, give a very thorough assessment and can issue treatments for many eye conditions/refer on to hospital specialists if needed. We have had excellent feedback from patients who have used this service.

For newly pregnant (<13 weeks) ladies then please don't forget that you have direct access to the Addenbrookes early pregnancy unit for any pregnancy related problems (like pain or bleeding). They are open Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and 0830-2pm Saturday and Sunday. Their number is 01223 217636.

### **Good news for (some) Diabetic patients.**

The local NHS system has agreed to fund more sophisticated glucose monitoring systems for all type 1 diabetics and some type 2 diabetics. These systems are:

- 1) Freestyle Libre 2 ( a system where you scan a sensor which checks your glucose levels)
- 2) Dexcom 1 (a continuous glucose monitoring system in which a sensor sends a glucose reading your smartphone every 5 minutes)

Type 2 diabetic patients who are eligible are:

- *Severe hypoglycaemia or impaired hypoglycaemic*
- *Condition or disability that means they are unable to self-monitor but can act upon glycaemic changes*
- *Is living with a learning disability*
- *Renal failure on dialysis*
- *Cystic fibrosis*
- *Where they require help from a care worker or health care professional to monitor their blood glucose.*

Most Type 1 diabetics should be under a hospital team. If you are interested in this technology I would suggest you ask about it at your next review.

If you are a Type 1 not under a hospital clinic or a Type 2 patient that is eligible then we will discuss this with you at your next review.

It is a big step forward for patients and we are very excited that it is now available.

### **Electronic access to Medical records**

Some of you already have access to your electronic GP record via the NHS app (the one with the Covid pass on it for international travel). Soon electronic access to GP medical records is going to be 'switched on' for everybody who has the app.

This will only be for records after this date but I think that patients will find it really helpful – for example if you wish to access laboratory test results. There is some more detail here <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/how-to-get-your-medical-records/>

Please do email [admin.burwellsurgery@nhs.net](mailto:admin.burwellsurgery@nhs.net) if you have any queries about this

### **Patient participation group**

As you can see there is a lot going on at the moment! We are very lucky in having a very active patient participation group. The group meets quarterly however is always happy to hear any feedback or ideas from our patients that will help improve our service. If you would like to get involved, even just digitally, then please do email [amy.robertson12@nhs.net](mailto:amy.robertson12@nhs.net)

### **Staying well in Winter**

I know that it is really hard time for people at the moment with multiple financial pressures and Winter setting in. There are some NHS tips for staying well here <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/> and [https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/Stay\\_well\\_this\\_winter\\_-\\_large\\_print.pdf](https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/Stay_well_this_winter_-_large_print.pdf)

Do get in touch with us if you think that there is something we can do to help from the surgery.

Best wishes to you all.

Alex Manning