

OCTOBER 2020 PATIENT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our October 2020 newsletter.



UPDATE

Thank you for your support and patience through the last 6 months, it's been a difficult time for us all.

Following the early phases of the Covid pandemic, when all health service energies were directed at managing a potential surge of very poorly patients, the NHS is now trying to restore normal services.

This is being done against a backdrop of the ongoing pandemic and with the risk of local significant outbreaks or a larger "second wave". Across the country Primary Care has seen the demand for consultations increase dramatically since lockdown was loosened and we appreciate our phone lines are very busy.

At Shore Medical we continue to follow national guidance around when and how to restart our usual services so that we can care for you in a safe and infection-controlled environment.

National Guidance is that we should still have initial remote contact with all patients (by phone or online) and only arrange face to face review if there is no suitable alternative.

When we do need to see you face to face then we are sometimes having to ask you to attend different sites within the group depending on the service we are providing.

For each consultation we need to clean surfaces before and after seeing you and, also, don and doff the appropriate PPE. All this takes significant time and affects how we can manage patient flow. It is impacting on all our services, especially those previously "quick" appointments like blood tests. Social distancing guidance also mean it is no longer possible to offer a sit and wait option at our surgeries, leading to a much higher number of telephone calls than we are used to.

We know that people have been putting up with potentially worrying symptoms while the Covid crisis unfolded and we need to ensure our patients are able to get the right care they need as quickly as possible.

If your problem is a minor health issue you could choose to approach your local pharmacy or use NHS.uk for self-help advice.

When you do contact us (unless you feel it is urgent) please try to do so via the eConsult system available on our website as we know how busy our phone lines are. The more information that you give on the eConsult or to our reception team, then the faster we will be able to signpost you to the appropriate team member. To allow the GPs to concentrate on those with complex medical problems we are increasing our supporting clinical teams. This will ensure that you are navigated to the right person to deal with your problem and allow the GPs capacity to offer continuity of care when appropriate.

Thank you for being so understanding about our evolving services in the highly unusual situation we all find ourselves in.

Delivery of flu vaccination is seen as hugely important this autumn but will also be hugely challenging to deliver. Please do have your flu jab if eligible and have it at a Shore practice- as well as providing patients with a potentially life-saving vaccination it also provides invaluable income for the surgeries.

The website is being regularly updated with guidance around booking and we will be in contact with our at-risk patients. The additional groups identified by the media recently will be alerted later in the autumn about receiving their flu jab.

SHORE NEWS

We would like to say a big Shore welcome to:

Michelle Williams - Pharmacy Technician

Dr Ahmed Shiddo - GP Registrar

Dr Lucy Johnson – GP

HEALTH CHAMPIONS

Lilliput Health Champions are back in action supporting the surgery and patients – all socially distanced of course.

Events and Support available:

Coffee morning at Saltern Hotel restarts on the 3rd September at 10.30 – 12.00 every week.

Garden Club is the now 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 10 to 12 noon.

IT support – how to access my medical record, send an eConsult or order prescriptions.

General telephone phone support for all Shore Medical patients

If you would be interested in joining them or would like support with any of the above, please visit our website, www.shoremedical.co.uk and submit your interest.

IN FOCUS

Diabetes when you're unwell

When you have diabetes, it's important to know how to cope when you're unwell. Especially when approaching winter season.

Being ill can upset your diabetes management, so you need to know what to do to keep your blood glucose (sugar) levels as close to target as possible. Some people will know these as **sick day rules**.

You'll need to know how to manage your diabetes medications, blood or urine tests, and your diet. This is also very really important if you go into **hospital** or if you need to take **steroids** as part of your treatment. Always tell the healthcare professionals treating you that you have diabetes.

How being ill can affect your diabetes

Illness and infections, as well as other forms of stress, can raise your blood glucose (sugar) levels. As part of the body's defence mechanism for fighting illness and infection, more glucose is released into the blood stream. This can happen even if you're off your food or eating less than usual.

People who don't have diabetes just produce more insulin to cope. But when you've got diabetes, your body can't do this. The **symptoms of diabetes** can add to those of the original illness or infection and make it much worse.

Feeling or being sick, or having diarrhoea can make your blood sugar levels drop, because you're not absorbing food as usual.

Being dehydrated when you have diabetes

Having a temperature or being sick can lead to dehydration. In some cases, severe dehydration and very high blood sugar levels can mean that you need to go into **hospital**.

Therefore, it's important to be prepared and follow our advice on coping when you're sick. You might want to give this information to a friend or family member, so they can help you if you get sick.

Managing your diabetes when you're sick - your sick day rules

- Don't panic – contact your diabetes team who will help you if you have any queries or if you are unsure about what to do.
- Keep taking your diabetes medications – even if you don't feel like eating. But there are some medicines that you shouldn't take as much of or stop taking altogether. Make sure you talk to your diabetes team as soon as you're feeling ill so they can give you the right advice.
- If you **check your blood sugar** at home you'll probably need to do it more often – at least every four hours, including during the night. If you don't test your blood sugar levels at home, be aware of the signs of a **hyper** (hyperglycaemia).
- Stay hydrated – have plenty of unsweetened drinks and eat little and often.
- If you have type 1 diabetes, it's important to check for **ketones**. You usually check when your blood sugar level is 15mmol/l or more, or 13mmol/l if you use an insulin pump. But your diabetes team may have given you different targets, so regardless of what your blood sugars are saying – test for ketones. If you find ketones, contact your diabetes team.
- If you take a certain type of diabetes tablet called **SGLT2i** and become unwell, you should stop taking these. You need to check your ketones and your blood sugars (if you've been told to do this and have the kit) and speak to your healthcare team. There are different types of **SGLT2i tablets** so, check our list for all the brand names. Taking these tablets when you're not very well could increase your risk of developing **diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)**, so, you need to know the **symptoms** to look out for.
- Keep eating or drinking – if you can't keep food down, try snacks or drinks with carbohydrates in to give you energy. Try to sip sugary drinks (such as fruit juice or non-diet cola or lemonade) or suck on glucose tablets or sweets like jellybeans. Letting fizzy drinks go flat may help keep them down. If you're vomiting, or not able to keep fluids down, get medical help as soon as possible.

For this and more information on 'diabetes and illness' please visit Diabetes UK website:

www.diabetes.org.uk

OUR PRACTICES

Keep yourself and others safe. Use a face mask when attending the Surgery

In line with the government guidance to wear face coverings in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible, we are asking all patients who attend the surgery to use their own reusable face coverings.

For those patients who are not able to provide their own face covering we are grateful to the patients and supporters who have donated a large batch of home sewn face masks. These masks are available to those who are unable to provide their own for a small donation. This donation will allow us to continue to provide masks and reduce the risks for all patients and staff.

COMMUNITY CARE

Learning Disability and Health Checks

Do you or someone you care for have a Learning Disability and are over the age of 14 years? Did you know you or they are eligible for a free annual health check?

Our dedicated team of nurses can provide both clinic based and visiting service for your annual check.

During your appointment we will provide discussion about health concerns and physical assessment as required. We undertake our assessments in PPE and will discuss any concerns that you may have prior to the assessment.

If you would like your assessment, please contact your surgery and one of our team will call you to discuss in more detail.

For more information about the check please follow this link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/learning-disabilities/annual-health-checks/>

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE JANUARY

