



## Kensington Group Practice

DONEGALL ROAD AND FINAGHY  
Medical Centre

# Spring Newsletter

MARCH 2022

**Please note we will be closed on St. Patrick's Day on Thursday 17th March, 2022.**

**If you have an urgent problem that cannot wait until we reopen at 8.30am the following day, you can contact GP Out of hours.**

**The GP Out Of Hours Service provides care for people in Belfast when their normal GP surgery is closed. It is not intended to replace normal GP services, but deals with urgent problems that cannot wait until your own GP is available. You should therefore only use this service if you are suddenly ill and you cannot wait until your GP's surgery is open.**

**South and East Belfast - 02890 796220  
North and West Belfast - 02890 744447  
Lisburn area - 02892 602204**

**Call 999 in an emergency. Chest pains and/or shortness of breath constitute an emergency.**

**We will also be closed for staff training from 1.45pm on Thursday 24th March.**

**If you have an urgent query that cannot wait until we reopen the following morning, please contact us on our usual number; please note we will not be able to process routine scripts or results during this time.**



# Why am I still being asked to wear a facemask in the surgery?



**Please wear a face covering in all HSC settings**



Protect vulnerable patients, other service users and our staff

Whilst the legal requirement to wear a face covering no longer applies, the government suggests that you continue to wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Face coverings and face masks will continue to be required in health and care settings - such as GP surgeries and hospitals - to comply with infection prevention and control measures.

Under health and safety legislation, we still have an overriding legal duty to protect all patients and staff within our building.

Therefore, in line with other healthcare settings, we kindly ask all our patients to continue to wear a mask when coming to surgery, unless exempt or have reasonable excuse.

Also, good hand hygiene, and keeping distance from others, remains important.

**Covid vaccinations remain available. Please click on the picture to the left for details about current arrangements.**



How to get your **COVID-19** vaccine or booster jab

COVID-19 vaccine and booster >

Information on getting a COVID-19 vaccination or booster in Northern Ireland.

## Health A to Z

Your complete guide to conditions, symptoms and treatments, including what to do and when to get help.

[Go to the Health A to Z](#)

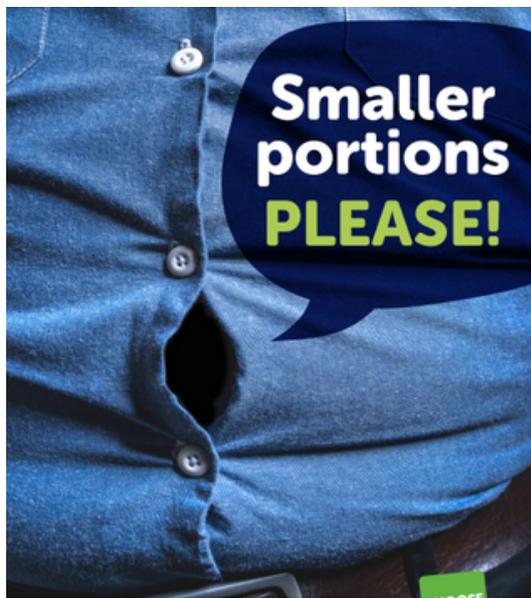
## Medicines A to Z

Find out how your medicine works, how and when to take it, possible side effects and answers to your common questions.

[Go to the Medicines A to Z](#)

The above two links are taken from the NHS England website <https://www.nhs.uk/>



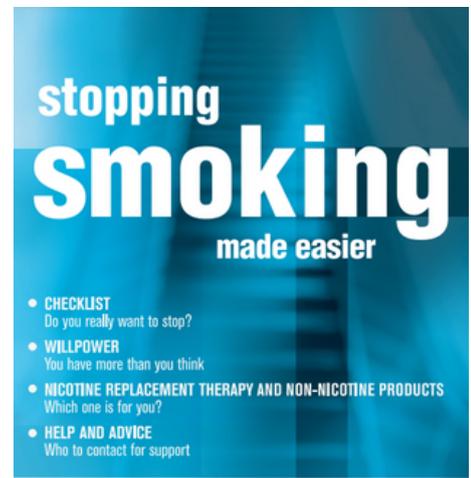


Making healthier choices

CHOOSE TO LIVE BETTER



Breast Screening



- CHECKLIST Do you really want to stop?
- WILLPOWER You have more than you think
- NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY AND NON-NICOTINE PRODUCTS Which one is for you?
- HELP AND ADVICE Who to contact for support



Walking football is aimed at keeping men and women aged over 50 active and involved in football.



HSC Public Health Agency



Protection from Measles, by vaccination, is important for us all, not just children. If you believe you, or a family member, is not fully vaccinated against MMR (two doses - generally given in UK at around one year, then again at three years and four months) - speak to the GP.

**MMR vaccination  
It's not just for children**

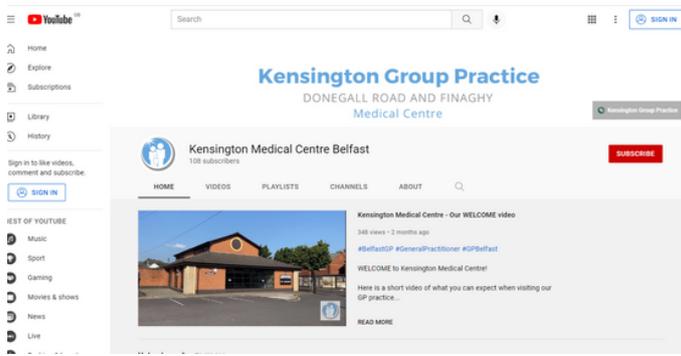
Why is getting moving again important?

After a period of illness and inactivity, your muscles will be much weaker than normal and you will certainly be less fit than you were.

It is important to get back to your previous level of activity or possibly aim to be more active!

<https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/your-wellbeing/getting-moving-again/>





We have further updated our YouTube playlists, where we have a wide range of carefully curated and interesting videos to help support you with your health.

New this month - skin health.

<https://kensingtongp.uk/skin-health-videos>



## Health Minister publishes update on waiting list progress

On the 24th February, Health Minister Robin Swann provided an interim update on actions to tackle Northern Ireland's hospital waiting lists.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-minister-publishes-update-waiting-list-progress>



## Health Minister supports appeal for foster carers

The Health Minister is supporting the launch of an appeal to find homes for young refugees who arrive in Northern Ireland without a parent or carer.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-minister-supports-appeal-foster-carers>



Believe in children  
Barnardo's

NI Refugee Support Service

Support for refugees

If you are a refugee, asylum seeker or vulnerable migrant, the British Red Cross may be able to help you.



Migrant Centre NI

Supporting Migrants in NI

# *Working hard, but innovatively to manage historically high demand.*

Demand for all clinical services, not just General Practice, but across the entire health service, remains extremely high.

Our staff are all working incredibly hard to meet this need as best we can, however at times, demand can exceed availability of appointments, and we thank you for your patience and understanding about this.

As we have discussed before in previous newsletters, there are only so many patients that can be safely tended to in a clinical session.

As such, we are slightly restructuring how we allocate our telephone consultations, so that we:

- protect capacity for "urgent on the day" matters
- but balanced against the need to address things that are important, but not necessarily urgent - such as long-term conditions management; or symptoms that are troublesome but not necessarily urgent.
- Ensure the GPs have adequate time to deal with all patients in their session. This is very important for delivering safe and quality care.

To that end, we have set aside around half of our telephone consultations to be used for "urgent on the day matters" and around half for "less urgent, but still important" matters.

You can help us get the maximum benefit from these sessions, so we can help as many people as we reasonably can

- If you are content your concern is not an immediately urgent one, please let the receptionist know - we will then organise you can call back at a future time, but probably within the next few days; this will help us preserve capacity for issues that are genuinely urgent for that day.
- If you have a "less urgent but still important" matter - please book your callback slot online if you can, giving some detail regarding your concern. Please note you may not be called back at the exact time of your booking - it will be some time that morning or afternoon, as we need to prioritise the session's workload by urgency; for this same reason, we cannot give an exact time when the GP will call you (although if you can only take a call before/after a certain time, we will try to accommodate you where we can.)



- To help prioritise the work of the day, and to assist the GP in preparing for your telephone consultation, the receptionist will ask for some brief information about your current concern. Please note if there are multiple concerns, this may require most than one callback, and the most urgent issue will be dealt with first.
- If your issue is "less urgent but still important" - please consider booking this telephone consultation with the GP - these can be found on our online portal to book under "KMC Tel Calls". Please do note your call back will NOT likely be at the exact time booked, for the same reasons outlined above.
- Where a call back is scheduled - please to make every effort to be able to pick up the phone when the GP calls back. As the clinical sessions are exceptionally busy, whilst we will try to call again if at all possible, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. This very much depends on the pressures of the day, and the urgency of the query. Having to try repeatedly takes time away from the consultations of other patients.
- If capacity is full - you will appreciate a line has to be drawn somewhere - please do not resort to abusive, coercive or manipulative behaviour in order to secure a slot. Our receptionists perform a very difficult role.
- If you feel your need for a callback is especially urgent, please outline why, and the receptionist will enquire with the GP if it is possible to add on a further slot. Please understand it is only in exceptional circumstances, when genuinely clinically urgent, that this may be possible.
- Prevention is better than cure! Throughout the Covid pandemic, we have always remained accessible - we have never locked our doors - and we have continued to see patients face-to-face, where this has been necessary or useful - and not just when people are feeling acutely unwell - long term conditions continue to need managed. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have concerns about any long-term conditions, as you would have done prior to the pandemic. These type of calls may not necessarily need an urgent call back on the day, but we will endeavour to get you your callback in a timely manner.
- We are continuing to invite our patients for routine reviews where appropriate, and routine blood tests; when you receive such an invitation, please promptly respond. This frees up administrative capacity, which can then be used for other activities, if we only have to ask once!



# Improving how we use text messaging to reach our patients



- You may have noticed text messages received from the surgery may now look a little different; whether these have been your reminder texts for an appointment, invitations to clinics. You may even have accessed this newsletter today from one of our texts - by broadening the reach of our email, means we can more effectively keep in touch with our patient body.
- Texting also enables us to quickly share useful information with you, for example, during an asthma review, we can quickly send you a video link to show you how exactly to use your inhaler - adding value to the consultation.
- Please note this texts will come from the following number:

**07860 063962**

- You might wish to save this number in your phone, under "Kensington Texts" - that way, you will be able to quickly spot this text is from us.
- Please note this number **DOES NOT RECEIVE INCOMING CALLS, OR TEXTS** (with the exception of short replies indicated by the text - eg reply "1" to cancel etc)
- If you would prefer not to receive any texts from us, please let reception know.

## Are your details still up to date?

- **Moved house?**
- **Got a new phone contract?**
- **Are you a young adult, but the contact number we hold for you, or address, is that of your parents?**

- Please update your details by visiting
- <https://www.kensingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk/change-of-personal-details>
- By maintaining accurate details, means it is easier for us to get in touch with you, when we need to; and you are less likely to miss any important information.
- Please be assured your information will be kept safe, and "lawfully processed" - which in plain English - means only used to help deliver effective care to you - visit our GDPR policies at
- <https://www.kensingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk/privacy-policy>



## *Using "Quicklinks" to share useful information with you*

- You may have noticed in some of our texts, and elsewhere (for example, the right hand side of your prescriptions) some "shortened web addresses" - we would like to reassure these are genuine - and these lead onto useful information - but they are neater, and easier to type in, than the original web address to which they relate!
- Here are just a few particularly useful ones - they are very deliberately named so the content speaks for themselves.
- <https://kensingtongp.uk/Register> (through this link you can register for our online services and book appointments without having to attend the surgery to present ID - we can fully upgrade your account to order prescriptions as well at a later point)
- <https://kensingtongp.uk/help-to-stop-smoking> (through this link you can self-refer to our smoking cessation services, if you would like to stop or cut down)
- <https://kensingtongp.uk/bookchronicpaincourse> (a course you can self-refer to help you manage chronic pain)
- Again this is all about trying to help deliver a better service by maximising the benefit of our clinical contacts and invitations, and by streamlining administration.

## *What else can I do through your website?*

- We have shared before how our phones do be very busy, although we are finding with some of the small changes we are making in the way we do things, we are starting to find pressures on our phone lines reduce a little.
- We wanted to make you aware of other things you can do on our website, that can also present an alternative to needing to phone the surgery, or attend the surgery.
- If you are accessing the surgery on Google Chrome, the website can be translated by clicking "language"
- <https://www.kensingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk/contraceptive-pill-review-form> (if you are on the contraceptive pill, and have not had a review in the last 12 months, please complete this form)
- <https://www.kensingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk/sickfit-note-certificates> (order a sick note)

# Other options for support, as an alternative to contacting the surgery



Belfast Trust is delighted to introduce a pilot scheme offering free oral emergency contraception and contraceptive pills online via [SH:24](#) to anyone over the age of 16.

Do NOT enter the pharmacy if you have any symptoms of COVID-19

SAVE TIME AND AVOID WAITING TO SEE A GP

Ask your pharmacist **FIRST** for free confidential advice and treatment for symptoms of **Winter Conditions**



Maternity self-referral forms -

[Belfast Trust](#)

[South Eastern Trust](#)



This service is available through pharmacies to support Winter Ailments, until 31st March 2022.

Physiotherapy self referral, available for adults over 16 who need support and advice to manage symptoms related to muscle strains/joint sprains/back and neck pain - [for patients who live in South Eastern Trust \(ie. Lisburn\) areas only](#)



[Northern Ireland Primary Eyecare Assessment and Referral Service \(NI PEARS\)](#) is a service provided by most optometry practices across Northern Ireland for patients who develop a sudden eye problem. The NI PEARS service is for patients who develop a sudden eye condition such as:

- Red eye(s)
- Pain and/or discomfort in the eyes, or around the eye area
- Sudden reduction in vision in one or both eyes
- Recent onset or sudden increase of flashes and/or floaters in one or both eyes
- Suspected foreign body in the eye



# What is self-care?

- Our Health and Social Care Board, has the following to say.
- *The COVID-19 pandemic has left so many people in a state of poor physical and mental health.*
- *Millions are working to restart their lives, restore their fitness and make sure they are taking the very best care of themselves and their loves ones.*
- *Given the pressure on the Health service across Northern Ireland – there has never been a more important time for people to try and improve their personal health and wellbeing.*
- *Self-care is the best choice to treat minor illnesses, ailments and injuries. A range of common illnesses such as aches and pains, coughs, colds, upset stomachs and sore throats can be treated with over the counter medicines and plenty of rest. Remember, whether treated or not, most of these common complaints will get better.*



If people can take care of their minor ailments, that reduces the number of GP consultations and enables GPs to focus on caring for higher risk patients, such as those with comorbidities, the very young and elderly, managing long-term conditions and providing new services.

Invest in your future self by considering how making small changes that can make a big difference.

Examples of small steps to a healthier you, include:

- **Get Active** – advice is to exercise for at least twenty minutes a day, it's ideal if you can incorporate this into your day by ditching the car and walking to work, or walking the dog, taking the stairs or even dancing around the kitchen table to your favourite songs!
- **Eat Well** – We all know that healthy eating is crucial to our health so we can start by swapping unhealthy snacks for healthy options such as nuts, seeds and fruit. Ask your pharmacist for advice on managing your weight.
- **Adopting Positive Lifestyle Choices** – Take steps to stop those bad habits that don't serve you well. This Self Care Week make a plan to stop smoking, reduce your alcohol intake and get active! Your pharmacist can help with lifestyle changes such as weight management and stop smoking services.

To access more information about Self Care and lifestyle changes visit –

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/health-and-wellbeing>

# Kensington Group Practice – How we use your email addresses and telephone numbers



**Kensington Group Practice**  
DONEGALL ROAD AND FINAGHY  
Medical Centre

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) is a regulation by which the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission intend to strengthen and unify data protection for all individuals within the European Union (EU).

## ***What does this mean for me?***

This regulation is intended to build upon, and strengthening existing legislation and guidance around data protection.

**Part of this involves letting people know how their data is being used.**

*We may have a record of your email address, if we have received your email address from yourself, a family member, or guardian. We use your email address in two ways:*

- It underpins our online services for ordering prescriptions and booking appointments
- We use it to circulate practice newsletters such as this one, or to let you know of significant developments in the practice.

**Using your email in this way helps us in providing a stronger, more efficient service to our patients by facilitating access, and making sure our patients are aware of surgery arrangements so they can access care effectively.**

It is also a valuable means of communicating Public Health Information, for example around Flu Vaccination. We do not share your email outside the practice eg. for marketing purposes. We generally aim to send around four or five newsletters a year so you are not overloaded with information.

**We hope you find our newsletter useful and interesting, and as always, welcome feedback on it. If you do not wish to receive it by email, please let us know by replying “UNSUBSCRIBE” to the emailed newsletter, or speak to reception.**

*We also keep a record of your phone-numbers.*

- These enable us to get in touch with you with matters regarding your care, for example to invite you to a clinic, or to provide advice, or in an emergency.
- Text-messaging can be a very effective means of reaching a large number of patients quickly; eg. To invite for flu vaccinations.
- Holding an accurate mobile phone numbers means you can receive a reminder about an upcoming appointment, and also allows you a convenient means of cancelling this appointment, if you wish.

**Maintaining this information again helps ensure we can continue to deliver an effective service to you. Again if you wish not to receive communication by text, please speak to reception, who can flag your record accordingly.**