



Kensington Group Practice

DONEGALL ROAD AND FINAGHY
Medical Centre

AUTUMN 2020

practice newsletter

Welcome to our practice newsletter.
As before, this is an interactive newsletter,
please click on the pictures for further information.

In this newsletter, we discuss

The importance of remaining vigilant about Covid-19

How we are going to manage our Flu vaccinations this year

Looking at painkiller prescribing;

guidance has changed

Public Health advice

and

Welcoming Dr Edel Lambon and

Sister Chrissy McClay to the team



Coronavirus
STAY SAFE SAVE LIVES

Keep your distance
2m (6ft)

Cough or sneeze into your elbow, or a tissue and dispose in a bin

Don't touch your face

Wash your hands well and often
20 secs

Download the StopCOVID NI app

You must use face coverings in enclosed spaces like shops, healthcare settings and on public transport

If you have coronavirus symptoms, even if mild, go home, self-isolate and book a test.
For more information go to www.pha.site/coronavirus

HSC Public Health Agency

WE ALL MUST DO IT TO GET THROUGH IT

Produced by the Public Health Agency, 12-22 Linerhall Street, Belfast BT2 0BS

NOW IS NOT A TIME FOR COMPLACENCY

covid-19 is still with us

As a practice, we have concerns that the number of positive tests for Covid-19, appears to be growing again, at the time of preparing this newsletter.

We would very much like to remind our patients and families that we cannot become complacent about taking all measures to curb the spread of Covid-19; it is still so very important we all make every best effort to follow all guidance given as best we possibly can.

Please follow the following links for continually updated information for the public about Coronavirus.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND THE SURGERY, FOR ANY REASON, IF:

you have a new continuous cough

you have a temperature/feeling hot

you have loss of sense of taste or smell

you have travelled outside UK/Rep of Ireland in last 14 days

you have had any contact with known cases of COVID

PLEASE PHONE AHEAD AND SEEK ADVICE FIRST, INSTEAD.

FLU VACCINATION APPOINTMENTS

are now available to book

We are currently in the process of sending invitations to those entitled to receive a vaccination from the NHS. If you or your family members are entitled to the Flu Vaccination on the NHS, you can book now; please book online if you can, as we would expect high uptake this year, which may mean our phones become very busy, but you can book by phone if you need to. Read on, and click on the pictures in the next page for further info.

Not sure if eligible? Please visit the following link for more information:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flu-vaccine-adults>

Not eligible, but still wish to receive a flu vaccination? There are a number of local providers, including some of our nearby Community Pharmacists, and other private providers, who can administer the flu vaccination for a modest fee.

Received a shielding letter this year? You are entitled to a flu vaccine on the NHS, but so are your immediate family members who you share a household with. If they are registered with us as patients, they can receive this from us. If registered elsewhere, they should request a vaccination from their own surgery, clearly stating to them, that they "have a member of their household who was shielding."

The Public Health Agency is urging everyone who falls into an eligible group to get the flu vaccine.

The flu vaccine campaign has been expanded to help reduce the spread of flu and lower flu-related hospital admissions at a time when the health service is under strain as a result of COVID-19. It'll also help reduce the risk of contracting flu and coronavirus at the same time.

Dr David Irwin, Consultant in Health Protection at the PHA, said: *"For most people flu is a very unpleasant illness, but in some cases and for those in 'at risk' groups it can be very dangerous and sometimes fatal. That is why we have a wide-ranging vaccination programme which helps protect groups at particular risk in our community."*

Northern Ireland has secured extra vaccine this year so that household contacts of those who received shielding letters during the coronavirus pandemic can request vaccination via their GP.

"Staff in independent care homes and schoolchildren in Year 8 – representing those who will be in the first year of secondary school from September 2020 – are also eligible for the free vaccine."

Health Minister Robin Swann said: *"It is extremely important that we take all necessary measures to help reduce the risk of the flu circulating alongside COVID-19 during autumn and winter, to protect ourselves, our families and those we come into contact with."*

"There is also emerging evidence that co-infection with COVID-19 and flu may lead to a more severe illness. Reducing the pressure caused by seasonal flu will help preserve the capacity of the health and social care system to manage any future waves of COVID-19."

GPs across Northern Ireland are offering flu vaccination to everyone over 65, pregnant women, carers at home, people under 65 with an underlying health condition, as in previous years. Contacts of those who were shielding can also get it at their GP.

Pre-school children aged two years or over on 1 September 2020 can get the vaccine at their GP's surgery, while primary school children and Year 8 pupils will be offered it at school by the school health service. The kids' vaccine comes in the form of a quick, painless spray up the nose rather than an injection.

The flu virus spreads through the air when people cough and sneeze without covering their nose and mouth. Because young children don't always cover their noses or mouths, they can spread the flu virus very quickly, making them 'super-spreaders', so it is important that they avail of the vaccine to help protect them and those around them, including vulnerable members of their family and the wider community.

Dr Irwin continued: *"With a second surge of coronavirus likely during the winter months we cannot afford to be complacent about getting the flu vaccine this year. Each year the strains of flu in circulation change, so new vaccines are formulated to reflect this. That is why it is so important that everyone who falls into an eligible category gets the vaccine annually – if you got it last year, it won't cover you for this year's flu season. Also, while it won't protect you from COVID-19, it may stop people getting both illnesses and putting strain on health and social care services, not to mention reducing their risk to their own health."*

"It takes approximately two weeks following vaccination to develop maximum protection against flu. Everyone who is eligible should aim to have their vaccine early, according to their GP surgery's arrangements, and before flu activity generally increases. If you wait until cases of flu are widespread, it may be too late for the vaccine to offer you any protection."

Everyone who is eligible for vaccination should make themselves aware of their own GP surgery's flu vaccination arrangements particularly with extra measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 this year such as restrictions on numbers who can meet in one place and social distancing. By working with surgeries' schedules, people who are eligible to receive the vaccine can help ensure that it can be given to everyone in a timely manner."

"The flu vaccine does not give you the flu. It is offered as the best protection for 'at risk' groups because if they get flu, they are more likely to have severe illness and develop complications such as pneumonia, which can be life-threatening. It's free, it's quick, and it could make a big difference to your health and the health of those close to you. The message is clear – don't take the risk; get the vaccine."

ON THE DAY OF YOUR FLU VACCINE APPOINTMENT

You will find our Flu Clinics look a little different this year, as there are measures in place to protect both you, our patient, and our staff.

Broadly speaking, this is achieved by minimizing the time you will be in the building, and with our practitioners, whilst also observing social distancing and good hand hygiene.

Please help us run our service as smoothly and efficiently as possible, hence reducing crowding within the building, by following the following rules.

As we expect to be busy this year for vaccinations, and wish to reach as many patients we can, in a safe, controlled manner, please ensure you keep your appointment. Cancel in good time if you cannot attend. It is important you cancel your appointment and not attend if you are feeling unwell.

Please do not arrive very early to your appointment, to reduce crowding in the building.

Whilst in the building, please make every effort to observe social distancing.

Please attend your appointment alone if you can, but if support is required, or you need to support someone, one person accompanying is fine.

Please ensure you put on your mask before entering the building.

Once checked in, please sanitise your hands. Follow the one way system to your chair, and then to the room, when called.

If the unlikely event of noting more than twelve patients in the building, please wait outside.

Please roll up your sleeve on your preferred arm for vaccination (generally this would be the arm you do not write with) before being called. This saves time.

Please do not take any umbridge if you find your appointment for your vaccine short and to the point. As we do not wish our patients to remain on site for as short a period of time as possible, if you have any other matters you wish to discuss, please speak to the reception (ideally by phone during the working week) to organise a callback at a future point. The focus on the appointment is to receive your vaccination.

All windows and doors will be open to maximize airflow within the building. If you require further privacy, please ask your practitioner to close the door.

Once you have had your vaccine, please take a seat for two minutes; if you feel well, you can go on, there is no need to tell reception you are going. If you feel unwell shortly after your vaccination, please speak to the reception staff.

Flu is more serious than you think

Get the vaccine now



STAY WELL THIS WINTER

www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Protecting your child against flu

Vaccination for your school child

School-based programme



2020

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Protecting your child against flu

Vaccination for your toddler or pre-school child



2020

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Flu is more serious than you think

Get the flu vaccine to protect yourself and your baby



STAY WELL THIS WINTER

www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Aged 70 or 78?

There's a vaccine to help protect you from the pain of shingles



HSC Public Health Agency

Vaccinations during COVID-19 (coronavirus)

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has been a challenging time for everyone and it means that we need to maintain social distance. However, it is still very **important that your child continues to receive the vaccines they need** when invited by school.

Attending for vaccination

Your child should still attend for vaccinations unless they are unwell or self-isolating because they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19.

If your child or anyone in your house has a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss of or change in smell or taste, even if it is mild, you should speak to your school nurse *before* attending.

For more information on signs and symptoms, visit: www.pha.site/coronavirus

Your child's school vaccination clinic will take all possible precautions to protect your child from COVID-19.

Be aware that school vaccination clinics will continue to take place in schools, but the usual processes may change in order to maintain social distance.

Immisation

the safest way to protect your child

Health and social care workers

Don't risk flu infection!



Protect yourself, and those around you

MEASLES

Don't let your child catch it - make sure they get the MMR vaccine

The number of young people catching measles has risen across Europe and the UK. Children are offered MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps and rubella just after their first birthday and a second dose at 3 years 4 months. For the best protection they need both these doses.

It's never too late to be vaccinated.

For more information contact your local GP surgery or visit: pha.site/mmr

Immisation

the safest way to protect your child

Public Health Agency, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS. Tel: 0300 555 0114. www.publichealth.hscni.net www.nidirect.gov.uk

Are you aged up to 25 years and starting university for the first time?

If yes, protect yourself against meningitis and septicaemia

Get the MenACWY vaccination before you start the academic year or soon after.



Immisation

the safest way to protect your child

Whooping cough

If you are pregnant you should get vaccinated to protect your baby



HSC Public Health Agency

The HPV vaccine

Question and answers for parents of girls and boys aged 12-13



HSC Public Health Agency

PAINKILLERS

handle with care



In the interests of safe and effective prescribing, **we continue to review our prescribing of painkillers**, as in many instances, there may be more suitable therapies available for you, which carry less risk, and we may be able to help you reduce your dose, or even stop altogether.

We are currently looking closely at our prescribing of "opioid-type" medicines such as Tramadol, Co-codamol, codeine, dihydrocodeine, morphine, oxycontin, and other related medicines.

Why are we doing this? Opioids are very good painkillers for acute (ie. short term) pain, and pain at the end of life but there is little evidence that they are helpful for long-term non-cancer pain.

And there is a greater understanding of both the short, and longer term risks.

At higher doses, the risks increase, but the benefits do not.

Equally, using multiple opioid-type painkillers - (eg. co-codamol and tramadol together) is not considered optimum practice at this time.

Why would we encourage our patients to consider reducing their dose of "opioid-type" painkillers, if at all possible?

- To prevent accidental death
- To prevent the worsening of pain
- So you can drive and work safely (some painkillers can cause cognitive impairment, and it can be an offence to drive if affected in this way)
- To reverse opioid tolerance
- To reduce "mental fog"
- To reduce hormonal changes/sexual dysfunction
- To reduce the risk of falls/further injuries.

Please have a look at the below videos, to help understand a little bit more about pain. Please arrange to speak to the GP if you, or your family member, would like to arrange a holistic review.

You should NOT stop regular medications abruptly without speaking to the GP first, however if you are using these types of medications on a "when required" basis - as many would do with co-codamol, for example, this may give you the flexibility to slowly reduce your dose - for example, by only using when the pain is severe.



Understanding pain in less than five minutes



Stopping opioids - as no longer recommended in long-term non-cancer pain



What next? Transitioning to an evidence based approach.

- Medicines prescribing is one of the most common interventions that medication practitioners will make.
- There are a number of steps you can take, to help you get the best benefit from your medicines, and minimise the risk of side-effects and other problems.
- If you are concerned about side-effects from your medicines, please discuss with your community pharmacist or GP.
- Many medicines require monitoring from time to time - this may be because routine blood tests are required, or you may need to see the GP to ensure this is still the best treatment for you. If invited to attend, please make sure you do.
- Sometimes medicines are prescribed, with the intention of it being in the short-term; for example; stronger painkillers following an operation; sleeping tablets, or certain medicines for anxiety such as Diazepam. Longer-term use may be reviewed, to reduce the risk of you experiencing side-effects from these.
- Never take medications which have not been prescribed or recommended for you by an appropriate healthcare professional. Please do not share your medications with other people, even if it seems like their symptoms are the same as yours.
- Please keep medications out of reach from children.
- When re-ordering medications, please only order what you need, and don't stockpile medications. If you have medicines in the house you no longer need, please return to your pharmacy so they can dispose of them safely. Do not dispose of medicines in the bin, or down the toilet.
- Please ensure you carefully follow the directions; if a medicine needs to be taken regularly to have a full effect, please make sure you do; other medicines only need to be taken "as required"; if this is the case, please only use them when you need to.
- Please take care not to run out of your regular medications, especially around bank holidays when the surgery may be closed.
- If you have any queries or concerns about any prescribed medications, please speak to your community pharmacist - as medicines experts, their advice can be obtained without appointment; or your Doctor.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

EDUCATION RESTART

WE ALL MUST DO IT TO GET THROUGH IT



STAY SAFE



SAVE LIVES

Coronavirus

Advice on car sharing

At this time please **avoid car sharing**, but if you have to, please follow these simple steps



Take5 steps to wellbeing



Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

TEST TRACE PROTECT A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Test ✓ Trace ✓ Protect ✓

- SPOT THE SYMPTOMS**
If you have a new persistent cough, fever or loss of or change in sense of taste and smell, you and everyone in your house should immediately self-isolate.
- REQUEST A TEST NOW**
Visit [nhs.uk/abx/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/abx/coronavirus) to book a test online. Call 119 if you cannot book a test online.
- ISOLATE**
Isolate for 10 days after symptoms appear, longer if fever continues (until at least 48 hours after your temperature returns to normal). Other people you live with should isolate for 14 days.
- GET TESTED**
Testing is carried out at drive through testing centres and you must arrive by car (not on foot, via public transport, by taxi or by any other means). Home tests are also available.
- GET RESULTS**
You should receive results within 72 hours. If you test negative for coronavirus you and your household can stop isolating.
- PROVIDE DETAILS**
If you test positive for coronavirus Public Health Agency (PHA) contact tracers will call you from the number 0800 9516 888. They will ask you who you have had contact with recently.
- PHA INFORMS CONTACTS**
If you have coronavirus, the PHA will contact the people you have had close contact with. Your name will not be shared unless you give permission. All data will be held securely.
- CLOSE CONTACTS ASKED TO ISOLATE**
Close contacts will be asked to isolate for 14 days from the last time they had contact with you.
- HOUSEHOLD OF CLOSE CONTACTS**
If the close contact has no symptoms, others in the household don't need to isolate. If the close contact develops symptoms, they should follow the guide starting at step 1.

When you can leave home, stay safe and continue to follow public health advice:

- Wash your hands well and often and avoid touching your face.
- Keep your distance from others when outside the home.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and dispose of the tissue in a bin.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

WE ALL MUST DO IT TO GET THROUGH IT

YOUR NHS NEEDS YOU. HELP US FIND A VACCINE FOR COVID-19.

Join the NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry.

The new NHS vaccine research registry will help NHS-approved researchers to get in touch with volunteers.

1. Sign up by adding your details to the registry.
2. Researchers will contact you with suitable studies and you can decide to take part or not.

Sign up today:
nhs.uk/researchcontact

#beapartofresearch

BE PART OF RESEARCH

Birth to five

This book gives you information on:

- Becoming a parent
- Taking care of yourself and your child
- Finding practical help and support



The Pregnancy Book

Your complete guide to:

- A healthy pregnancy
- Labour and childbirth
- The first weeks with your new baby



BE PART OF IMPROVING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE



#bepartofresearch
www.nihr.ac.uk/takepart

Second Dance

Watch later Share

organdonationni.info

#OrganDonation #YesIDonate #ASecondDance

MORE VIDEOS

5:10 / 5:14 YouTube

Happier homes handling challenging times

HELLO

Dr Lambon

The practice is delighted to introduce our new salaried GP, Dr Edel Lambon (pictured) whom many of you will have already met. The practice is very pleased to avail of her experience and enthusiasm.

WELCOME

Sr. Chrissy McClay

Also joining us in recent times is Sister Chrissy McClay, as our new practice nurse. She brings a wealth of varied experience from her work in the hospital. Sr. Boucher will continue to help look after our patients as well, focusing primarily on long-term conditions management.

