



Kensington Group Practice

DONEGALL ROAD AND FINAGHY
Medical Centre

Autumn 2021 practice newsletter

The practice is beginning to roll out Covid "booster" vaccines.

If you have a pre-existing flu vaccine appointment, and you are also due your Covid booster, if attending at our main site, we should be able to offer this to you. These boosters will either be Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, regardless of which vaccines you had the first time round. This is because these are the ones that appear to provide a strongest response as a "booster".

If you have already been invited for your flu vaccine, but haven't yet booked or attended - and it has been at least six months since you had your 2nd Covid vaccine - let us know when booking your vaccines so we can book you into the appropriate clinic.

Appointments are now available, and we are now in the process of actively inviting our patients who are due their Covid booster, to make an appointment for one; we are phasing these invitations, in order to protect telephone capacity, and also with an eye to stock/appointment availability, with the aim to provide vaccinations as close to six months after the first dose as is practical or possible. If more than six months have passed since your second dose, these are the patients we would be keen to prioritise, so you can contact the surgery to book your dose, if we have not already been in touch with you.

Booster vaccines will be offered to those considered most vulnerable:

those living in residential care homes for older adults

all adults aged 50 years or over

frontline health and social care workers

all those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19, and adult carers (in the main, these individuals will typically have received their first invitation for their Covid-19 prior to March 2021)

and

adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals

Please keep an eye on our website, and the local media, for further information.

Further information about the vaccination programme, can be found at

● <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/covid-19-vaccination-programme-northern-ireland>

For those who have not yet come forward for their Covid vaccination, but would now be minded to, this link will also outline where these can be given. Opportunities remain available.

Updated NI vaccination programme - key questions answered

<https://covid-19.hscni.net/get-vaccinated/>

DoH www.health-ni.gov.uk HSC Health and Social Care

What to expect after your COVID-19 vaccination



Information for people who have just had a COVID-19 vaccination



Find out more at www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine

DoH www.health-ni.gov.uk HSC Health and Social Care

COVID-19 vaccine

Your guide to booster vaccination



People aged 50 years and over, health and social care workers and younger people at risk are being offered a booster dose of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. You will be contacted when it is your turn to have a booster.

BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER COVID-19 jab

DoH www.health-ni.gov.uk HSC Health and Social Care

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccination programme for children and young people

Guidance for parents

This autumn all young people aged 12 to 15 years are being offered the first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 is a very infectious respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Very few healthy children and young people with COVID-19 infection go on to have severe disease.

Why should my child have the COVID-19 vaccine?

The UK's Chief Medical Officers all agree that while COVID-19 is typically mild or asymptomatic in most young people, it can be very unpleasant for some and one dose of the vaccine will provide good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation. Vaccinating 12 to 15 year olds should also help to reduce the need for young people to have time-off school and reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools.

The COVID-19 secondary schools vaccine programme should therefore provide protection to young people and reduce the disruption to face to face education. This will help to keep young people emotionally well and happier and this was an important consideration for the Chief Medical Officers. See Further information on page 7.



DoH www.health-ni.gov.uk HSC Health and Social Care

COVID-19 vaccination

A guide for children and young people



Find out more at nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus

DoH www.health-ni.gov.uk HSC Health and Social Care

What to expect after your COVID-19 vaccination

Advice for children and young people



Find out more at www.nidirect.gov.uk/covid-vaccine



COVID-19 restrictions

Current restrictions >

Information on the current restrictions in place in Northern Ireland.



COVID-19 vaccine

COVID-19 vaccine >

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

Test ✓ Trace ✓ Protect ✓

Contact tracing >

Contact tracing lets people know if they have been in close contact with someone with the virus.



COVID-19 TEST BOOK NOW

Book a test >

Find out when you should book a COVID-19 test, what type of test to take and how to get it.



Travel advice

Travel advice >

If you need to travel, keep up-to-date with the latest rules for Northern Ireland.



How to stay safe

Staying safe >

How to stay safe when shopping or using public transport, at work or at a place of worship.

We continue to roll out the Flu vaccines to eligible patients.

If you have received an invitation, please contact us at the earliest opportunity to arrange this, or book online.

Flu can be a very unpleasant illness, and in some cases, very dangerous.

The flu vaccination is being offered to:

everyone aged 50 and over

pregnant women

carers

those in long-stay residential care homes

close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

all pre-school children aged two to four years on 1 September 2021

all primary and secondary (up to year 12) schoolchildren (via visiting School Health vaccinators)

those aged six months to two years and 16 to 49 years in clinical risk groups

The vaccine changes each year to cover the strains which are likely to be around over the course of the flu season, so it's important to get immunised every year.

The vaccine does not give people the flu.

As we administer not one, but two complex vaccination campaigns - against a backdrop of very high demand for other services - our phone lines are unprecedentedly busy, Our surgery is by no means alone in this - it is a universal issue affecting all surgeries - please be patient while we continue to serve you as best we can.

Flu is more serious than you think

Get the vaccine now



STAYWELL THISWINTER
www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Protecting your child against flu

Vaccination for your toddler or pre-school child



2021

STAYWELL THISWINTER
www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Protecting your child against flu

Vaccination for your school child from P1 up to and including Year 12



School-based programme

2021

STAYWELL THISWINTER
www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Flu is more serious than you think

Get the flu vaccine to protect yourself and your baby



STAYWELL THISWINTER
www.nidirect.gov.uk/stay-well

Aged 70?

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



HSC Public Health Agency

Pneumococcal vaccine - helping to protect against pneumonia, meningitis and other serious illnesses



Vaccination against pneumococcal disease for people aged over 65 or with certain health conditions

HSC Public Health Agency

Information for parents and carers



Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. Please don't send your child to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- loss of or change to their sense of taste or smell

If your child does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they or members of your household do not need to self-isolate. Your child can attend school if fit to do so.

Contact tracing and self-isolation procedures have recently changed, so here's what to do in particular cases.

Contact tracing will be done by the Contact Tracing Service at the Public Health Agency (PHA). They will call from the number **028 9536 8888** – save the number in your phone so that you recognise it and please answer if they call.

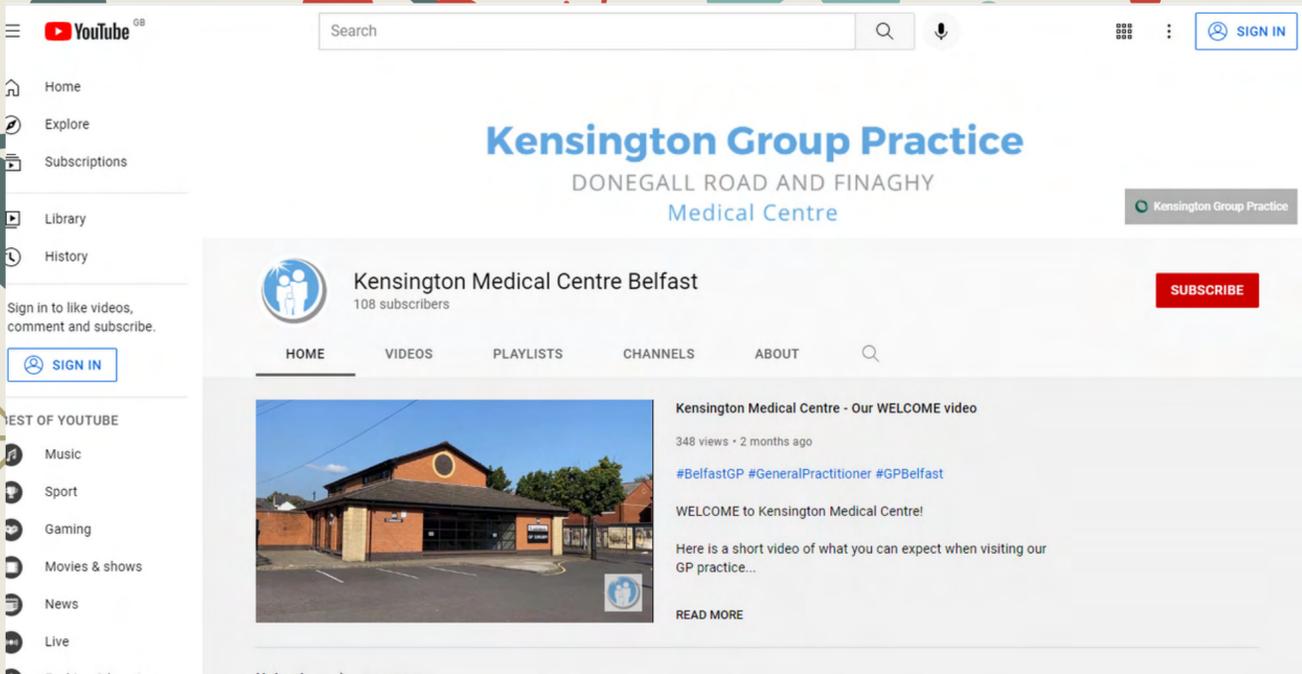
Contract tracing arrangements for school aged children have changed in recent weeks. Click on the picture to the left for more information.

Put safety first at Halloween, to make sure it's a night for treats, and not trauma.



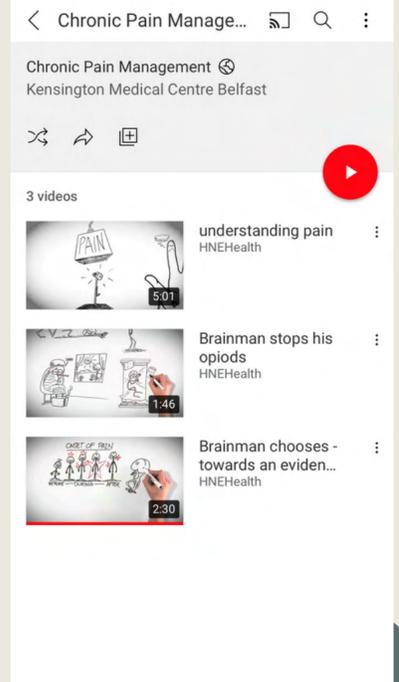
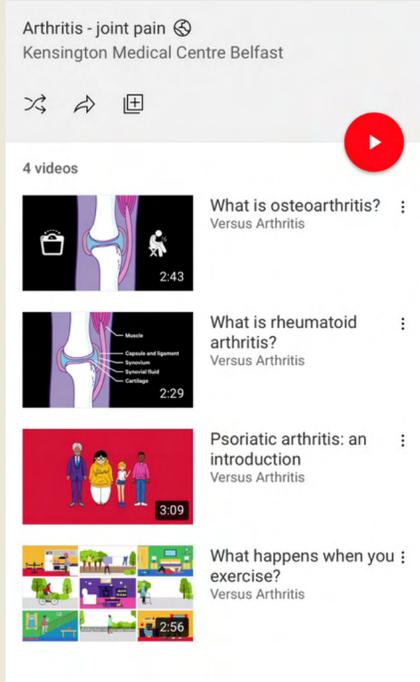
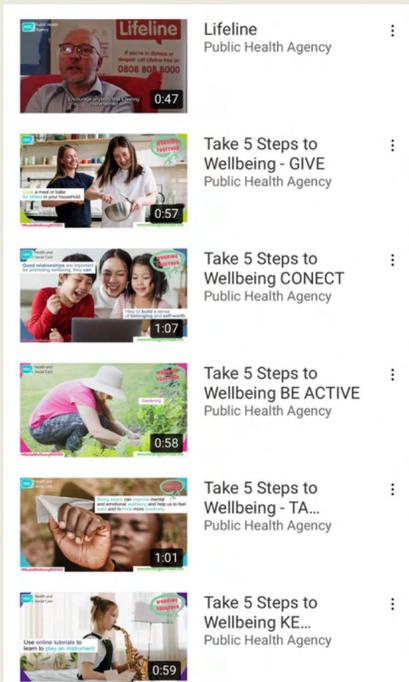
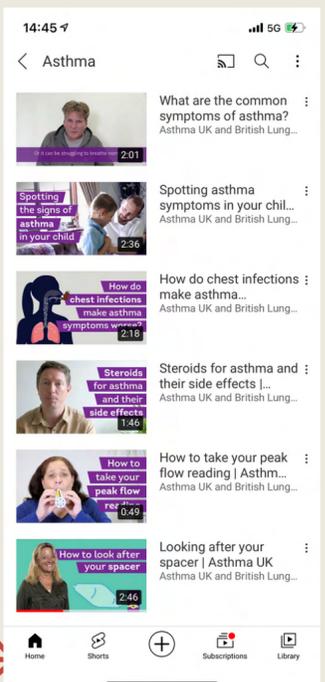
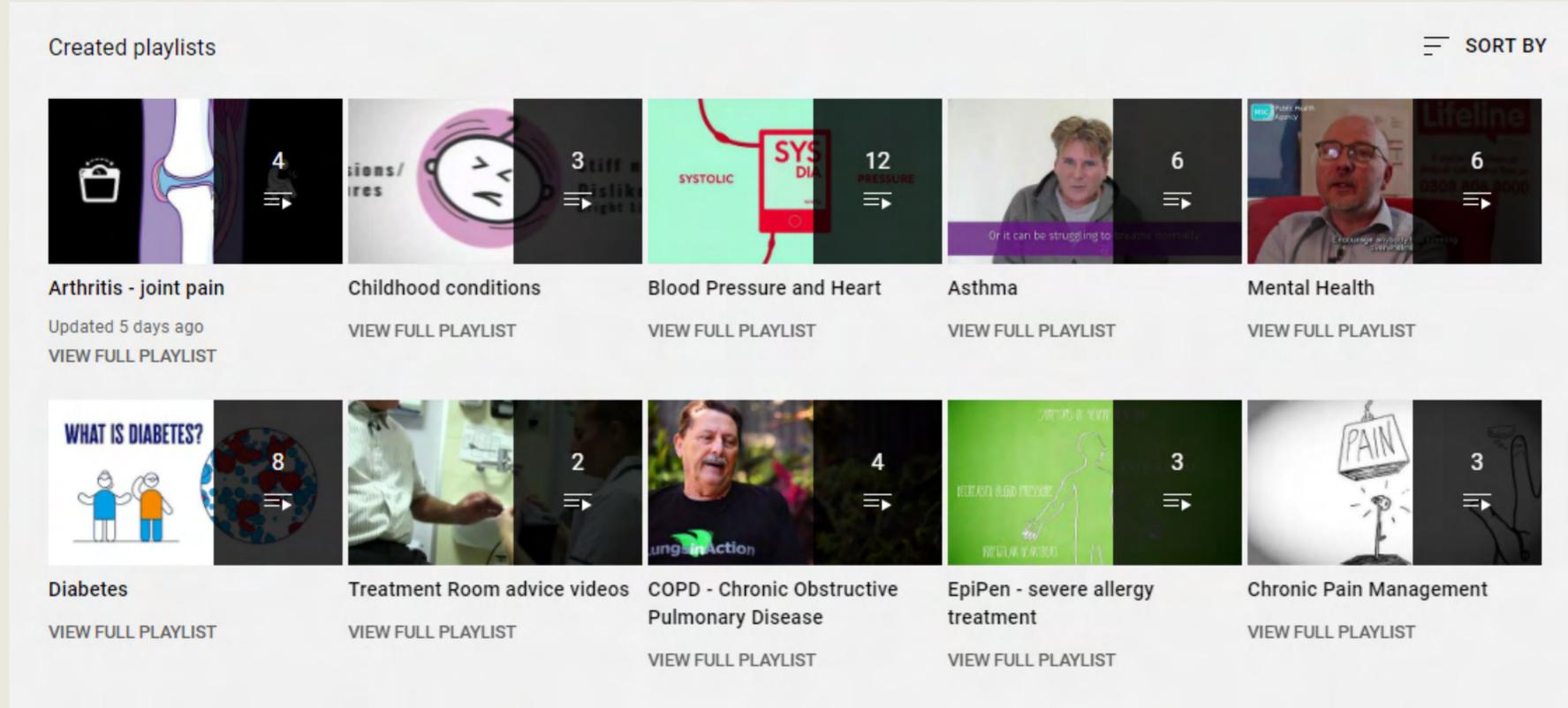
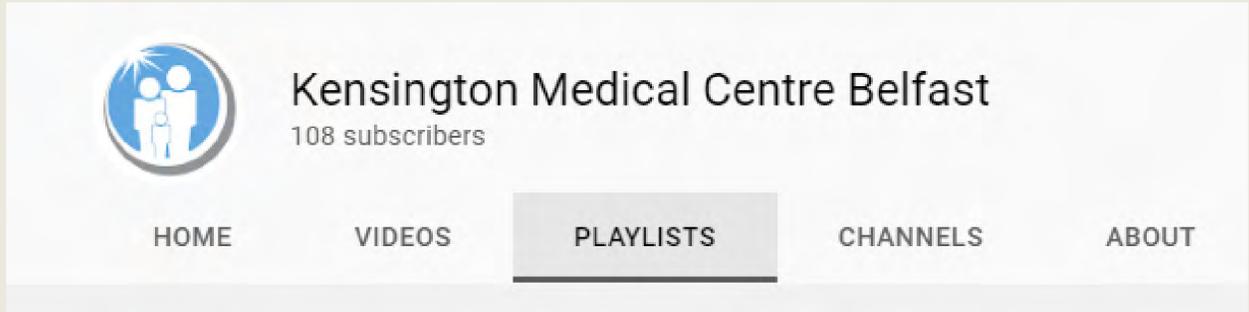
Click on the picture to the left, for advice to people who, without payment, provide help and support to a family member or a friend who may not be able to manage without this help because of frailty, illness or disability, during the season of Covid. Carers can be adults caring for other adults, parents caring for ill or disabled children or young people who care for another family member.





The practice has put together a YouTube channel, where we have gathered a range of resources and videos, which we hope you will find helpful. Click "subscribe" to be updated when new videos are added.

Select "Playlists" - and you will see a range of videos, covering different areas of interest.



Finally, allow us to be frank about pressures affecting our profession.

You will be aware that the last 18 months have been entirely without precedent across the world, and disruption across every facet of society. Meanwhile, we have striven to provide as robust a service as we can, as best we can, during the Covid season, whilst continuing to take all reasonable precautions to keep you, and our staff, safe, when visiting the practice. Although prior to Covid, ours was a profession under strain, like all other areas of the NHS and wider healthcare system.

Currently, we are seeing **significantly** increased levels of workload, for a number of reasons:

There is a significant amount of "pent up" demand in the system, as there are many things patients would perhaps not have come forward about during the peak of the pandemic; however, a routine matter can become urgent if left too long. Of that, there is no doubt.

In common with most GP practices, we have had difficulty in recruiting as many GPs as we would like, and as many locum GPs as we would need, to support the core team, and help them maintain a sustainable level of workload. There are only so many effective patient contacts a GP can undertake in one day, and give each patient the attention they deserve. This is why at times, you may be asked to call back at a future time if your matter is a more routine one.

The workload involved in managing two large scale vaccination campaigns - Flu vaccines, and Covid boosters, is very significant in both administrative and clinical terms. This is in addition to seasonal winter pressures that we would expect to see.

We are currently recruiting for more GPs, to help us deal with our increasing demand. Should you have any GPs in your networks, who would be interested in joining our hard-working and enthusiastic team, please let them know about our opportunity, and if requiring further details, to please speak to our team.

We have already invested in additional staff members, and a new phone system, to significantly increase the number of incoming lines available. Please be aware however, our staff undertake a very wide range of administrative activities to support your care, which go on behind the scenes, beyond just answering the phones.

We have never "closed our doors" during Covid, and each GP is tending to more clinical consultations than they have ever done before. We do not share this information for pity, but so you can understand the pressures our profession is under, in common with every GP surgery in the country, *without exception*. The practice has been encouraged by the many kind messages of encouragement we receive, and whilst we welcome constructive feedback, we do not get disheartened by some of the comments we see occasionally see online, which are less kind, and occasionally, without reasonable justification, but we can of course understand why patients at times may be frustrated, as of course, if circumstances were somewhat different, more could be done.

We can only ask for your patience and understanding, and we give you an assurance that all members of staff, across our whole team, are giving it their all to provide as good a service as they can possibly can. And they will continue to do so.