

The Shaftesbury Circular

The Newsletter of The Shaftesbury Medical Centre

Issue No. 10

Autumn/Winter 2019



Planning for the 2019 flu season

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone for having their influenza (flu) jabs this year, 2018/2019. For the 2019/2020 flu season started in September! Starting with August, you could see adverts about flu vaccines and eligibility of who can have the flu vaccine through the NHS.

Flu can be unpleasant, but if you are otherwise healthy it will usually clear up on its own within a week.

However, flu can be more severe in certain people, such as:

- anyone aged 65 and over
- pregnant women
- children and adults with an underlying health condition (such as long-term heart or respiratory disease)
- children and adults with weakened immune systems

Based on the patients vaccinated last year we calculated how many people will be eligible for the flu vaccine and use that information to guide us on how many vaccines we need to order. They have been delivered to the practice in September (for over 65 years old patients) and we started administering them as patients had come in.

We are organising additional flu clinics at the weekends and you are invited to book into these. We also run flu clinics during normal surgery hours, which is a quick appointment to administer the vaccine.

The earlier you have your vaccine the better protected you will be – please make sure that we have your up-to-date mobile telephone number.

When you come into the surgery for your flu vaccine we use the opportunity to make sure we are up to date with your care needs, arrange any review appointments and, in some cases, it is the only time we see you!

Please do come and see us for your flu jab – it might also prevent you having to come in another time.

Patient Group Meeting

The next Patient Group Meeting will be held on the 6th November 2019, between 17:30 and 18:30.

We would like to invite our patients to join us in the next Patient Group Meeting.

Help us in improving patient care and patient services.



- Dr Christina Unwin – Salaried GP

Dr Unwin graduated as a GP and she works as a salaried doctor for the surgery now..

Dr Visita Majithia – Salaried GP

Dr Majithia works as a salaried doctor for the surgery since June 2019.

NHS Prescribing Changes—endorsed by NHS England

Prescribing of over the counter medicines is changing

Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will not generally give you a prescription for over the counter medicines for a range of minor health concerns. Instead, over the counter medicines are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket in your local community. T

he team of health professionals at your local pharmacy can offer help and clinical advice to manage minor health concerns and if your symptoms suggest it's more serious, they'll ensure you get the care you need.

Please help the NHS to use resources

Your GP, nurse or pharmacist will not generally give you a prescription for certain medicines that are available to buy in a pharmacy or supermarket, even if you qualify for free prescriptions.

This applies to treatments for these conditions:

Acute sore throat	Conjunctivitis	Cough, colds and nasal congestion
Cradle cap	Dandruff	Diarrhoea (adults)
Dry eyes/sore tired eyes	Earwax	Excessive sweating
Haemorrhoids	Dead lice	Indigestion and heartburn
Infant colic	Infrequent cold sores of the lip	Infrequent constipation
Infrequent migraine	Insect bites and stings	Mild acne
Minor burns and scalds	Mild cystitis	Mild dry skin
Mild irritant dermatitis	Mild to moderate hay fever	Minor pain, discomfort (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)
Mouth ulcers	Nappy rash	Ringworm/athletes foot
Oral thrush	Prevention of tooth decay	Teething/mild toothache
Sunburn	Sun protection	Threadworms
Travel sickness	Warts and verrucae	Minor fever

GPs, nurses or pharmacists will also generally no longer prescribe probiotics and some vitamins and minerals. You can get these from eating a healthy, varied and balanced diet, or buy them at your pharmacy or supermarket.

Why does the NHS need to reduce prescriptions for over the counter medicines? The NHS has been spending around £136 million a year on prescriptions for medicines that can be bought from a pharmacy or supermarket, such as Paracetamol. By reducing the amount the NHS spends on over the counter medicines, we can give priority to treatments for people with more serious conditions, such as cancer, and diabetes

Exceptions to the new prescription rules :

You may still be prescribed a medicine for a condition on the list if:

- You need treatment for a long-term condition, e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or inflammatory bowel disease.
- You need treatment for more complex forms of minor illnesses, e.g. migraines that are very bad and where over the counter medicines do not work.
- You need an over the counter medicine to treat a side effect of a prescription medicine or symptom of another illness, e.g. constipation when taking certain painkillers.
- The medicine has a licence which doesn't allow the product to be sold over the counter to certain groups of patients. This could include babies, children or women who are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- The person prescribing thinks that a patient cannot treat themselves, for example because of mental health problems or severe social vulnerability.

HEALTH INFORMATION:

Vitamin D

Sunshine, not food, is where most of your vitamin D comes from. So even a healthy, well balanced diet, that provides all the other vitamins you need, is unlikely to provide enough vitamin D.

What is vitamin D?

You make vitamin D under your skin when you are outside in daylight, which is the reason vitamin D is sometimes called the 'sunshine vitamin'. A vitamin is something that helps our body function – a 'nutrient' – that we cannot make in our body. Vitamin D is different because it is actually a hormone and we can make it in our body.

What does vitamin D do in my body?

Vitamin D works with calcium and phosphorus for healthy bones, muscles and teeth. Even if you have a calcium-rich diet (for example from eating plenty of low-fat dairy foods and green leafy vegetables), without enough vitamin D you cannot absorb the calcium into your bones and cells where it is needed.

What happens if I don't get enough vitamin D?

Some babies are born with low levels of vitamin D and some do not get enough in breast milk; this can result in fits or rickets. Rickets can cause permanent deformities to the bone, weaken muscles and reduced growth. Adults who don't get enough vitamin D can develop osteomalacia. This makes the bones softer as the minerals needed to keep them strong cannot get into the bone. People with osteomalacia experience bone pain and muscle weakness.



When is vitamin D made in skin?

The amount of vitamin D you make depends on how strong the sunlight is. You will make more in the middle of the day, when the sun is strongest. You will also make more when you are in direct sunlight than in the shade or on a cloudy day.

Sun safety

It is the sun's ultraviolet rays that allow vitamin D to be made in the body. You do not have to sunbathe to make vitamin D. In the UK, ultraviolet light is only strong enough to make vitamin D on exposed skin (on the hands, face and arms or legs) during April to September. However strong sun also burns skin so we need to balance making vitamin D with being safe in the sun.

Groups at risk of low vitamin D

- babies and young children, and children and adolescents who spend little time outside
- pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers
- people over 65 years old because their skin is not as good at making vitamin D
- people with darker skin tones - that is people of Asian, African, Afro-Caribbean and Middle Eastern descent – living in the UK or other northern climates
- anyone who spends very little time outside during the summer
- if the air is quite polluted

Which foods contain vitamin D?

Help your body get more vitamin D by eating plenty of vitamin D rich foods, including:

- oily fish such as salmon, sardines, pilchards, trout, herring, kippers and eel contain reasonable amounts of vitamin D
- cod liver oil contains a lot of vitamin D (don't take this if you are pregnant)
- egg yolk, meat, offal and milk contain small amounts but this varies during the seasons
- margarine, some breakfast cereals, infant formula milk and some yoghurts have added or are 'fortified' with vitamin D

Can I have too much vitamin D?

Taking a vitamin D supplement as well as eating foods rich in vitamin D and spending a lot of time outside in sunshine is not a problem. However do not take more than one supplement containing vitamin D (count cod-liver oil as a supplement) as you could exceed the 10 micrograms recommendation. Always choose a supplement tailored to the age group or condition, as fish liver oils and high dose multivitamin supplements often contain vitamin A, too much of which can cause liver and bone problems, especially in very young children, and the elderly.

Who needs a vitamin D supplement?

- All adults and children over the age of one should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of Vitamin D especially during autumn and winter.
- Those in the at risk groups, as above, should consider taking a supplement containing 10 micrograms of Vitamin D all year round.
- All babies under one year should be given a daily supplement of 8.5-10 micrograms unless they have more than 500mls of fortified formula milk.

Where are vitamin D supplements available?

Vitamin D supplements and multivitamins are now widely available to buy from chemists/pharmacies, supermarkets and health food shops. Some women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and children aged six months to four years may qualify for Healthy Start vitamins which contain vitamin D. Ask your health visitor about this. A supplement only needs to contain 10 micrograms to meet the recommendation – those with a higher content of vitamin D are unnecessary and could be harmful in the long run.



