

Cherrymead Chat

Winter 2021

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COVID VACCINATIONS

The NHS COVID Vaccination Programme is moving at pace. As of 12 December, 87.8% of our 8766 eligible patients had had their first dose. Of the 7699 patients who were then eligible for the second dose, 95.7% were vaccinated. Of the 5,290 patients eligible for a third dose, 60.7% had been vaccinated. If you haven't yet had a first, second or third vaccination, we urge you to visit the 119 website and book one as soon as you can. You need to be registered with a GP surgery to be able to use the 119 booking service.

The First Dose is available to anyone aged 12 years of age or over. The Second Dose is for people who have had the first dose and are 16 years or over.

The Third Dose can be a Third Primary Dose or a Booster Dose. A Third Primary Dose is for people who had a severely weakened immune system when they had their second dose. There are rules set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) about who is eligible for a third dose. If you are under a specialist, the specialist consultant will provide you with a letter which you must take to the appointment. If you are not under a specialist and think you are eligible for a Third Dose, we will assess you using the same guidelines. We will *only* provide you with a letter if you meet the JCVI criteria.

Booster vaccine doses will be available on the NHS for people most at risk from COVID-19 who have had a 2nd dose of a vaccine at least 3 months ago. This includes:

- people aged 40 and over
- people who live and work in care homes
- frontline health and social care workers
- people aged 16 and over with a health condition that puts them at high risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19
- people aged 16 and over who are a main carer for someone at high risk from COVID-19
- people aged 16 and over who live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis)

People who are pregnant and in one of the eligible groups can also get a booster dose.

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GETTING HELP DURING THE BANK HOLIDAYS

We'll be closed on December 27 and 28 and on January 3. During this period:

- Call **999** immediately if you or someone else is having a heart attack or stroke. Every second counts with these conditions.
- Also call **999** if you think someone has had a major trauma, such as from a serious road traffic accident, a stabbing, a shooting, a fall from height, or a serious head injury.
- Call **999** in a medical emergency. Medical emergencies can include loss of consciousness, an acute confused state, fits that aren't stopping, chest pain, severe breathing difficulties, severe bleeding that can't be stopped, severe allergic reactions, severe burns or scalds.
- If it's not a life-threatening emergency and you or the person you're with doesn't need immediate medical attention, please consider other options before dialling 999. These could be self-care, calling **111**, or talking to a **pharmacist**.

Choosing the best service for your needs will ensure that the ambulance service is able to respond to the people who need help the most.



BEHIND THE SCENES IN RECEPTION

This Newsletter is published quarterly to help, advise and inform all 10800 plus patients registered with Cherrymead Surgery. Its aim has always been to update you with what is happening in key areas of healthcare, providing valuable information on a variety of health related matters. However, the worrying and upsetting events currently occurring on a daily basis at the Surgery must now be brought to your attention.

Everyone has been through a difficult and demanding time over the last two years, not least the NHS staff at Cherrymead. They have tirelessly managed and adapted to the fast paced changes demanded by Government, the Department of Health, Bucks CCG, and most importantly by the patients themselves.

The frontline in the Surgery is made up of the Reception staff. It is they who as speedily and efficiently as possible handle all patient calls and in person requests. They have a vast number of calls everyday, not only asking for an urgent appointment with a GP or a nurse but also how to deal with a variety of minor health questions eg what to do with a baby rash and others such as how to get a COVID pass.

The majority of callers are sensible, polite and can be successfully helped. However there is an unprecedented and growing number of patient callers

who are abusive, offensive, racist, sexist and threatening.

A member of the reception staff has been called “ F..... Paki “ another told “learn to speak proper English”, another “ I am coming to the surgery and will bring hell to you all “.

There have been instances when patients have been shouting and swearing at the receptionist at the front door.

What is shocking is that there is not a single member of the reception staff at the surgery who has not on a daily basis experienced such abuse from a patient. They are often reduced to tears.

Most of the calls that sadly end up being abusive are ones where the patient is demanding an appointment which may not be available but is not listening to the receptionist's explanation or advice on how the issue can be sorted out.

The Reception staff have a very full and comprehensive manual on how to handle the wide variety of patient requests including how to recognize and direct the patient to the best way that particular issue can be answered. The staff are updated and trained by the Partners and Managers on a regular basis.

The Cherrymead website clearly sets out the way the appointments booking system works. The whole process called “triage” is in place to

help patients and not to obstruct them from getting help.

When a patient calls, the receptionist will ask questions about the medical problem which are necessary to direct them to the right help as soon as possible. The receptionist will put the patients' name and the medical problem on the triage list for that day if necessary.

The information given to the receptionist is vital for the Duty Clinician to assess the urgency of condition. The Duty Clinician may then give the patient a face to face or video appointment or may call the patient to discuss the condition further or direct the patient to another medical facility such as Accident and Emergency or an Urgent Treatment Centre .

If the triage list is full, the receptionist will ask the duty doctor whether that patient can be added to the list. Reception staff cannot at any time give out appointments without approval from a Clinician in the first instance. This is to ensure patients are directed to the correct person for their condition and to make best possible use of appointments.

You will already be aware of the enormous pressure the whole of the NHS has experienced and is continuing to do so, not least in surgeries. It is there, on the front line, that reception staff are invaluable to the smooth running of the surgery.

They are there to help you.

*EA
PRG Member*

Merry Christmas from the Patient Reference Group



It's been another extraordinary year! Our NHS Services have continued to adapt to the ever-changing pandemic in a huge effort to keep us all safe. The Patient Reference Group has continued to meet monthly online. We are working to bring our Health Information Meetings online, so watch this space!



Would you like to be a part of the Cherrymead Patient Reference Group? We always welcome new members who want to join the team! For more information please get in touch! You can e-mail cherrymeadsurgeryprg@gmail.com



We wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Healthy 2022!

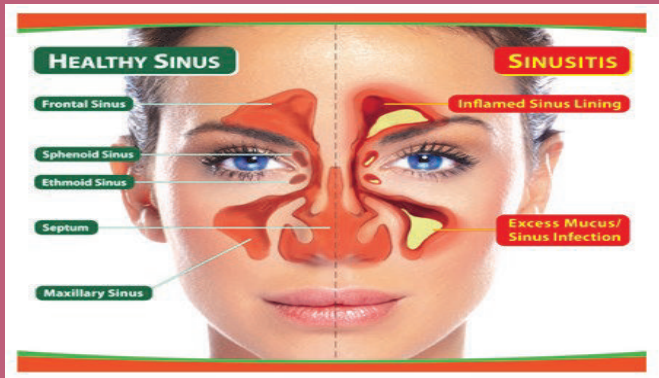


Cherrymead Patient Reference Group



SINUSITIS & SORE THROAT

Sinusitis



The sinuses are air spaces in the face that help warm up the air when you breathe through the nose. The true reason for their existence is not known. However they still manage to cause us problems.

Sign/symptom	Sinusitis
Nasal Discharge	Cloudy or colored
Nasal Congestion	Often
Facial Pressure/Pain/Fullness	Often
Duration of Illness	10 days or longer
Double-worsening*	Sometimes
Fever	Sometimes
Pain in Upper Teeth	Sometimes
Bad Breath	Sometimes
Coughing	Sometimes
Sneezing	No

What can you do to help yourself?

Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen will usually ease any pain. They will also help to bring down any high temperature (fever) that you may have.

Decongestant nasal sprays or drops are sometimes used. You can buy these from pharmacies. They may briefly relieve a blocked nose. You should **not** use a decongestant spray or drops for more than 5-7 days at a time. If they are used for longer than this, they may cause worse congestion in the nose.

Keeping hydrated can be helpful, so have plenty of drinks.

Warm face packs held over the sinuses may help to ease pain.

Saline nasal drops may help to relieve congestion and blockage in the nose.

Seek medical advice if symptoms become severe or do not ease within a week.

Sore Throat

This is usually caused by an infection. Symptoms include:

- temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F) or over
- aching muscles or tiredness
- headache
- cough
- runny nose
- swollen painful glands in the neck
-

How long will a sore throat last?

In 50% of cases, moderately bad symptoms of sore throat will settle seven days after the onset of the illness.

In 80% of cases, moderately bad symptoms of a sore throat have gone after ten days.

When to seek medical help

Ring the surgery and ask for advice if:

- you have a persistent high temperature above 38C (100.4F), which does not go down after taking medication
- your symptoms do not improve within a week
- you have difficulty swallowing or breathing or opening your mouth
- you have earache or joint pains
- you have a rash
- you have blood in your saliva or phlegm
- you have a lump in your neck
- you have hoarseness lasting more than two weeks
- you have frequently recurring sore throats

WHERE TO GET HELP WITH SELF-CARE

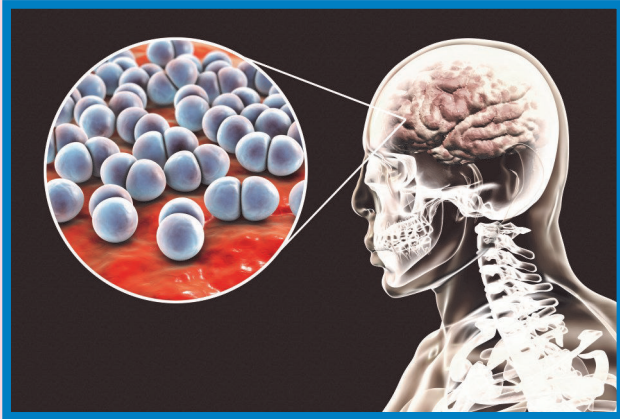
Your **Community Pharmacist** is trained to help you with advice about looking after your symptoms.

You can also visit the NHS Website.

Meningitis

What is Meningitis?

Meningitis is inflammation of the lining around your brain and spinal cord. It can be very serious if not treated quickly. Meningitis can be very serious if not treated quickly.



The common bacteria or viruses that can cause meningitis can spread through coughing and sneezing, good hand washing can help prevent the spread of germs.

Anyone can potentially get meningitis, but it's more common in:

- babies and young children
- teenagers and young adults
- elderly people
- people with weakened immune systems.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of meningitis develop suddenly and can include:

- a high temperature (fever)
- cold hands or feet
- vomiting
- confusion or drowsiness
- eyes becoming sensitive to light
- breathing quickly
- muscle or joint pain
- pale, mottled or blotchy skin
- spots or a rash that does not fade when a glass is rolled over it (but a rash will not always develop).

You do not always get all the symptoms.

What should you do?

You should get medical advice as soon as possible if you're concerned that you or your child may have meningitis. It's important to trust your instincts and get medical help if you need it, do not wait until a rash develops.

Call **999** for an ambulance or go to your nearest A&E immediately if you think you or your child might be seriously ill.

Call **111** or your GP surgery for advice if you're not sure if it's anything serious or you think you may have been exposed to someone with meningitis.

You can reduce the risk of getting meningitis by ensuring your vaccinations are up to date.

For further information go to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/>



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PRG Member

BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED

Safety warnings have been issued after an increase in incidents involving children's toys that contain **MAGNETS**.

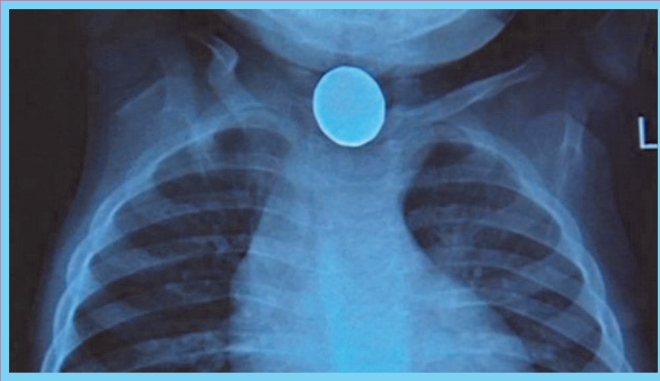
When the magnets are accidentally swallowed, they cause huge damage to internal organs and tissue sometimes requiring surgery. They are also a choking hazard. These are used particularly construction type toys and jewellery making.

BUTTON BATTERIES can also be a choking hazard.

What to do if you suspected your child has ingested a magnet or battery

- Attend the nearest Accident and Emergency Department
- Do NOT try to make them sick as this could make any damage worse

For more information visit:



Here are some tips to keep safe this Christmas.



- When buying toys look for the CE, UKCA or British Toy and Hobby Association 'Lion Mark'
- Ensure the toys are age appropriate
- Keep toys with small parts out of reach of younger children
- Supervise young children while playing
- Check toys have not become worn or broken

<https://www.btha.co.uk/guidance/toy-safety/>

<https://www.rospa.com/home-safety/advice/product/toy-safety>

Copy and paste this into your browser to find out about swallowed supermagnets:

<https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Advice-if-your-child-has-swallowed-super-strong-magnets.pdf>

Did you know?

Sales of toys are governed by strict regulations. Christmas novelties are not and should not be given to children to play with.

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PRG Member

