



THE THREE SHIRES MEDICAL PRACTICE

Colerne, Marshfield, Pucklechurch and Wick Surgeries

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Live Long and Well

An information leaflet from

Three Shires Medical Practice

Introduction

We are living longer and by 2030, 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 or over. Evidence suggests that the proportion of life in good health has remained broadly constant, implying that the additional years are in poor health. If people can experience these extra years of life in good health and if they live in a supportive environment, their ability to do the things they value will be little different from that of a younger person. If these added years are dominated by declines in physical and mental capacity, the implications for older people and for society are more negative¹.

As a GP practice we want you to live a long, healthy, and fulfilling life. In saying this, we also recognise that illnesses happen and as we get older, we can get frailer and can start to struggle with everyday task. This leaflet is designed so you can act when needed, stay in control of your own health as well as support you in planning for the future.



Annual Review/Health Checks

To make sure that your health is monitored you will be invited to one of the following:

- If you have a long-term condition such as diabetes, hypertension, or asthma you will be invited for an annual review
- If you are between the age of 40-74 with no long-term condition you will be invited for an NHS Health Check every 5 years. We will send you an invite when you are able to book this.

When you receive your invitation, please ensure you book your appointment.

¹ [Ageing and health \(who.int\)](http://www.who.int)

Services we can refer you to if needed

There are several services we can refer you to if you need extra support, investigations, or equipment to help you in your day-to-day life. Please speak to a GP, nurse, or other members of the team in your surgery for more information.

- **Memory Service** - offers assessment, diagnosis and treatment for people who are experiencing difficulties with their memory and thinking skills, which are affecting their day-to-day life.
- **Falls Service** – offers support to patients that may be at increased risk of falls or has experienced unexplained falls or black-outs. They will help with finding out why the falls have happened, treat any underlying problems as well as provide advice and information on how to improve safety, balance, and confidence.
- **Active Ageing** - The Active Ageing Team consists of Health Visitors and Health Visitor Support Workers who work in the community to help people access medical, social, home environment and financial services. The team helps to identify health needs and signpost families to the services they may require to maintain independence.
- **Continence Service** - This service is for adults over the age of 18 with problems affecting the bladder and bowel.
- **Occupational Therapy** - Occupational therapy supports patients who may start to struggle with day to day living. Your occupational therapist will work with you to find practical solutions that can help you maintain, regain, or improve your independence. These solutions might involve changing your environment or using different techniques and new equipment.
- **Physiotherapy** – Will assess your problems or injury and provide treatment as well as advising on long-term needs. They may give you exercises to do. They will support you to have as much bodily movement and function as possible.

For patients in South Gloucestershire most of these services will be provided through a company called Sirona, and if you live in Wiltshire the services will come from Wiltshire Health and Care.

There are also the following services within your GP surgery:

- **Social Prescribing** – social prescribing is a way to be referred to a link worker. Link workers are there to give you time and focus on what matters to you as well as taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. They can help connect people to community groups and statutory services and emotional support.
- **Care Coordinator** – a care coordinator can provide patients with extra time, capacity, and support in navigating the care and support available to them. They act as a liaison between our clinicians and other services that patients may need such as health visitors, district nurses and social prescribers as well as ensuring patients are invited to their health checks, reviews and vaccinations.

Services you can access yourself

- **Age UK** - Provides information and advice that covers every facet of later life, from helping people find out the benefits they are entitled to claim, to discussing options that help make later life at home more manageable as well as befriending services, finding a cleaner or gardener. Their aim is to be the first port of call – the first place that people turn to when they have an age-related need.
 - **South Gloucestershire – 01454 411707**
 - **Wiltshire – 0808 196 2424**
- **ReEngage – 0800 716543**
Re-engage helps reducing loneliness and social isolation amongst older people by bringing generations together in friendship and shared experiences.
- **Silver Line Helpline – 0800 470 80 90**
Free, confidential service just for older people. They provide friendship, conversation, and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **AgeUK Walking Group South Glos – 01454 411707**
Age UK are running a new Walking Groups Project in South Gloucestershire, aimed at reducing the barriers older people face which hinder them from keeping active.
- **Age UK Fitness and Friendship – fitnessandfriendship@ageukwiltshire.org.uk / 07754 612 569**
Our Fitness & Friendship Clubs in Wiltshire provide a great opportunity for older adults to socialise and stay active. Each meeting includes gentle exercise to help maintain strength, balance and flexibility.
- **Age UK Digital Inclusion Program South Glos - 01454 411707 or digital@ageuksouthglos.org.uk**
The Digital Inclusion Programme will address digital skills support, and the provision of relevant technology & connectivity.

Mental health

As we get older, changes in our lives, such as retirement, bereavement, or physical illness, can affect our mental health. Mental health problems aren't an inevitable part of ageing, however. Most older people don't develop mental health problems, and there is help available if you do. If you're struggling to manage or not feeling like yourself, you don't have to put up with it².

- **VitaMinds – 0333 200 1893**
In partnership with the NHS, Vita provides IAPT talking therapy services to residents in South Gloucestershire. It is a free service, and you can self-refer to get help, no need to see a GP.
- **Mind – 01225 706532**
We are an independent charity supporting people in Wiltshire who are experiencing mental health problems or emotional distress. Our services are accessible for everybody in our community.

² [Mental health in later life | Mental Health Foundation](#)

Caring for someone else

If you are a carer for a parent, partner, relative or friend there is support for you. A carer is someone who provides support to family or friends who would not manage without this help. This could be caring for a relative, partners or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. All the care they give is unpaid. Taking on a caring role can mean facing a life of poverty, isolation, frustration, ill health, and depression. Many carers go unidentified until many years into their caring role and the majority struggle alone unaware that help is available to them. Families affected by illness or disability are facing tough times at the moment and it had never been more important that they know their rights³.

You can refer yourself by calling the below numbers or please speak to a care coordinator for further information.

Carer Support Centre South Gloucestershire – 0117 965 2200

Carer Support Wiltshire – 0800 181 4118

Cost of living support

- **South Gloucestershire**

Warm and Well – “Our team of trained energy advisors give free energy efficiency advice that will help you stay warmer and healthier in your home. This ranges from simple changes you can make, to helping you access grants for insulation or providing information about renewable technologies. We can help you reduce your energy bills, switch your energy tariff or supplier, and help you find local installers and tradespeople. We may be able to offer you a free home energy visit.” Their number is 0800 500 3076

Support from the Council – The council can support with a wide range of things so do not hesitate to contact them if you are struggling on 0800 953 7778. You can also have a look at their website:

<https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/help-with-the-cost-of-living>

- **Wiltshire**

Wiltshire Citizen Advice has compiled a list of cost of living support on their website if you have access to a computer: <https://wiltshiremoney.org.uk/wiltshire-resources/cost-of-living-support>
You can also contact them on 07376 055 831.

Warm and Safe - Warm and Safe Wiltshire is a service provided by Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Energy to help residents live in safer and healthier homes. Additional funding for Warm and Safe Wiltshire has been provided by the Warm Homes Fund, which has enabled the service to offer more support to residents across Wiltshire. Their number is 0800 038 5722.

- Age UK can check if you are eligible and help apply for attendance allowance. Attendance Allowance is extra money you can claim if you're over State Pension age and need regular help with your personal care. It's not means-tested, so you can claim it whatever your income or savings. Please contact your local Age UK office to find out more

- **South Gloucestershire – 01454 411707**

- **Wiltshire – 0808 196 2424**

³ [What is a carer? | Carers Support Centre](#)

Planning for the future

To ensure you can stay in control of your care and other important aspects of life it is important to plan for the future. It may feel difficult to plan for a time when we may not be able to communicate our needs very well or for the end of our lives, but it is needed so your wishes can be followed.

Care needs assessment

A care needs assessment works out what help or support you need with your care, and how you might get it. It is usually provided by the social services department of your local council. The council has to give you an assessment if you appear to need care and support, regardless of your income or savings or whether the council thinks you will qualify. The assessment is a chance for you to discuss what support you need with a trained professional. They'll involve you throughout the assessment. You'll be given a chance to talk about any difficulties you have in looking after yourself and the impact these have on your wellbeing. For example, you might want to continue living independently in your home, but you are finding it difficult to wash and get dressed⁴.

To request a care need assessment, you need to contact your local council on:
South Gloucestershire – 01454 868007
Wiltshire – 0300 456 0111

Advanced Decision (Living will)

An advance decision would become relevant if there came a time when you were unable to make or communicate your own decisions. It allows you to refuse treatment, even if this might lead to your death. An advance decision is legally binding which means that those caring for you must follow your instructions. However, it will only be used if you lose the capacity to make or communicate decisions about your treatment⁵.

For more information on advanced decision, you can call Age UK on:
0800 678 1602

Making a will

There is no need for a will to be drawn up or witnessed by a solicitor. If you wish to make a will yourself, you can do so. However, you should only consider doing this if the will is going to be straightforward. It is generally advisable to use a solicitor or to have a solicitor check a will you have drawn up to make sure it will have the effect you want. This is because it is easy to make mistakes and, if there are errors in the will, this can cause problems after your death. Sorting out misunderstandings and disputes after your death may result in considerable legal costs, which will reduce the amount of money in the estate⁶.

For more advice you can call Citizens Advice:
South Gloucestershire – 0808 278 7947
Wiltshire – 0800 144 8848

Power of attorney

A power of attorney is a legal document that lets you give one or more person the power to make decisions and manage your money and property, and/or your health and welfare. If you want to talk to someone about whether you should set up a lasting power of attorney now, contact the [Office of the Public Guardian](#) on 0300 456 0300

⁴ [Getting a care needs assessment | Independent Age](#)

⁵ [Living wills - advance decisions and advance statements | Age UK](#)

⁶ [Wills - Citizens Advice](#)

What can you do to stay healthy? – 10 tips for ageing better from Age UK

1. Watch what you eat and drink

It sounds obvious, but having a balanced diet is crucial for good health, energy and preventing illness. An ideal diet should be low in saturated fat, with lots of fruit and vegetables, wholegrains, oily fish, and small amounts of low-fat dairy and lean meat. Don't forget to top-up with lots of water to avoid dehydration, which can make you feel tired and confused. Tea, coffee and fruit juice will also help you to stay hydrated, but avoid sugary fizzy drinks. If you drink alcohol, keep at least two days per week booze-free to give your liver time to recover from the toxic effects of alcohol, and don't exceed recommended daily limits for alcohol consumption.

2. Look after your teeth

Brush your teeth twice a day and floss daily. Floss helps to prevent gum disease by removing pieces of food and plaque from between the teeth. If it's left to build up you might notice sore or bleeding gums, and gum disease can also be linked to diabetes, strokes, heart disease and rheumatoid [arthritis](#). Have regular check-ups and, if you wear dentures or have a bridge, ask your dentist to check that they fit properly.

3. Stay active

Daily exercise helps you to stay strong and healthy. This will lower your risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and even cancer. If that wasn't enough, staying active can boost your self-esteem, improve your sleep, and give you more energy. Government guidelines recommend that older adults do 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week, as well as strengthening exercises twice a week. If that sounds like a lot, start small and as you get stronger you will be able to work up to those amounts.

4. Make the most of your doctor

It's a good idea to get some routine tests done at the doctors to check your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. High readings increase your risk factor for stroke and heart disease but any problems are completely reversible with medication.

Whilst you're there, why not ask your doctor about the [seasonal flu jab](#)? It's free once you reach 65, or if you have a health condition that puts you at risk of more serious problems if you caught the flu.

5. Get a vitamin boost

Lots of people have a vitamin D deficiency and don't know it. In fact, it's estimated that it affects half of the adult population. Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to cognitive impairment, bone problems and also cardiovascular disease.

Try to get outside in the sunshine for at least 15-20 minutes a day for a vitamin D boost. It can also be found in food such as eggs and oily fish. Alternatively, talk to your doctor about a vitamin D supplement.

6. Take care of your feet

Look after your feet by applying moisturiser to prevent dry skin and cutting your toenails straight across. Make sure you have footwear that fits properly and supports your feet.

If they're sore you may be tempted to stay in slippers, but a pair of trainers could be a good option as they are more supportive. Contact your doctor if your feet become painful, feel very hot or cold or if you have common problems like corns, bunions or ingrown toenails.

7. Sort out your sleep

Many of us have trouble getting – or staying – asleep as we get older. This can leave you feeling tired and grumpy.

Avoid insomnia by cutting down on daytime naps, establishing a bedtime routine and going to bed at the same time each night. Try a warm drink such as chamomile tea or hot milk before you go to bed.

8. Take the tests

As we age our hearing and eyesight can be affected, so it's important to get them checked regularly. [Hearing loss](#) is common in older people so see your doctor if you have to have the TV on loud or having trouble tuning into conversations. If you need a hearing aid, some are available on the NHS. Have your [eyes checked](#) every year if you are aged 70 or over, and every two years if you are under 70. This means that changes in your vision can be corrected and any problems can be picked up before they seriously affect your sight. Eye tests are free if you are over 60.

9. Stay in touch

Spending time with other people can prevent you from feeling lonely or anxious. If you find that you are no longer able to do the things you used to do, try to develop new hobbies and interests or think about becoming a volunteer.

Use Skype to make video phone calls to friends and family who don't live nearby.

If you are single, divorced, or bereaved and would like to meet someone, read our online [guide to dating](#).

10. Give up smoking

If you didn't know it already, let us repeat it: smoking is bad for your body and your brain.

It's linked to a whole range of different health problems, including heart disease, lung cancer, and bronchitis.

The good news is that if you stop smoking, regardless of your age, your circulation, your lung capacity and your energy levels will improve.