

Amersham Health Centre

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2021

It's time for our Autumn Newsletter with updates on the covid boosters, flu vaccinations and general practice information. The teams at the Health Centre have been super busy implementing our flu vaccines and Covid boosters. Clinics are running for the Covid booster most Friday afternoons and provided you meet the timeframe and age regulations, you can call the surgery to book your appointment.

Front Reception Desk

Our front reception desk is now fully open for checking in for appointments, registrations and general queries. We do ask that for any prescription queries, you call the prescribing team – option 2 on the phone lines.

Face to Face Appointments

We are continuing providing face to face appointments for those patients who require one. The current process books patients into the GPs clinic for either morning (8.30am to 1pm) or afternoon (1pm to 6pm) clinics. The GP reviews the booking notes and requirements and either carries out the consultation over the phone or makes arrangements for a face to face appointment.

This process is designed to minimise unnecessary contact, keeping patients and staff safe but also providing a face to face contact in line with our patient's needs.

NHS APP and COVID-19 vaccination records: you can now view and share your COVID-19 status for travel by downloading the NHS App (via the App Store). Follow the instructions to register and then use the App to access a range of NHS services and your GP account on your smartphone or tablet.

You can use the NHS App to check your symptoms and get instant advice, book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, view your GP medical record and more.

Visit www.nhs.uk/nhsapp for more information.

The NHS App shows COVID-19 vaccination status for people living in England. If people do not have the app and need proof of a vaccination they can call 119 and request a copy of a letter.

Alternative Appointment System:

We empathise how frustrating it can be for our patients telephoning reception to book an appointment with one of our clinicians. As you can appreciate, we are experiencing an increased number of calls every day and our team work extremely hard to assist.

There are a number of alternative routes to book an appointment which may be of benefit. These are:

AskFirst App - this is a **simple online** solution linked to our surgery. It provides a symptom checker, self-care advice and if appropriate, books you an appointment directly with the surgery. You can download this from the App Store on your device.

Patient Access – if you are signed up to our on-line system Patient Access (forms available on our website – over 16 year olds only) you can book an on-line appointment on the day or in advance.

Pre-bookable – if you have a non-urgent issue and would like to speak to a clinician, you can make an appointment in advance. These are usually 10-14 days in advance.

General Health Centre Booking System

Telephone System: We open the lines at **8.30am** which are answered in turn by the reception staff. Please pick from the following:

Option 1 for appointments. At present, reception is booking telephone calls with the GP and Express Nurse which will be triaged and if necessary, a face to face appointment will be organised. There are video calls available which the GP or Express Nurse will arrange with the patient. Our telephone lines are extremely busy in the morning, if your call is not appointment related please call back after 11am.

Option 2 is for Prescribing. The results line is open from 10am – 5pm. We are sending all prescriptions electronically to a pharmacy.

Option 3 is for the Secretaries. Please be aware that the secretaries are unable to book any appointments so please do not use this option.

Booking online appointments and ordering prescriptions:

We recommend downloading and using the NHS App to book appointments online and to order repeat prescriptions. From December 2021, you will be able to see all new record entries in your health records.

Email Policy:

Emails to the surgery may not be seen on the same day by your doctor. Please do not use this mail box for the following:

Medical Problems: Please do not use the email for any type of medical consultation. **Results:** If your query is relating to a recent test, please call the surgery on **01494 434 344** and select option 2. If your test was requested by a hospital doctor please contact them.

Appointments: We do not accept requests for appointments via email – please call reception.

Prescriptions: Please do not send any prescription request via the admin email. If you are requesting a prescription please do so via our website **amershamhealthcentre.co.uk** and follow the instructions on the prescription tab. We do not take prescription requests over the phone. **Visits:** All visits should be requested by calling **01494 434 344** and select option 3. **Covid Vaccine:** Please visit our website **www.amershamhealthcentre** for up to date information.

Deaf and hard of hearing patients who have difficulty using the phone and rely on email for contact should register with the surgery that you are hard of hearing via **admin.ahc@nhs.net**. Your medical records will be updated. They may thereafter access the surgery by this email address for routine issues including appointment requests or general queries, remembering to include in your subject heading / content that you are hard of hearing.

What to expect when you call your GP surgery for an appointment:

As per NHS guidelines, it is compulsory for patients visiting the surgery to wear a face covering.

Our reception team are here to help you and will initially book you a telephone consultation with the GP or Nurse, depending on your requirements. The GP or Nurse will triage your booking and may invite you in for a face to face appointment.

You will be given a morning or afternoon slot for a call back. Please ensure you pick up or you will be required to rebook which obviously wastes valuable appointments.

We may ask you to send a photo prior to your telephone appointment. The request comes through as a text message so please provide us with a mobile number and permission to contact you via text as this speeds up the process.

The GP may also arrange for a video call, this will be arranged between yourself and the GP at the time of the telephone consultation.

If you are asked to come in for a face to face appointment, blood test or other procedure, you will be asked to follow these guidelines:

1. Come to the main entrance and enter through the automatic doors. The reception desk is open for you to check in.
2. The receptionist will either show you to the GPs waiting area which is set up to social distance requirements or the Nurses waiting area which is limited by number and spacing.
3. The GP or Nurse will then come and collect you themselves. They will have the correct PPE.
4. Please follow the one way system in the building.
5. You will be shown out of the building following a one way system.

Current guidelines require that we triage all patients coming into the surgery. This is for your safety and the safety of our staff as should a member of our team test positive for the coronavirus, it could result in the surgery being closed for a period of time. Therefore we ask that everyone play their part in ensuring they following our triaging procedures.

Sunrise Clinic: The clinic runs on a Tuesday morning. 7.30 – 8.30am, the phone call appointments are pre bookable by calling reception.

Evening pre bookable appointments: These are available on a Wednesday 6.30 -7.30pm, they are available to book three days in advance.

Nurses Appointments: The nurses are continuing to see patients for blood tests, dressings, stitch removal, regular injections, health checks, smears and also routine child immunisations. There will be a Sunrise clinic running for the nurses on a Tuesday, appointments available 7.20-8.30am

Annual Reviews: Patients will be invited in for their annual reviews; including diabetes, asthma, hypertension etc. Please wait to be contacted by the surgery; we will contact you by letter or SMS.

Welfare Support: Please contact us if you are having any difficulties with shopping, prescriptions, transport and essential deliveries. Prescriptions can be delivered by many of the pharmacies please speak to them about this service, many of the people helping out are volunteers. There are 750,000 volunteers in the UK helping with the National Voluntary service. We can refer you to offer you the following services:

Check in and Chat Support: Provides short-term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness as a consequence of self-isolation.

Community Support: Provides collection of shopping, medication or other essential supplies for someone who is self-isolating, and delivering these supplies to their home.

Patient Transport Support: Provides transport for patients who are medically fit for discharge or to support patients going to NHS appointments

NHS Transport Support: Provides transport for equipment, supplies and/or medication between NHS services and sites. Also involves assisting pharmacies with medication delivery.

IMED: Available for home delivery, their number is 01727 837985 or look at the website: www.imedpharmacy.com

Amersham Voluntary service: A volunteer group registered with Buckinghamshire Council. They are a network of local people who are here to help. They can run errands, like basic shopping or collect prescriptions or even for a chat. They aim to respond within 24 hours.

Contact via youramershamcoronahelp@gmail.com or 01494 702149.

Ear syringing services: We no longer offer this service at the surgery. Below is a list of alternative providers:

Aston Hearing Services, Old Amersham: 01494 733840

Chalfont Hearing, Little Chalfont: 01494 765144

Boots Hearing Care: 0345 270 0999. Based in Alyesbury

Pharmacies: Please utilise your local pharmacy who are able to provide over the counter solutions for many symptoms including, coughs and colds, verrucas, eye infections, thrush, hay fever, diarrhea, constipation, mouth ulcers, head lice: You can purchase all treatments from your local pharmacy and some medications are available at supermarkets. Please try these over the counter treatments before contacting the surgery.

Social prescribers connect patients to non-medical support, such as day centres, charities or community groups, in the community to improve their wellbeing and tackle social isolation.

They can link you in to support within your local community to help you work towards a more fulfilling life.

They enable people to have more control over their lives, develop skills and give their time to others, through involvement in community groups. Please see overleaf for an introduction to what they provide.

Staff Updates:

We would like to announce that Dr Hui has left the surgery to pursue other interests. She will be missed by both the surgery and her patients alike and we wish her well. We are delighted to inform you we have two new GPs joining the surgery, Dr Leila Ball and Dr Niloufar Nikpour are starting with us in January 2022. We would also like to welcome Kamla, Sandra and Ann to our reception team. Janet Jones has also joined us working with our partnered care homes in

the area as a care home support nurse. All of whom look forward to assisting you.

Meeting the Team:

We have introduced a new section of the newsletter to introduce you to key members of our health centre team. This quarter we would like to introduce our secretarial team.

Secretaries

We are a team of 4 part time secretaries, who work for all the GP's, currently 11 part time doctors. We would like to introduce ourselves to you to help should you have a need to contact us; Maureen, Caren, Lynne and Clare (we have all worked at the health centre between 8-15 years).

We are a very committed, hardworking and friendly team and we always aim to help patients with many differing queries whilst supporting our team of doctors with their admin workload.

Our job role is always evolving in the ways we do things, never more so than with the COVID pandemic. Back in the day, referral letters were typed & posted, then faxed and now referrals and advice requests are sent via eRS (Electronic Referral Service) directly to hospitals where they are then triaged by a Consultant prior to an appointment being offered or advice given.

Despite our very busy job role, we are here to help, so if you have any queries which our secretarial team can help with, please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you need a GP in a medical emergency when the surgery is closed, please call 01494 434344 for details of how to contact Buckinghamshire Urgent Care, the out of hours emergency service.

If you need medical information or advice, please call

111

What we have been doing

Dr Gabe and Partners

Amersham Health Centre

Throughout COVID-19 the surgery has remained open and provided additional capacity to our patients through new digital consulting solutions.

We are now starting to reflect on the last 11 months and wanted to share some of the data to our patients.

Data gathered between January 1st – November 30th 2021 for **13808** patients registered with Dr Gabe and Partners.

4175 Face-to-face appointments with a GP	13555 Telephone appointments with a GP	2414 Telephone appointments with a Minor Illness Nurse
306 Sick notes issued	4626 Face-to-face appointments with our nursing team	4742 Flu Vaccinations given so far
1348 New patients registered	11253 Prescription items issued	216 Visits to patients' homes
1961 Referral processed	5874 COVID-19 Booster Vaccinations given so far	306 Sick notes issued



Mid Chilterns PCN comprises of Amersham Health Centre, Rectory Meadow Surgery, Hughenden Valley Surgery, Prospect House & The John Hampden Surgery

Social Prescribing Service

Connecting you to local services to improve your physical and mental wellbeing

What is Social Prescribing?

Do you need support with housing, debt, employment, lifestyle, managing your mental health, loneliness etc?

Social prescribing can link you in to support within your local community to help you to work towards a more fulfilling life.

You can self refer to this free service by emailing the social prescriber link worker team by email :-

mid-chiltern.socialprescribers@nhs.net

or alternatively ask you GP Surgery to refer you.