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## **A BIG THANK YOU**

Four weeks into lockdown and several weeks of overwhelming guidance from the Government and NHS England we are still being challenged by the global coronavirus pandemic. We do however seem to have developed a routine within our working week and we would therefore like to take this opportunity to offer you all our heartfelt gratitude for your patience and kindness towards all the staff at Mayford House Surgery.

It has been a testing time for us all but we would like to reassure you that we are trying our very best to maintain our high level of care given the constraints that have been placed upon us.

We felt it important to update you on how our work has changed but to also remind you that we remain open during our normal working hours to address your medical needs as safely as we can do.

## **CHANGES TO HOW WE CONSULT WITH PATIENTS**

Across the nation all GP surgeries are being asked to work 'remotely', this means trying to deal with our patients in a non-face to face setting. You will therefore have noticed that at present you are unable to book any online appointments. You can still however ring and book telephone appointments with all the clinical staff i.e. doctors, nurses, advanced nurse practitioners (ANPs) and our clinical pharmacist.

If we feel that a telephone appointment does not give us all the information we need, we can also arrange a direct and secure video consultation with you. In a few situations where we feel it is safe but necessary to do so, we will ask you to attend the surgery.

**Online Consultations (Engage Consult)** - you can also, via our website ([www.mayfordhouse.co.uk](http://www.mayfordhouse.co.uk)), submit an online consultation and we will reply to you by the end of the next working day. Again, if we need more information, we can arrange a telephone or video call back. The Engage Consult service can be found on our website under the 'GP Online' tab.

Unfortunately, we are unable to send ANY routine referrals for the time being. Please contact us again over the summer if you feel you need a routine referral.

**If you have significant or worrying symptoms you must contact us in the usual way as some urgent referral processes are still in place. There are even some conditions which, as GPs we can manage in the community without needing specialist advice.**

We do still have access to specialist advice should it be needed.

We have also been asked to stop all routine insurance reports and medicals.

#### **USE OF E-MAIL**

Please **do not email the secretaries** directly unless one of us has asked you to do so; we have received too many emails for the secretaries to read whilst they are also trying to do their routine work.

Any paper work that we may need to provide for you e.g. sick notes will be sent by e-mail to minimise footfall into the surgery.

#### **REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS**

Please do not e-mail the secretaries regarding prescriptions. We would encourage you to sign up for on-line access, and sign up with a nominated pharmacy if you have not already done so.

#### **CERVICAL SMEARS**

If you are on routine 3-yearly or 5-yearly smear tests, we have been advised that it is safe to delay these for 6 months. Please therefore book a smear appointment 6 months after your original smear was due. If you are on annual recalls, it is safe to postpone your smear for 3 months.

#### **BLOOD TESTS**

Some bloods tests will be delayed to minimise footfall into the surgery but the nursing team will liaise with you regarding which tests need to continue. They will also contact you if you are shielding with regards how best to arrange any necessary blood tests.

#### **FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND BABIES**

Although the health visitors are no longer doing routine visits to your homes or holding regular clinics you still have access to them if you would like advice on your child's health. If you have young children or infants at home, we acknowledge that this can be a very isolating and stressful time for you; the health visitors are still accessible for you to speak to for support. Please use the number provided in your red book.

At the surgery we have decided to continue to perform the 8 weeks checks for your newborn babies; we will do this at the same time as your baby's first immunisations to reduce your trips to the surgery.

Childhood immunisations are very important so PLEASE DO NOT PUT THESE OFF. If you have any concerns about coming to the surgery with your young children please do not hesitate to contact our nursing team.

There have been some concerns locally that children are not being brought to the GP or the Urgent Treatment Centre when a child is unwell or has had an accident; we understand that as parents you are trying to protect the NHS from being overloaded and also trying to protect your families from the coronavirus. However, if you have ANY concerns about your child please access medical services appropriately.

### **CONTRACEPTION**

If you are due a pill check, coil or implant change or another injection please contact us and speak to a GP or ANP. We have had recent guidance from the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health and we will be able to talk through what options are available to you. If you regularly use a form of contraception and do not want to fall pregnant, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CONTACT US BEFORE YOUR CONTRACEPTION RUNS OUT.

You can also look at <https://www.sexwise.fpa.org.uk/contraception> for advice.

### **THOSE OF YOU WITH LONG TERM CONDITIONS**

Many of you who fall in to this category will already have received the letter from the government to shield. We thank you for your patience in doing so. This must be a scary and uncertain time for you. If you need advice or help about food parcels or social care please contact North Yorkshire County Council or Northallerton Covid-19 support for our community via Facebook or on 07513164020 or 07821863833.

The nursing team, led by Karen Hill, Jane Wright our specialist diabetic nurse and Jenni Greenbank our clinical pharmacist, are still available on a daily basis to help look after your asthma, COPD, diabetes, hypertension, kidney, thyroid and heart disease. If you are due a routine review of any of these conditions PLEASE DO NOT DELAY YOUR APPOINTMENT. This can safely be carried out over the phone or via video link.

### **Medications**

In the meantime, we are looking at ways in which to ensure your delivery of medications is not compromised. We are working closely with our local pharmacy colleagues and our dispensing staff to deliver to you your medications promptly and safely. We have had a huge request from you to our dispensary for medications to be delivered to more of you. We are looking at ways in which we can facilitate this. The husband of one of our receptionists has kindly volunteered to help with this and we would like to say a big thank you to Paul; he has put the needs of the local community before his own.

## **MENTAL ILLNESS AND WELLBEING**

During this lockdown period where many of you will be self-isolating, shielding or working from home, we are acutely aware that your mental wellbeing may suffer.

If you are struggling with feeling anxious, low or depressed you can directly self-refer to the local IAPT (Improving access to psychological therapies) team or,

Mental Health Support 01609 780758

There are different websites (eg moodjuice, living life the full, calmzone, headspace, <https://web.nth.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>) which can be good places to start for self-help. <http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/booklets/> <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about-us/responding-to-covid-19/covid-19-and-mental-health>

If you take regular medication for your mental health please do not stop it. Please contact the surgery if you would like to discuss your mental health or medication.

Eating well, reducing smoking and alcohol consumption and doing exercise can all help.

PE with Joe on YouTube  
Yoga with Adriene

## **OUR OLDER AND FRAIL PATIENTS**

If you fall into this category, you will be all too well aware that you are at the highest risk of catching the coronavirus. Even if you have not been asked to by the government we would ask you to maintain social distancing to protect yourselves and the local community.

If you are feeling isolated or lonely NYCC may be able to help or the local Northallerton volunteer group who you can contact on Facebook or on 07513164020 or 07821863833.

If you feel you would like some advice about any medical conditions or you are feeling worried at this stressful time then PLEASE CONTACT THE SURGERY. Our reception staff will ask a GP or ANP to call you back. Your health is our priority and we feel strongly that you contact us if you feel you should. We know some of you may feel the need to stay away from the surgery in order to protect yourselves and the NHS, but we hope to be able to deal with your query over the phone. PLEASE DO NOT, NOT CONTACT US BECAUSE YOU THINK WE WILL BE TOO BUSY.

## **CARE HOMES AND HOME VISITS**

There has been a great deal of recent media interest in the spread of the coronavirus to care homes and amongst our older patients who want to stay at home.

For those of you with loved ones currently residing within one of our local care homes, we can reassure you that although we are no longer regularly visiting (to reduce the risk

of transmission of the virus) we are in weekly contact by phone with them. Again we have been able to use video links where needed but WE WILL VISIT anyone who needs one. Our paramedics from Yorkshire Ambulance Service continue to work with us to facilitate this.

Over the coming few weeks some of you will be receiving letters from us about Advance Care Planning. This is something we discuss with older and frail patients as part of our day to day work but the current crisis may have left some of you wondering what your options are should you catch the virus. Some of you may not wish to be admitted to hospital and for some of you hospital admission may feel inappropriate. It can be difficult to talk about where or how we would like to be cared for in our final days or weeks but it is also necessary if your loved ones and ourselves can honour your wishes. We will follow up the letters with a phone call from a GP or an ANP to address any of your concerns and discuss your priorities.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE**

Sadly during the corona virus pandemic domestic violence and child sexual abuse has increased.

A new campaign signposts how to access help for victims of abuse and provide reassurance that police response & support services remain available during the coronavirus pandemic.

***Coronavirus household isolation instruction does not apply to anyone who needs to leave their home to escape domestic abuse.***

The Rail Delivery Group also announced those fleeing domestic abuse during the coronavirus lockdown can apply for free train travel to refuge accommodation. Tickets can be accessed through the member services of Women's Aid Federation of England, Welsh Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Aid and Imkaan.

- Government guidance on how to get help: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>
- Read the Home Secretary's statement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-outlines-support-for-domestic-abuse-victims>
- Announcement on train tickets: <https://media.raildeliverygroup.com/news/train-companies-to-offer-free-travel-to-those-fleeing-domestic-abuse-during-coronavirus-lockdown>

**Call the [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.**

#### Resources and helpline on child sexual abuse

The government wants to ensure that the public are aware of the resources and helplines they can access to help them prevent Child Sexual Abuse. There is support available through the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, such as:

- A confidential helpline (Stop It Now! – 0808 1000 900) for anyone who is concerned about their own behaviour or the behaviour of others – this can

be accessed by any member of the public or by professionals who need advice on child sexual abuse risk whether they are concerned about the behaviour of an adult or someone under-18. There is also a secure messaging service available through <https://contactus.stopitnow.org.uk/>.

- Information and advice on child sexual abuse through their website: <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>

There are also resources available specifically for children, young people, parents and carers:

- The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command Centre (CEOP) have just launched a campaign (#OnlineSafetyAtHome) promoting their resources on preventing all forms of online child sexual abuse; this includes resources for all age groups and for those concerned about sexting – <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- There are resources for parents on the NSPCC website about online safety and all forms of child sexual abuse: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

**...FINALLY AND MOST IMPORTANTLY**

**THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND MESSAGES OF KINDNESS. WE VALUE YOUR ONGOING UNDERSTANDING AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME.**

**WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL OUR STAFF AT MAYFORD HOUSE SURGERY WHO HAVE RISEN TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND HAVE REMAINED CALM AND PROFESSIONAL AT ALL TIMES.**

**PLEASE ADHERE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND NHS GUIDANCE AND STAY HOME AND STAY SAFE.**