

November 2022

UPPER TOOTING SURGERY

Dear Reader,

As the days get shorter and we move into Autumn, Covid infections, as expected, are rising. Cases have increased by 31% since June, especially among older age groups who are seeing the highest rates of admission to hospital.

At our Trevelyan House Site, the PCN Vaccine Centre, continues to offer an Autumn booster to all eligible patients. Having started the campaign with over 75s, we believe we have now invited all those eligible, i.e., over 50 years of age or in an 'at risk' group. If you believe you are eligible and have not yet been contacted, please contact us. Our website and July newsletters set out all those who are eligible. You can also book at an NHS vaccination site.

NHS Vaccination

The vaccines currently used as boosters are Moderna and now mainly the Pfizer, RNA bivalent vaccine, which protects against 'original' Covid and the Omicron variant.

The same group of patients i.e., over 50 or 'at risk' are eligible for a flu jab. It is possible to have both at your Covid appointment, so please let the team know if you would like this.

We highly encourage BOTH vaccinations: as experience from the Southern Hemisphere predicts a strong flu wave here this winter.

Children's Flu

Children's flu vaccines which are given by a nasal spray NOT injection are now arriving.

2-3 year olds will be recalled by the surgery.

Older groups will be offered this at school. Children are super spreaders of flu, so please be vaccinated.

Polio

The polio booster campaign, offering all children in London from 1 to 9, a polio booster continues into November. Text messages have been sent to those eligible.

See our website for further details and please visit southwestlondon.icb.nhs.uk/find-nhs-services/vaccinations/polio/polio-vax-booking, for a list of South West London vaccination sites.

MMR

As detailed in earlier newsletters this year. MMR vaccination rates are low post pandemic and NHS England is also contacting parents and carers of children aged between one and six who have not yet had both doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines.

These are highly infectious, unpleasant illnesses for children, so please do NOT delay if you are contacted.

Please book an appointment with one of our nurses.

Certificates

We get many requests for sick notes (known as Med 3 fit notes) and many do not need a GP appointment.

You can self-certificate (SC2 available from your employer or government UK website) for the first 7 days of any illness, and if needing time off work after a hospital admission, the hospital team should give you the first certificate, if you need it, if you are likely to be away from work for more than 7 days.

We have posted a useful video explaining Med 3 fit notes on our website.

Certificates can also be issued by a Nurse Practitioner or physiotherapist. So, a GP appointment is not always needed

Antibiotics

The 18th to 24th November is World Antimicrobial Awareness Week.

This is a global campaign that is celebrated annually to warn and educate all of us that use of unnecessary antibiotics contributes to antibiotic resistance.

This means over time bacteria viruses, fungi and parasites change and no longer respond to medicines, increasing the risk of diseases spread and severe illness and death.

Most respiratory infections, colds and coughs are caused by viruses and antibiotics will not kill viruses so are not indicated, and, as we all see with increasing resistance, may cause harm to all of us if prescribed in such situations.

This does not mean that antibiotics are not indicated in many other cases, but PLEASE work with our clinicians to give you the best care possible and try to understand and listen to their reasons if they advise simply supportive measures for such common winter illnesses, rather than a prescription for antibiotics.

Local pharmacists can help you, e.g., suggest lozenges and cough syrups and a trip to the GP surgery can be avoided.

Wellbeing and Low Mood Service

I want to highlight this service for our patients which continues at Upper Tooting.

It is possible to make an appointment directly with a highly trained in-house counsellor who can help you decide the best course of action for low mood, anxiety or depression.

Please see our website.

Details of the service are accessed via the depression/anxiety/stress link in the wellbeing section.

We encourage those interested in the service to fill in a short confidential questionnaire prior to the first appointment. This is helpful to our counsellors, but NOT mandatory. Slots can be booked by submitting an online request or speaking to the Upper Tooting reception team.

Our wellbeing centre websites also give details of other local resources including the 24-hour mental health support line. *0800 028 8000* – available for all residents of SouthWest London.

IAPT - Wandsworth Talking Therapies

Here you can directly refer yourself for support from trained counsellors for anxiety, depression, stress, bereavement, sleep difficulties, anger issues, obsessive compulsive disorder, phobias, eating disorders and many other everyday problems. *0203 513 6264*.

Website: talkwandsworth.nhs.uk.

Email:

talkwandsworth@swlstg.nhs.uk

At Upper Tooting, all the team encourage all of our patients to be proactive in self-care this Autumn/Winter. Please get yourselves up to date with vaccinations, consider using resources such as local pharmacies for help with minor ailments and order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time.

I realise most of this newsletter gives you ways to improve your health. We are all here to help, and hope and trust, pressures on the NHS will not be as huge as the gloomy forecasts are predicting. We need to work together this winter, so we are able to offer you timely appointments with the best team member for your issues at most appropriate times.

With best wishes,
Dr Penelope Smith

Penelope E Smith

Senior Partner

