

December 2021



# Upper Tooting Surgery

**Dear reader,**

My December newsletter is shorter than usual, with one simple message:

**Please have a Covid booster when we call you and reconsider if you have previously declined a vaccine.**

COVID vaccines are safe, save lives and reduce hospital admissions.

Our Trevelyan House site will continue to serve as a Primary Care Network Vaccination site for all Grafton Medical Partners' patients.

We had hoped our work would be completed by Christmas, but the emergence of the highly transmissible Omicron variant means we will continue, and try to offer boosters to all of our eligible patients, as soon as possible.

## **COVID Vaccination Programme**

This programme is run by our normal team of doctors, nurses, HCAs and pharmacists. Many are working extra hours to help the programme and deferring much needed annual leave to do so.

Please be assured everyone is working as hard as they possible can to help with vaccines, as well as running 'normal' General Practice. We are also limited by vaccine stocks and deliveries, which are not entirely in our control.

Yesterday, the UK Health Security Agency showed that people had two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine several months ago, had no protection against the Omicron variant. Two doses of the Pfizer vaccine cut the risk by 30%.

We are all encouraged, however, by the dramatic effect of booster jabs, which increase protection above 70%, and hope that this third dose will be just as good at preventing serious illness, caused by Omicron as by Delta.

We believe cases are doubling every 2 to 3 days, so **please** come forward for a booster when texted or called.

**Please ensure your contact details are up-to-date.**

We are working down age groups as fast as we can, starting with older patients, those with comorbidities, or those who are pregnant.

All boosters at the surgery will be the **Pfizer** vaccine, as this has shown to be the best at increasing immunity.

Guidance now is to offer a **booster 3 months** after a second dose to **ALL adults over 18** (not within a month of a positive COVID test).

## COVID Vaccinations for 16-17 year olds

**Healthy 16 and 17 year olds** will now be offered a **second dose** of vaccine **3 months** after their first dose, however we cannot give this second dose until 3 months after a positive COVID test.

This gap is **8 weeks** if they are considered **immunosuppressed** or **live with someone who is immunosuppressed**.

## Adult immunosuppressed patients

A **third dose** should be administered at least 8 weeks after a second dose.

The terminology used initially was confusing, as their third dose was labelled as a 'third primary dose' **not** a 'booster'. This is because this cohort of patients may not have as strong of an immune response to the vaccine.

We will now give a **fourth dose** - the '**booster**' - **3 months** after the **third dose**, to try to boost protection.

We will be contacting patients in this group when they are due, but if you believe you have been left out, or have, for example recently joined this cohort, please contact us.

**Telephone:** 02038835708

**Email:** swlccg.uppertootingsurgery@nhs.net

## Booking for COVID Vaccinations

It is possible to book for COVID vaccinations via the NHS National Booking Service - [www.nhs.uk/book-a-coronavirus-vaccination/do-you-have-an-nhs-number](http://www.nhs.uk/book-a-coronavirus-vaccination/do-you-have-an-nhs-number) or by ringing **NHS 119**.





## COVID Vaccinations administered abroad

There is now a link on the NHS website, that you can use if you are **aged 18 or over**, have an **NHS number** and have received one of the **MHRA-approved vaccines** outside of England.

The MHRA-approved vaccines are: Oxford/AstraZeneca (Vaxveria), Pfizer/BioNTech (Comirnaty), Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) or Moderna (Spikevax).

Please note you have to book an appointment on the website to update your vaccine record.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/tell-nhs-about-coronavirus-vaccinations-abroad/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/tell-nhs-about-coronavirus-vaccinations-abroad/)

### Flu vaccine

We continue to advise all those in 'at-risk' groups or over 50s to take up a seasonal flu vaccine.

It is possible to have this at the **same time** as your COVID vaccine, stocks permitting.

We will update our website and Instagram as needed, in the coming weeks.

**Instagram:** [@grafonmedicalpartners](https://www.instagram.com/grafonmedicalpartners)

**Website:**

[www.uppertootingsurgery.nhs.uk/](https://www.uppertootingsurgery.nhs.uk/)

### Our website

You can find a list of our Christmas opening times and local pharmacy opening times, along with more practice information and useful links on our website.

In the Wellbeing Section of our website, there are a number of resources, providing advice for adolescents and adults' chronic conditions, including mental health.

We know the pandemic has had a huge toll on mental health and hope these resources are useful.

The **Mental Health Support Line** is open 365 days a year for adults and children, and is accessible to all residents living in South-West London boroughs. The service screens calls and refers too the right services, avoiding unnecessary trips to A&E.

**Telephone:** 0800 028 8000





2021 has been a challenging year for everyone.



We thank patients for their positive feedback - lovely comments on NHS Choices or Google or to our inbox really help to keep us going and boost staff morale.

We are committed to continuing to offer boosters and the best care we possibly can, and we wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a much better, pandemic-free, healthy 2022.

Get boosted!

Stay safe!

With best wishes,

Penny Smith Senior Partner

*Penelope E Smith*

