

July 2025

UPPER TOOTING

SURGERY



Dear Reader

As we move into summer, we remain as busy as ever.

We encourage all patients to sign up for online access and the NHS App. More and more NHS services (including us) are using the app to disseminate information in a far more efficient way than the postal service, also saving significant NHS resources.

You can use the NHS App to check results, view hospital letters and upcoming appointments, and to order repeat medication. Simply download the NHS App via Google Play or the App Store and turn on notifications. Messages will appear in the 'View messages from your GP surgery and other NHS services' section.

To check your messages:

- Log in to the NHS App and go to 'View messages'
- Select 'View messages from GP surgery and other NHS services' and select GRAFTON MEDICAL PARTNERS

It is essential to link your NHS App account to the surgery in advance. To do this, please contact the practice for your unique 'linkage key' if you have not already done so. For online access to your surgery records, we require proof of ID. Please liaise with our reception team to apply for this.

Prescriptions

Please order your prescriptions in a timely manner before any summer holidays. If ordering repeat medication exceptionally early, it helps us if you add a note to your request explaining the reasons.

Generally, the NHS App should only be used to request medication already classified as 'repeat'. All repeat medications have a review date set. This review date is very important. We will remind you if this is overdue but being proactive helps all of us. Online-bookable slots for medication reviews are labelled 'Medication review with pharmacist'. At this review, our pharmacists can check any drugs' side effects and compliance, and arrange appropriate monitoring (e.g. blood tests and blood pressure checks).

We find our system for reviewing a mental health questionnaire (PHQ-9) before issuing a repeat prescription for antidepressants is generally working well. Overall in the UK, numbers of those on antidepressants are incredibly high.

We encourage regular review and weaning off medication after six months symptom-free wherever possible. Summer is an ideal time to consider this (under supervision), so please be open to this suggestion from your clinician and consider other local supportive services.

Wandsworth Talking Therapies (swlstg.nhs.uk/wandsworth-talking-therapies) provides free confidential psychological and wellbeing interventions for common mental health problems and can be accessed without a GP referral.

Our **Social Prescriber**, Wioletta, can help with social and housing issues, and offer carers support, and you can book to see her directly. Please speak to reception for an appointment.

Citizens Advice Wandsworth is an independent charity providing free, impartial advice and support to enable people to manage their lives better in times of crisis. To contact the service, call the Adviceline (open 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday) on 0808 278 7833 and press option 4, or visit cawandsworth.org.

Vaccinations

The summer months are also a good time to catch up on vaccinations, particularly respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), pneumococcal, and shingles in adults.

RSV and pneumococcus cause pneumonia, which is more common in the autumn and winter months.

Pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for all over 65s and those who are immunocompromised (e.g. on immunosuppressant medication, or with asplenia, sickle cell disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart or kidney disease, diabetes, HIV, or have cochlear implants).

RSV circulates all year and causes serious illness, particularly in babies and the elderly. From last year, all pregnant women are offered the RSV vaccine from 28 to 36 weeks so their newborn baby is protected. In the elderly, this can cause serious pneumonia. If you are invited, please consider this important vaccine. Most older patients need only one dose (the childhood vaccination schedule now includes two doses).

Older patients are more susceptible to complications from RSV. The vaccine was introduced to the vaccination schedule last September.

We propose a summer catch-up campaign and will be recalling those who have not yet had the vaccine who were 75-79 on 31/08/2024, and those who have turned 75 since 01/01/2024.

Shingles is caused by a reactivation of chicken pox virus. It can be very unpleasant and can give pain persisting for a long time after the rash has gone. Interesting research is emerging suggesting that shingles vaccination may decrease dementia risk. Currently, this is just a suggestion, but it is another reason to consider the shingles vaccine.

Everyone aged 70-79 is eligible and will be offered two doses of the vaccine (given between 6 and 12 months apart). Patients aged 50 or over with a severely weakened immune system are also eligible (for this group, two doses are given between 8 weeks and 6 months apart). For more information, please visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/shingles-vaccine.

Childhood immunisation schedule

From July 1, there are changes in the childhood immunisation schedule. Babies who have not yet received the 12-week vaccinations (as at July 1) will move to the new schedule. Babies who have had their 12-week vaccines already will remain on the previous schedule.

Essentially, meningococcal B vaccine (previously offered at 8 and 16 weeks) will now be given at 8 and 12 weeks. The first dose of the pneumococcal vaccine will move from 12 to 16 weeks. The second MMR dose is moving forward from 3 years and 4 months to 18 months. A new 18 month routine vaccination appointment for the fourth hexavalent vaccine will be introduced.

For more information, please see below or visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/routine-childhood-immunisation-schedule

Age due	Vaccines that protect against		Vaccine given and trade name	
Eight weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and hepatitis B		DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (6 in 1 vaccine)	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis
	Meningococcal group B (MenB)		MenB	Bexsero
	Rotavirus gastroenteritis		Rotavirus	Rotarix ²
Twelve weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and hepatitis B		DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (6 in 1 vaccine)	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis
	MenB		MenB	Bexsero
	Rotavirus		Rotavirus	Rotarix ²
Sixteen weeks old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and hepatitis B		DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (6 in 1 vaccine)	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis
	Pneumococcal (13 serotypes) • if received pneumococcal at 12 weeks give Men B		PCV	Prevenar 13
One year old (on or after the child's first birthday)	Born before 1 July 2024 Pneumococcal Measles, mumps, rubella MenB Hib/MenC (if Hib/MenC exhausted give DTaP/Hib/IPV/HepB)	Born on or after 1 July 2024 Pneumococcal Measles, mumps, rubella MenB	PCV MMR MenB Hib/MenC	Prevenar 13 MMRvaxPro or Priorix Bexsero Menitorix
Eighteen months old	Born before 1 July 2024 No appointment	Born on or after 1 July 2024 DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB Measles, mumps, rubella	DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB MMR	Infanrix hexa or Vaxelis MMRvaxPro or Priorix
Three years four months old or soon after	Born before 1 July 2024 Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio Measles, mumps, rubella	Born on or after 1 July 2024 Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio	dTaP/IPV MMR	REPEVAX MMRvaxPro or Priorix
Boys and girls aged twelve to thirteen years	Cancers and genital warts caused by specific human papillomavirus (HPV) types		HPV	Gardasil 9
Fourteen years old (school Year 9)	Tetanus, diphtheria and polio		Td/IPV	REVAXIS
	Meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y		MenACWY	MenQuadfi

If in any doubt, please check with our nursing team.

Sadly, vaccination rates for all vaccines are decreasing in the UK. All the clinical team at Grafton have vaccinated their children and encourage all parents to do the same. The reemergence of unpleasant diseases such as measles, which can kill and leave long-lasting medical problems, is completely unacceptable and avoidable with higher vaccination rates.

If your child has missed vaccines, please check with our nursing team for advice on how best to catch up.

Diabetes

We have high numbers of diabetic patients at all surgeries. All diabetics require an annual check and we recall patients based on birthday month or, more often, those felt to be less well-controlled.

As with all chronic illnesses, we feel that patients' understanding of their condition is the greatest facilitator of good diabetic control and are delighted to see a Living With Diabetes day event has been organised and is free to attend online (via Zoom) on July 10. It is designed to support and inform patients living with diabetes.

To book your attendance, scan the code below or contact the organisers at secoastandlondon@diabetes.org.uk.



Diabetes UK (www.diabetes.org.uk) is also an excellent source of advice and we highly recommend this website.

Weight loss drugs

Obesity is a national crisis and one of the drivers of diabetes with links to increased cancer rates. We were all excited by the announcement that GPs would be able to prescribe tirzepatide (Mounjaro) from July and received many queries on this as the popular press and news did not adequately explain the commissioning guidance.

The rollout is being phased to manage demand, starting with patients with a latest BMI of at least 40 (currently, obesity is defined as a BMI >30), which is very overweight.

In order to qualify, the patient must have at least four of the following long-term conditions (in addition to a latest BMI of at least 40):

Type 2 diabetes
Hypertension
Heart failure/established cardiovascular disease
Hyperlipidaemia
Sleep apnoea (diagnosed and using CPAP)

In year 2 of the programme, eligibility is expected to expand to those with a BMI of 35-39.9 and four comorbidities; in year 3, this will extend further to those with a BMI of at least 40 and three comorbidities. NHS England has stated that the full rollout could take up to 12 years to reach all 3.4 million potentially eligible patients.

We have run patient searches and numbers of those qualifying for initiation in the first year are relatively low. We plan to contact all patients.

We are aware, however, that many of our patients are accessing Mounjaro privately via online or high street pharmacies. Many notify us that they are prescribing for our patients but, sadly, some do not. Please ensure that you let us know, especially if taking any prescribed medication.

Oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) in particular can be affected by weight loss drugs. Oral contraceptives may be less protective (hence the advice to use alternative cover for one month when starting Mounjaro and at any dose increase). For HRT, there are concerns regarding the effect on any oral progesterone (given to protect the uterine lining), so long-acting reversible contraception (LARC - e.g. the Mirena coil or patches) are seen as a safer solution if using Mounjaro.

Please discuss with your GP if you may be affected.

As we enjoy the summer weather with high temperatures expected, we advise all patients to ensure they use adequate sun protection for themselves and their children and keep hydrated.

We have already had two Weather Health Alerts from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) this year. Weather impacts are felt across the whole health service with evidence of more serious health outcomes across the population, especially older adults and those with pre-existing health conditions.

We encourage you to check on friends, family and neighbours who are more vulnerable, and to take sensible precautions whilst enjoying the sun. The UKHSA's Weather Health Alerts can be found at ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/weather-health-alerts.

The Furzedown Project

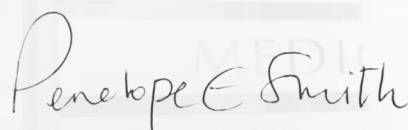
The Furzedown Project is an excellent local project which provides older people in our community the opportunity to connect, contribute and be active, tackling isolation and improving wellbeing. For details of regular activities, talks and events, and summer outings, please visit www.furzedownproject.org.

The Furzedown Project's VitaliTea Outreach Service is a weekly meeting with a matched befriender for those over 60 who may be lonely or isolated. Details can be found on the main Furzedown Project website, or by calling 020 8677 4283 (Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm). Volunteers to help with the project are always welcome.

We wish all patients a happy, healthy summer.

With all best wishes

Dr Penelope Smith

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Penelope E Smith". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the printed name "Dr Penelope Smith".

Senior Partner and Clinical Director, Grafton PCN