

December 2024

UPPER TOOTING SURGERY



Dear Reader

As we move into December, our local hospitals are already under pressure and reporting four times as many inpatients with **flu**.

In addition, COVID cases are rising, as are admissions for RSV (respiratory syncytial virus).

We strongly urge you to come forward for vaccination against these three infections if you are in a vulnerable, eligible group.

As families mix over Christmas, infections inevitably are passed on.

Flu vaccinations

The following groups are eligible:

- Aged 65 years and over
- Individuals in an “at risk” group, e.g., diabetes, pregnancy, COPD, heart disease, sickle cell disease
- Carers (paid and unpaid)

We still have flu vaccines available at the surgery, as do local pharmacies.

COVID vaccinations

The following groups are eligible for the Autumn COVID booster:

- Aged 65 years and over
- Individuals in an “at risk” group, e.g., diabetes, pregnancy, COPD, heart disease, sickle cell disease

Unpaid carers are no longer eligible for COVID vaccinations.

Our COVID vaccination clinics at Trevelyan House have ended, but they are still available from local pharmacies.

For Upper Tooting this is Barkers Chemist.

Address: 219-223 Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7TG

Telephone: 020 8672 6116

For more information about COVID vaccinations, please visit the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/covid-19-services/covid-19-vaccination-services/>

RSV vaccinations

RSV causes very unpleasant respiratory infections in babies. This year, pregnant women between 28 and 36 weeks are being offered a vaccine as immunity will pass on to their babies and prevent significant illness, hospital admissions, and deaths.

Individuals aged 75 to 79 are also eligible, as RSV causes significant illnesses and admissions in this age group. If you turned 80 years old on or after 1 September 2024, you are also eligible until 31 August 2025.

We still have RSV vaccines available at the surgery, so **please** book in if you are eligible.

Norovirus

Norovirus causes severe vomiting and hospital admissions are also high. Simple hand hygiene can help to prevent many cases.

Wash hands!

Face masks

Inevitably, as Winter approaches, surgeries are seeing and treating more respiratory infections.

Face masks are no longer mandatory in NHS settings, but we ask you to consider others and wear a mask if you have a cough or cold when attending the surgery.

Cancellations

We have deliberately defaulted all of our appointments to face-to-face. If booking an appointment online, it is also possible to request a telephone appointment instead.

Recently, we have sadly seen a rise in missed appointments or DNAs (Did Not Attend).

Cancelling an appointment is very easy via the NHS app or by calling the surgery and pressing option 1. You can cancel an appointment anytime as the phone cancellation line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Please be considerate and think of others if you cannot attend so your potential missed appointment can be used for others.

Lung screening

The Royal Brompton Hospital has been running a project inviting all patients aged 55 to 74 years who smoke or used to smoke and are registered with a South West London GP to a free one-off telephone conversation with a nurse who will decide if you need a low-dose radiation lung CT scan. This can detect early cancer and some chronic respiratory problems.

We understand that Grafton patients are currently being invited. The invite is a little ambiguous as it suggests we have referred you, which has led to some anxious phone calls. Please be assured this is a blanket screening invite and we encourage those invited to take it up.

You can contact the screening service directly on **020 7351 8607**.

Breast screening

Levels of breast screening locally appear to be declining. We strongly encourage our patients to consider this when called by the National Screening Programme, which aims to detect cancer early, when treatment is often simpler and more effective.

All women aged 50 to their 71st birthday registered with a South West London GP are invited to breast screening once every three years. Women 71 and over will stop receiving screening invitations but can still request breast screening by calling **020 3758 2024** to make an appointment.

South West London Breast Screening is coordinated from the Rose Centre at St George's Hospital.

Our website has a short video from the team which helps to explain the service: <https://uppertootingsurgery.nhs.uk/news/breast-screening-at-st-georges-hospital/>.

Blood pressure monitoring

Every year, we sadly hear of patients who have strokes or heart attacks who have not had a blood pressure check for many years.

We encourage all our patients to take up the offer of an NHS Health Check at age 40. Blood pressure, weight and cholesterol are assessed and for some this can be life-saving. NHS Health Checks are subsequently offered at 5-year intervals and this can be booked with one of our HCAs or nurses.

All of our surgeries have 'PODs' in the waiting rooms where you can check your own blood pressure. Local pharmacies also offer free blood pressure checks to those aged 40 years and over who are not under treatment for hypertension and have not had a blood pressure check by a healthcare professional in the last 6 months.

If you attend the pharmacy for a blood pressure check, depending on the result, they will:

- Give you advice to support healthy living.
- Give you a blood pressure monitor to take home and return later, with results over a longer time period.
- Advise you to see a GP (they will add the blood pressure reading to your GP health record).

To find a pharmacy offering this service, please visit the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/find-a-pharmacy-that-offers-free-blood-pressure-checks/>

Low Mood & Loneliness

Every year at this time, it seems appropriate to mention local low mood services, as the seasonal festivities can, for many, highlight feelings of sadness and loneliness.

The 'Wellbeing' section on our website has a list of services available to patients: <https://uppertootingsurgery.nhs.uk/wellbeing/>.

Some services have been highlighted below:

Talk Wandsworth (Talking Therapies/IAPT)

A free service that provides help if you are experiencing anxiety or stress, depression, bereavement or loss, sleep difficulties, anger issues, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, eating disorders and many other everyday problems.

You can self-refer to this service.

Telephone: 020 3513 6264

Website:

www.talkwandsworth.nhs.uk

Silver Line

Free telephone support for older people, 24 hours a day.

Telephone: 0800 4708 090

Website: www.thesilverline.org.uk

Samaritans

A national service offering a safe place to talk any time you like, in your own way, about whatever is on your mind. You can call Samaritans free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Telephone: 116 123

Coral Mental Health Crisis Hub

The Coral Mental Health Crisis Hub is an alternative place of safety to the Emergency department for patients with primary mental health problems. The service is based at Springfield University Hospital, and you can access these services (for yourself or another person you are concerned about) using the Mental Health Support Line. The line is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Telephone: 0800 028 8000

Local Christmas Festivities if you are alone

Rotary Club

The Rotary Club will again host a Christmas Day lunch and tea party for elderly people in Wandsworth.

For more information, please visit their website, www.rotarychristmasday.org/, or call **020 7223 8005**.



The Alexandra Pub

Yet again this year, The Alexandra will host a free Christmas dinner for those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day. You do not need to book, just turn up between midday and 3pm on Christmas Day. Everything is free, there is no catch – just kind souls, volunteers, and hosts Mick and Sarah, who run The Alexandra.

Address: 33 Wimbledon Hill Road, London SW19 7NE

Telephone: 020 8947 7691

Christmas Opening Times

Tuesday 24th December

8am - 6.30pm

Wednesday 25th December

CLOSED

Thursday 26th December

CLOSED

Friday 27th December

Normal hours (8am - 6.30pm)

Please note that if you need to order repeat medication, you must do so before Saturday 21st December.

If you need medical assistance during the Christmas period when we are closed, please call NHS 111.



As we come to the end of another busy year, we thank our patients for their positive feedback and appreciation. We are not perfect, but we aspire to provide an excellent service to all our patients, underpinned by a strong ethos that we want to provide a service we would wish for our own families.

We wish all of our patients a Happy, Healthy, Peaceful, and Productive 2025!

With all best wishes

Dr Penelope Smith

Senior Partner and Clinical Director, Grafton PCN

