

August 2026

UPPER TOOTING

SURGERY



Dear Reader

As we head into peak holiday season, we encourage all patients to order any repeat medications in plenty of time before travelling. We aim to process all prescriptions within two working days, but we still receive urgent requests via the NHS app at the weekends, with notes such as "Going on holiday tomorrow!" Some medications also need to be ordered by your pharmacy, so please request well ahead of time. If you are requesting medication earlier than usual because of travel, please let us know on your request.

NHS App

The NHS App sends your prescription request directly to a clinician to authorise, helping to minimise delay and reducing the risk of medication names or doses being mistaken. It is also one of the easiest ways to view your results, prescriptions and parts of your health records. We encourage everyone to use this wherever possible.

The NHS App is available on mobile phones, tablets, laptops and PCs:
www.nhsapp.service.nhs.uk/login.

Travel Vaccines

Ideally, you should book travel vaccines at least 8 weeks prior to travel if you would like to receive them at the practice. Our travel clinics fill up very quickly over the Summer, so you can also enquire at local pharmacies for travel vaccines.

You can view your vaccination on the NHS App. To find out which vaccines are recommended for your destination, visit the NaTHNaC Travel Health Website: www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries.

Hay fever

As the hot weather continues, so does hay fever, particularly for those allergic to grass pollen. Your local pharmacy should be your first port of call. They can advise on antihistamines, eye drops and nasal sprays, all of which are available over the counter. Hay fever is extremely common, and self-care is usually enough to keep symptoms under control. However, if it is affecting your sleep, work or daily activities despite treatment, please contact the practice for further advice.

Our local pharmacies can also help with a range of minor ailments through the **Pharmacy First** scheme, including:

- earache (aged 1 to 17 years)
- impetigo (aged 1 year and over) - a contagious skin infection
- infected insect bites (aged 1 year and over)
- shingles (aged 18 years and over) - infection that causes a painful rash
- sinusitis (aged 12 years and over) - infection of the sinuses (behind the forehead, cheeks and nose)
- sore throat (aged 5 years and over)
- urinary tract infections or UTIs (women aged 16 to 64 years)

If you normally do not pay prescription charges, this also applies under the Pharmacy First scheme.

Child Health

During the Summer holidays, we encourage parents to check that their children's vaccinations are up to date. Unfortunately, immunisation rates across South West London have fallen over recent years, and we have seen a resurgence of Measles as a result. We will always try our best to fit your children in for overdue vaccinations.

Meningitis B

Earlier this year, there was a significant outbreak of **meningitis B** (MenB) amongst students in Kent. Until now, the MenB vaccine has generally only been offered as part of the routine infant immunisation programme (since September 2015) because this type of meningitis is much more common in younger children.

From **20 July 2026**, the Department of Health has introduced a one-off 2026 MenB vaccination campaign. Vaccinations will be offered via participating high street pharmacies, rather than GP surgeries.

The vaccine offers vital protection for 17 and 18-year-olds currently in the last year of sixth form and students under the age of 25 who are heading to residential colleges or university this autumn for the first time.

Meningococcal B can cause serious, life-threatening problems including inflammation of the lining of the brain and sepsis (blood poisoning). This can lead to life-changing disabilities such as amputations, hearing loss and brain damage, and in some cases can prove fatal.

The bacteria that cause MenB disease can be spread through close contact with an infected person. This can be through kissing, sharing drinks or vapes, or prolonged close contact with the person for long periods of time, such as living in the same home.

First-year university students have around seven times the risk of developing MenB compared with young people of a similar age who do not go to university.

Eligible groups include:

- Individuals who were born between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2008
- Individuals who were born on or after 21 July 2001 and are starting university for the first time in autumn 2026
- Individuals who were born on or after 21 July 2001 and will be starting at some further education colleges for the first time in autumn 2026

For more information about booking a MenB vaccine appointment, visit the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/book-a-menb-vaccination-appointment/.

The **Meningitis ACWY** (Men ACWY) vaccine is also strongly recommended for teenagers heading to college or university and protects against 4 types of meningococcal bacteria (A, C, W & Y). If your teenager has missed their routine vaccination at school (usually given in Year 9 or 10), please contact the practice, as we can arrange this for you.

Heart Screening

CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) is a UK charity dedicated to preventing sudden cardiac deaths in young people through awareness, screening, research and support for affected families. Its screening programme offers ECG heart checks for young people aged 14 to 35, helping to identify hidden cardiac conditions that may otherwise go undetected.

There are several local screening sessions taking place over the Summer holidays, and we encourage anyone who is eligible to consider attending. An ECG is quick, simple and painless.

For more information, visit our website: www.uppertootingsurgery.nhs.uk/news/cardiac-risk-in-the-young-cry-cardiac-screening-for-all-aged-14-35/.

Mental Health

Our website provides details of local and national services that can help with mental health.

A new way to access mental health support in a crisis is to dial NHS 111 and select **option 2**.

The Coral Mental Health Crisis Hub, based at Springfield Hospital, is also still active.

Telephone: 0800 028 8000

There is also a new initiative that can be accessed via WhatsApp called **Everyturn**. This allows people experiencing mental health difficulties to access crisis support by messaging 0303 330 1511. In addition to emotional support, trained advisors can also signpost people to practical support relating to housing, finances, employment, relationships and other issues.

For children and adolescents, our website includes a dedicated Adolescents section, which includes mental health and support services for this particular age group. You can access this via our Wellbeing page. We recommend **Kooth**, a free, anonymous online service for young people aged 11–22 to discuss their mental health issues.

Sexual Health Services in South West London

At this time of year, many of us start thinking about holidays and overseas travel. We have limited travel clinic slots at the surgery, so we advise you to book early if you wish to receive your vaccinations from us.

Our nearest sexual health clinic is located on the 1st floor of 160 Falcon Road, SW11 2LN (next to Clapham Junction station). Clinics are also available in Mitcham, Wimbledon and Twickenham. For more information, visit South West London Sexual Health's website, www.shswl.nhs.uk/ or call **0333 300 2100**.

Parkrun

Parkrun is a free and friendly way to improve your physical and mental wellbeing. The nearest Parkruns take place at Tooting Common and Battersea Park. Participation is completely free, and there is no need to be a runner – many people choose to walk the course. Regular physical activity can improve heart health, reduce stress, boost mood and support overall wellbeing, making Parkrun a great way to stay active while connecting with your local community.

Flu / COVID / RSV

It may seem strange to be talking about flu vaccines while we are enjoying the Summer sunshine, but our Autumn vaccination programme is not far away. We anticipate flu vaccinations for children and pregnant women will start mid-September, and for over 65s and “at risk” patients in October. Please keep an eye out for your invitation.

COVID vaccinations will continue to be offered to those over 75, those in care homes for the elderly, and those of all ages with weakened immune systems.

This year, the RSV vaccine will also be offered to those aged over 75, as it reduces the risk of respiratory infections, pneumonia and hospital admissions in this age group. Pregnant women are strongly encouraged to have the vaccine from 28 weeks of pregnancy onwards (one vaccine per pregnancy), as RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) can cause serious illness and hospital admissions in young infants. Antibodies cross the placenta and protect the baby from birth. Since the introduction of the vaccine in pregnancy, deaths and hospital admission rates in babies have fallen dramatically.

Staff News

We say goodbye to Kevin Drury, our Paramedic, who has moved on from Upper Tooting. We wish him well in his new endeavours.

We hope you all enjoy the rest of Summer and wish you a happy, healthy and safe few months ahead.

With all best wishes

Dr Penelope Smith

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Penelope E Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senior Partner and Clinical Director, Grafton PCN

