

Winter 2023

Whitemoor Newsletter



Contact details: 01773 880099.
www.whitemoormedicalcentre-belper.co.uk

Keep healthy and support the NHS this winter: See a pharmacist!

During winter, primary care services such as GP's surgeries usually experience increased patient demand. This has many causes, including cold weather and peaks of common infections which also affect primary care staff. GP services are put under increased pressure, as a result, which can influence the care they provide.

Because people rely on primary care services for initial contact, diagnosis, treatment and coordination of care, they could be negatively impacted if their local GP surgery is overwhelmed during winter. This could also have an impact on other parts of the health service because someone who cannot get an appointment with their GP might be more likely to go to an emergency department instead.

So, how can patients stay well and help the NHS at the same time?

Many conditions presenting to the GP are actually self-limiting (get better by themselves) or are of a minor nature that can respond to self-care or help from the pharmacist. **For instance, most earache, sore throats, coughs and colds can be managed quite safely at home.** The first step with any minor illness should be to visit your local pharmacy, there are several in Belper, and you do not need an appointment to see them. Pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals who can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for various minor illnesses. They also work with other healthcare professionals to get you the best possible care in a way that works for you and the NHS. The pharmacist will let you know if you need to visit a doctor or other healthcare service, such as a hospital.

Pharmacists train for five years in the use of medicines. They are also trained in managing minor illnesses and providing health and wellbeing advice. They can answer your questions on prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Pharmacists can offer advice and over-the-counter medication to help with a range of common conditions and minor injuries, including:

- common ailments such as coughs, colds and the flu
- aches, pains and skin rashes

Is a chat with my pharmacist confidential?

Many pharmacies have a private consultation room where you can discuss issues with pharmacy staff without being overheard. Ask them if you would like to talk in private.

You can ask a pharmacist (instead of your GP) about how best to keep you and your family well. They've all sorts of advice, from how to eat healthily, quit smoking, lose weight, and exercise.

So, stay healthy and support the NHS by visiting your pharmacy first!

Christmas and New Year Opening times.

We will be closed on the following dates over the Christmas period.

- 25th December (Christmas Day)
- 26th December (Boxing Day)
- 1st January 2024 (New Years Day)

Please phone 111 for non-urgent medical advice on these days

Flu and Covid Boosters

It is not too late to get your free NHS Covid booster and flu vaccinations. But hurry up as vaccines are unlikely to be available after January 2024.

All people over 65 are eligible for a free jab as are some children and those under 65 with a long term health condition like diabetes or heart disease.

For more information on eligibility please visit the NHS website

[Flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Appointments

Here at Whitemoor Medical Centre we know how important access is to our patients. Here is our regular update on appointments offered. These figures cover the 13 weeks from 17th July to the 15th October 2023.

- **During those 13 weeks we have provided nearly 21,000 appointments, in total, to our 12,500 patients.**
- **Over 16,000 of these have been face to face.**
- **Of the total appointments seen 42% have been seen by GPs and the remaining by our other healthcare professionals. These include pharmacists, physiotherapists, mental health workers and nurses.**
- **7,198 patients, in those 13 weeks, were seen the very same day that they requested an appointment.**
- **Over 1000 appointments were wasted due to patients booking appointments but not bothering to turn up or contacting us to cancel them.**

There is no doubt that we will be busier in the winter months ahead and the demand for appointments will increase sharply. In previous years, the NHS has provided us with additional funding to recruit temporary/locum clinical staff to help meet this demand. Unfortunately, we have been told there is no additional resource being made available this year. We, therefore, thank all our patients, in advance, for their understanding and patience if it takes a little longer to get an appointment for a non urgent matter or minor illness.

Reminders

Out of Hours cover:

If you need help when the surgery is closed

- Call 111
- Derby Walk in Centre, Osmaston Road – 8am-7.30pm
- Ripley Hospital Minor Injuries Unit – 8am-10pm
- Call 999 in an emergency.

Remember pharmacists can help with minor ailments.

Derbyshire Community Transport is available for anyone needing transport to & from the surgery who struggles with the bus. Call 01773 746652

PPG News

The Patient Participation Group meet every couple of months and meetings are normally attended by management and doctors from the surgery.

At the last meeting, in October, a range of issues were discussed that included, appointment levels, covid precautions in the surgery, changes to the nurse team and the proposed new facility being built at Babington.

The next meeting is on the 6th December 2023 and new members are always welcome. If you do want to attend then just contact the surgery for details.

Finally, thank you to all the PPG members who acted as stewards at the recent flu and covid vaccination clinics!

Jackie Cox, PPG Chair

If you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter, please let us know. You can use the "contact us" section of the practice website.