

HOUGHTON CLOSE SURGERY

September 2020

COVID—19

Whilst shops and pubs are re-opening and the cases of COVID 19 are lower we are still very much taking all the safety precautions that are advised by the government and NHS England. We will continue to do this as the safety and welfare of the patients and staff are paramount.

For updated information on COVID 19 please go to the gov.uk website or NHS website.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

www.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/

At present, we cannot predict how the pandemic will unfold in the coming months, but winter pressures will add additional pressures onto NHS resources. As a service, we continue to respond promptly to any changes as necessary.

General Practice in particular has adapted to a new way of working since March, and the service we provide will undoubtedly be different moving forward to that which we have known in previous years. There is likely to be more remote consulting- by phone, video and online interactions, whilst still arranging Face-to-Face appointments when we feel it is clinically required to help managing a patient's condition. We would suggest that you keep an eye on our website for updates as they occur.

We are opening the waiting room for patients who have pre-booked appointment only, access via front doors. There will be a small number of chairs available for use and we would ask that patients do not come in through the front doors until they can see there is a spare seat. We would ask that where possible patients come in on their own to reduce numbers in the waiting room.

Reception is still not open except for patients collecting/delivering paperwork or samples.

The side door will continue to be used as it has for the past few months i.e. one in one out for dispensary collection of prescriptions and medication.

Staff news

We would like to welcome our new trainee GP registrar Dr Aman Harghandewal. He will be with us for 6 months.

Please be advised that some of the doctors have changed their work pattern. The doctors below will now be working as follows -

Dr Sookun - Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Dr Snape - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

Dr Murphy - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Phone Lines

We are aware that our phone lines are extremely busy at the moment. Please be assured we are in daily discussions with our phone provider to procure further phone lines to deal with this issue. We apologise for any inconvenience this is causing. We are doing all we can to find solutions including upgrading our phone system and introducing e-consultations to reduce phone traffic into the surgery.

We would ask that if your query is of a non urgent nature (including booking of flu vaccination) you wait until after 10:30am to call us to help reduce the early morning pressure on the phone lines.

Flu Clinics

Due to current guidelines regarding social distancing the surgery will be holding flu clinics at Parkside Hall, Ampthill rather than at the surgery this year. This is to ensure that we keep our patients and staff safe. It will also enable us to offer larger clinics as we are keen for our patients to be vaccinated as early in the season as possible.

The clinics at Parkside Hall will be for all patients **over 18**, with the exception of patients who are immuno-compromised. These patients will be offered vaccination at the surgery at times when the surgery is quiet (see below for further information)

The first three clinics at Parkside Hall will be held on:

Saturday 10th October 2020 – 08.30 -16.30

Saturday 17th October 2020 – 08.30-16.30

Saturday 31st October—08.30—16.30

Further clinics will be released in due course and will be advertised on the website and on posters at the front of the surgery.

It is imperative to adhere strictly to government guidelines, so please read the information at the end of this newsletter prior to attending for your vaccination.

There is plenty of parking at parkside Hall. Please do not turn up until your appointment time.



Vaccinations at the Surgery

The clinics for 2-3 year olds will be held from 12:30 – 14:30 on Wednesday 30th September 2020, future dates to be agreed. Please phone the surgery to book these.

The clinics for 2-17 year olds in at risk group will be held from 12:30 – 14:30 Wednesday 30th September, future dates to be agreed.

The clinics for immuno-compromised patients was first held on Friday 18th September 2020, but further clinics will be arrange.

Flu Vaccination for 50-64 year olds

The government announced in July that it is planning to extend the flu vaccination programme to include patients in the 50-64 year old cohort.

At this time we have not received final confirmation of this as it will be subject to vaccine supply. However, the intention is start this element of the programme in November/December to allow us to initially prioritise the over 65 years olds and those in the at risk groups first. **So please do not ring the practice now.**

We will update information on the 50-64 year olds vaccination programme as and when we have it.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

The official date for Coffee Morning is Friday 25 September, but you can hold yours whenever you like. Small or big, tea or coffee, socially distanced or virtual – Coffee Morning is what you make it.

Find out more on the website—

www.coffee.macmillan.org.uk



Blood Tests

Please be advised that we have a shortage of appointments for bloods tests due to our revised working practices during the Coronavirus outbreak.

We are therefore only able to offer appointments to patients who, for medical reasons, cannot go to Bedford Hospital for their blood test.

We currently have a long waiting list for patients requiring bloods at the Surgery, so would advise that if at all possible you do arrange to go to the hospital for your test.

Patients going to Bedford Hospital for their blood test must collect a copy of their blood form from the surgery. Please see below for the address and opening times:

Adults:

Walk-in service (no pre-booked appointment needed) at **Gilbert Hitchcock House, North Wing**, Kimbolton Road, Bedford (MK40 2AW).

Mon to Fri, 8am to 4:30pm.

During busy periods the last patient entry will be 4pm. Please call [01234 355122](tel:01234355122), Ext 3402 for any enquiries.

Under 16s:

Appointment ONLY bloods at Riverbank Ward, South Wing, Kempston Road, Bedford (MK42 9DJ) please call 01234 355122 Ext 6376 to book.

Please note you are required to wear a face covering to the appointment and must not attend if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Whilst the vast majority of our patients speak to our staff with dignity and respect, unfortunately our reception and dispensary staff have reported increasing incidents of patients being rude, verbally aggressive and demanding towards them.

We fully appreciate that no-one is at their best if they are worried or unwell about either themselves or members of their families - however our staff deserve to be treated respectfully.

All staff working at the surgery have very demanding and busy roles, but are here to help and care for others. They have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times. They will always try their hardest to help with any queries or concerns.

The NHS have a zero tolerance policy and any patients being abusive/rude to staff will be asked to leave the surgery.



Online Messaging

If you are registered for online services and have a non-urgent question, you can send this online at your convenience. The message will be passed onto the appropriate member of staff. Our aim is to respond within 48 working hours.

The response will be sent directly to your online account and will show as an unread message. You will need to log into your account to see if a response has been sent. The advantages of this service is that you can send the message at any time of the day or evening to suit yourself; it is confidential and secure; it removes the need of having to phone into the surgery; also all messages are logged onto your records.

PATIENT GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING FLU CLINIC

AT PARKSIDE HALL

It is imperative to adhere strictly to government guidelines, so please read the following information prior to attending for your vaccination:

- DO NOT attend on the day if you have any symptoms of COVID –cough/temperature/loss of smell or taste.
- DO NOT attend on the day if you are feeling unwell.
- ENSURE you are wearing a face covering.
- Weather permitting, please try to wear minimal loose clothing that can easily be adjusted to expose the top of your arm
- If driving to Parkside please stay in your car until your appointment time.
- If queuing outside the hall please socially distance yourself. There are no facilities to queue undercover so please come prepared.
- Enter the hall at the MAIN front door
- Please DO NOT enter the hall prior to your booked appointment time.
- Your temperature will be checked as soon as you arrive and if it is raised you will NOT be allowed access to the hall, and will not be given your flu vaccine on that day.
- Social distancing measures will be in place inside the hall
- There will be no seated waiting area
- You will only be given the flu vaccine at this appointment (NO OTHER Vaccines given or medical conditions will be discussed)
- You will leave the hall via a designated exit door
- Please come into the hall on your own if at all possible.

Parkside Hall

Woburn Street

Amphill MK45 2HX

