



Barwell & Hollycroft Medical Centres

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Dear patient,

You may have recently seen an update in the media with regards to Metformin (a drug used primarily to treat Diabetes) and Vitamin B12 levels. Decreased vitamin B12 levels, or vitamin B12 deficiency, is now considered to be a side effect in patients on Metformin treatment, especially in those receiving a higher dose or longer treatment duration and in those with existing risk factors.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has therefore advised that patients who are taking Metformin should have a routine blood test to check their vitamin B12 levels. At your next review, we will therefore take an additional blood test to check for Vitamin B12 levels in your blood. This does not need to be done immediately and can wait until your next review. This will be repeated every 2 years if you remain on Metformin.

In addition, the practice would recommend that you take an over-the-counter vitamin B12 supplement daily whilst taking Metformin (if you are not already doing so). These are not available on the NHS as a prescription and therefore you will need to purchase these from your local pharmacy / health shop / online.

If you are taking Metformin and develop any of the following symptoms prior to your review, seek medical advice:

- extreme tiredness
- a sore and red tongue
- pins and needles in your hands and feet
- pale or yellow skin.

You should continue to take your Metformin. Do not stop your medication without discussion with the doctor.

Yours sincerely,

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Striving together to deliver personalised patient centred care