



## Autumn Newsletter 2024



Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

### The Covid Vaccine Campaign.

Current vaccines provide good protection against severe disease and hospitalisation. UKHSA surveillance data relating to last autumn's programme shows that those who received a vaccine were around 45% less likely to be admitted to hospital with COVID-19 from 2 weeks following vaccination, compared to those who remained unvaccinated. Protection lasts for around 4 months.

Eligible groups this autumn

- adults aged 65 years and over
- residents in a care home for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- frontline NHS and social care workers, and those working in care homes for older people



The practice has been sending out self-book links via texts to people with mobile phones and contacting those without this facility known to the practice.

It is very important to ensure that if you have a mobile phone or an email address that you share this with the practice as this allows us to contact you quickly and easily and also allows you to self-book for appointments.

Also, if you change your mobile number or email address please try to remember to let us know by simply going onto the practice website and letting us know your new details. You may be invited to a clinic during the week or on a Saturday

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## The Flu Vaccine Campaign

As we approach winter, it's time for people at risk to be booked in for their free flu jab. If you're eligible, you need to know why it matters that you take up the offer.

Flu is far more than just a bad cold. For those susceptible, it can increase the risk of developing serious lung and airway infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia or can make existing conditions worse. Flu spreads easily and can lead to hospitalisation - in some cases, even death. The flu virus is constantly evolving, which is why getting vaccinated each year is vital.

Eligible groups this year:

The NHS recommends flu vaccination for several groups:

- Everyone aged 65 years and over
- Individuals under 65 with certain medical conditions, including children and babies over 6 months of age
- All pregnant women
- All children aged 2 and 3 years (provided they were aged 2 or 3 on 31 August 2024)
- All primary school children
- Some secondary school children (Years 7 to 11)
- Care home residents
- Carers
- Those living with people who are immunocompromised
- Frontline health and social care workers

## The RSV Vaccine Campaign In Older Adults

From 1 September 2024, those who turn 75 and those age 75 to 79 will be eligible for a free vaccine to protect them from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

RSV is an infectious disease of the airways and lungs. RSV infection often causes symptoms similar to a cold, including:

- cough
- sore throat
- sneezing
- a runny or blocked nose



It can also make you become wheezy or short of breath and lead to pneumonia and other life-threatening conditions. There is no specific treatment, and most infections will get better by themselves. Every year thousands of older adults need hospital care for RSV, and some of them will die. RSV can be more severe in people with medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or a weakened immune system.

RSV infection is common in young children but is most serious for small babies and for older people.

## RSV Vaccination And Pregnancy

From 1 September 2024, pregnant women can have a free vaccine in each pregnancy, to protect their babies against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

RSV is a common virus which can cause a lung infection called bronchiolitis. In small babies this condition can make it hard to breathe and to feed. Most cases can be managed at home but around 20,000 infants are admitted to hospital with bronchiolitis each year in England. Infants with severe bronchiolitis may need intensive care and the infection can be fatal. RSV is more likely to be serious in very young babies, those born prematurely, and those with conditions that affect their heart, breathing or immune system.

### **Vaccinations If You Are Housebound.**

You will be asked to try to come to the surgery for any vaccinations. The nursing team are happy to come out to a vehicle to vaccinate.

If you cannot leave your home to come to the surgery it is important that you let the administrative staff in the surgery know this so that it is mentioned in your medical record.

There are arrangements in place for a nursing team member to vaccinate in your home and it is possible you will be offered more than one vaccination in this case.

### **Pertussis Vaccines In Women Who Are Pregnant .**

Whooping cough (pertussis) can be serious for babies and may lead to complications, resulting in hospitalisation and even death. You can help protect your baby against whooping cough in their first weeks by having the whooping cough vaccine while pregnant.

The whooping cough vaccine is usually offered around the time of your mid pregnancy scan (around 20 weeks) but you can have it from 16 weeks. Vaccination in pregnancy provides very high levels of protection against serious whooping cough disease until your baby can have their own vaccination at 8 weeks of age. You will need to have the whooping cough vaccine in every pregnancy to boost the antibody you pass on to you baby. You should have the vaccine even if you have had it during a previous pregnancy. Your baby will still need their routine immunisations from 8 weeks of age.

Studies from the UK and other countries have shown that the whooping cough vaccine in pregnancy is very safe and effective for you and your baby. If you have reached 20 weeks of pregnancy and not been offered the whooping cough vaccine, talk to your midwife or GP practice to make an appointment to get vaccinated.

### **NHS Health Checks.**

We welcome all of our eligible patients to consider having an NHS health check. If you have previously been invited but did not take up the offer, it is not too late. Please contact the surgery and ask for a health check appointment.

#### **What is an NHS Health Check?**

The NHS Health Check is a free check-up of your overall health. It can tell you whether you're at higher risk of getting certain health problems, such as:

- [heart disease](#)
- [diabetes](#)
- [kidney disease](#)
- [stroke](#)
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During the check-up you'll discuss how to reduce your risk of these conditions.

If you're aged over 65, you'll also be told about [symptoms of dementia](#) to look out for.



### **Who is the NHS Health Check for?**

The check is for people who are aged 40 to 74 who do not have any of the following pre-existing conditions:

- heart disease
- chronic kidney disease
- diabetes
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- atrial fibrillation
- transient ischaemic attack
- inherited high cholesterol (familial hypercholesterolemia)
- heart failure
- peripheral arterial disease
- stroke
- currently being prescribed statins to lower cholesterol
- previous checks have found that you have a 20% or higher risk of getting cardiovascular disease over the next 10 years

You should have regular check-ups if you have one of these conditions. Your care team will be able to give you more information about this.

### **How do I get an NHS Health Check?**

If you're aged 40 to 74 and do not have a pre-existing health condition, you should be invited to an NHS Health Check by your GP or local council every 5 years.

If you think you are eligible but have not been invited, contact your GP surgery to find out if they offer NHS Health Checks or contact your local council to find out where you can get an NHS Health Check in your area.

Some pharmacies also offer NHS Health Checks.

### **Bringing Unused Drugs Back To Dispensary For Safe Disposal**

Our patient participation group and our Dispensary lead Charlotte Watlow is running a campaign to help people to dispose of the medications they may have at home that they know they will not use.

This very successful campaign has featured in the Eastern Daily Press and on Radio Norfolk.

Many people have found it very helpful to have a place to bring unused drugs. There is a silver bin in the entrance to the surgery. Please do not leave any drug packs in the boat. The boat is being used to help to remind people to bring in their unused drugs.

The drugs cannot be used by the practice as they have been dispensed already but the dispensary team can help you to dispose of the drugs (tablets, liquid, injectables, gels and creams) safely and in an environmentally friendly way. Please do not put unwanted medication down the sink or the toilet as this not only affects us humans, but also affects our wildlife.



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## Research

Over the last year the practice has been getting more involved in clinical research again. During Covid, research took a back seat as all hands were needed on deck to manage the pandemic. But research is back with us now. If invited to take part, please do consider helping ours. The practice is running a study in the area of swabbing people (a bit like the covid tests) to find out what sort of respiratory infection they have.

If you have had an upset tummy, you may be asked for a poo sample which is sent away to find out what sort of germs you have in your tummy.

We have also been running a study in the area of mild asthma and another around deprescribing high blood pressure tablets in people as they get older to see if this helps them to stop getting unsteady on their feet.

## The Patient Participation Group

We have an active Patient Participation Group ( PPG ) to whom we are very grateful . The group has been very helpful in organising:-

- Health and Wellbeing events,
- Marshalling at Flu /Covid clinics
- Recently coming up with a "medication amnesty" helping patients to return unwanted drugs.

The PPG is currently looking to form a virtual group. All patients and carers at the practice are eligible to join . The group will be sent items of interest by email or text for comment . The virtual group may also be asked from time to time to help at events.

If you are interested please email [ppg.hwmc@nhs.net](mailto:ppg.hwmc@nhs.net).( or Chair [carolhastwell@icloud.com](mailto:carolhastwell@icloud.com))

## Exciting New Ways To Access What You Require From The Practice.

The New Practice Website: If you have not noticed we have a new website. If you google Hoveton and Wroxham Medical Practice you will find the new website. The site is very user friendly and allows you to order your repeat medications and also to request an appointment or request other things that you may need such as a fit note or a certificate. If you use this way to contact the practice, it is quick for you and saves you waiting on the telephone. It is dealt with quickly by our great team of care coordinators.



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## The NHS App.

The NHS app can be downloaded on your phone.

The NHS App gives you a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services. Download the NHS App on your smartphone or tablet via the [Google play](#) or [App store](#). You can also access the same services in a web browser by [logging in through the NHS website](#).

You must be aged 13 or over to use the NHS App. You also need to be registered with a GP surgery in England or the Isle of Man. Find out more about [who can use the NHS App](#).

## What You Can Do With The NHS App.

You need to [prove who you are](#) to get full access to the NHS App. With full access you can:

- order repeat prescriptions and nominate a pharmacy where you would like to collect them
- book and manage appointments
- view your GP health record to see information like your allergies and medicines (if your GP has given you access to your detailed medical record, you can also see information like test results)
- book and manage COVID-19 vaccinations
- register your organ donation decision
- choose how the NHS uses your data
- view your NHS number ([find out what your NHS number is](#))
- use NHS 111 online to answer questions and get instant advice or medical help near you

Before proving who you are, you can use the NHS App to:

- search trusted NHS information and advice on hundreds of conditions and treatments
- find NHS services near you

Please note that you may have items on repeat that do not appear on your app. This may be due to a review needing to take place by our clinical team to allow more issues, it has been issued recently or it is simply out of sync with the remainder of your items. Please use the additional comments box at the bottom of the form when ordering your medication, to request the item(s) that do not appear or any acute medication that you may need.



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## New telephone system

We have had a new telephone upgrade. What this means for you is that at busy times of the week if you cannot use the website or NHS app but you have been informed by the telephone message that there is a queue you can now request a call back. This is proving popular but please do try to remain in mobile phone range whilst you wait for the call back and ensure your ringer is set to on so that you do not miss the call.



### **New Care Coordinators Joining The Practice.**

We have some new care coordinators in the team, one is called Ellie and the other called Ellen.

The care coordinators are there to help you to get to the right person as quickly as possible. We have a growing team of people that specialise in particular clinical areas, they also know the availability of the different clinicians and will do their very best to understand what you are telling them and work out the best route for you to take. For this reason they ask questions. They are dealing with hundreds of people and stories every day.

This care coordinator team can still find themselves on the end of verbally abusive behaviour occasionally. Although we understand that peoples behaviour is not always exemplary when they are unwell and in pain, the practice cannot tolerate verbally and physically abusive behaviour as it affects the morale of the team members who have a difficult job to do but can also be very embarrassing and upsetting for other patients waiting for their appointments in the practice. Where we feel we require assistance with someone's behaviour, we will not hesitate to contact the police.

### **Complaints and feedback**

Our practice encourages feedback from our patients, it is how we know if we are doing well or need to improve. The whole practice team strive to do their very best for all patients and their families but we do not get it right all of the time.

We encourage all registered patients to feedback to the practice. We have a dedicated complaints manager called Sheila who works in the practice Tuesday to Fridays. She is happy to receive a letter or an email or happy to meet face to face or via a telephone call.

All complaints are investigated to try to understand how we can do things better. We also have regular practice meetings to discuss events where we can learn and improve our processes.

Of course, we are also very happy to receive positive feedback. We keep a record of all feedback and complaints and this is shared with CQC if they request to see this.

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