

# Patient Newsletter



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**WELCOME to your winter patient newsletter!**

### Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Our patient participation groups have come together to form a single, unified PPG. Since the merger, they've held several meetings and have been actively involved in supporting initiatives like our weekend flu and RSV clinics. Moving forward, they'll also collaborate with the practice to offer NHS App drop-in sessions for our patients. Stay tuned for more details in the new year!

### Think Pharmacy First

**Did You Know? Your Local Pharmacy Can Help with 7 Common Conditions under the Pharmacy First Scheme**

Your local pharmacy offers a separate healthcare service that can treat a variety of common conditions quickly and conveniently, without needing a GP appointment. As well as issuing antibiotics when appropriate. Here are some conditions they can help with:

**Impetigo (aged 1 year and over):** Sores around the nose and mouth.

**Infected Insect Bites (aged 1 year and over)**

**Earache (aged 1 to 17 years):** Pain relief and treatment.

**Sore Throat (aged 5 years and over):** Remedies for pain and possible infections.

**Sinusitis (aged 12 years and over):** Treatment for blocked sinuses and facial pain.

**Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) (women aged 16 to 64 years):** Consultation and antibiotics if deemed necessary.

**Shingles (aged 18 years and over):** Antiviral treatments for the painful rash.

Pharmacies can provide quick, accessible care without the need for a GP appointment.

For more details Please visit: [NHS - How pharmacies can help](#)

### **How to use the Pharmacy First Service**

- **Signposted via 111**
- **Through the GP Surgery**
- **Walk in local pharmacy (Self refer)**

### NHS App

Make the Most of the NHS App

The NHS App gives you access to your medical records and services, allowing you to:

- Request and track repeat prescriptions.
- Nominate a pharmacy for prescriptions.
- Book referrals via Choose and Book.
- View test results.
- Access health advice, NHS 111 online, and more.

Signing up is simple—download the app from the App Store (Apple) or Play Store (Android), or register online at [NHS Account Login](#)

### Christmas Opening Hours

Christmas Day - CLOSED

Boxing Day - CLOSED

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December - Open as normal

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December - Open as normal

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> December - Open as normal

New Year's Day - CLOSED

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January - Open as normal

*If you are in need of medical assistance while the surgery is closed please contact NHS*

*111 who can refer you to the correct service for treatment or advice.*

*In an emergency please call 999.*

## Warm Connections This Winter

As the days get colder and darker, we know that winter can feel challenging for many. At Reach Healthcare, we want to help you stay healthy, supported, and connected throughout the season.

### **Stay Healthy: Catch It, Bin It, Kill It**

Winter illnesses like colds and flu can spread quickly, but you can take simple steps to protect yourself and others:

**Catch It:** Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

**Bin It:** Dispose of used tissues immediately.

**Kill It:** Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitiser.



### **Look After Each Other**

Winter can be particularly isolating, so let's all play a part in staying connected:

**Check on Neighbours:** A quick knock on the door or a phone call can mean the world to someone feeling lonely or vulnerable.

**Adverse Weather:** During periods of snow or ice, please take extra care and check in on those who may find it difficult to get outside or are at risk of falls.

### **Stay Connected with the National Databank**

We're pleased to share information about the National Databank, an initiative to help those in need stay connected.

- **Free Mobile Data:** The National Databank offers free data, texts, and calls to those facing financial hardship, helping them access vital services and opportunities.
- What is the National Databank? Think of it as a "food bank for connectivity." This service is supported by O2, Vodafone, and Three and managed by the Good Things Foundation, helping tackle digital exclusion across the UK.

- **Find Support Near You:** A handy support map is available to locate centres where you can access free mobile data and additional digital support, such as skills training.

For more information or assistance, visit the links below.

[o2 National Databank](#)

[Good Things Foundation](#)

[Good Things Foundation Support Map](#)

### Food Friends: Combating Loneliness Through Food

Food Friends is a Kent-based charity tackling loneliness by connecting volunteer cooks with neighbours who would benefit from a home-cooked meal and friendly conversation. Volunteers have already shared over 8,500 meals across Canterbury, Ashford, and Swale, and we're thrilled to now be expanding to Medway!

**Know someone who could benefit? Refer them here:**

<https://food-friends.co.uk/refer-a-diner>

**Interested in volunteering? Sign up here:**

<https://food-friends.co.uk/volunteers>

**Let's get cooking, sharing, and caring together!**

### Mental Health Matters

If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out for support. If you're experiencing a mental health crisis, call the Urgent Mental Health Helpline on **0800 783 9111**, or call **111** and press **option 2**.

Alternatively, you can contact The Samaritans for free on **116 123**, or text "**SHOUT**" to **85258**

### **Help for Winter Pressures**

**Feeling Unwell?** For advice, call NHS 111 or visit NHS 111 online. Remember, your pharmacy can also help with minor ailments.

**Keeping Warm:** If you're worried about heating costs, check with your local council or energy provider about winter support schemes.

**Community Support:** Reach out to local groups for companionship and activities to beat winter blues. Together, we can face the challenges of winter with kindness and care. Let's stay warm, stay connected, and support each other.