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FLU VACCINATIONS

The flu season has hit the NHS more than a month earlier than usual, with cases three times higher than this time last year.

It follows the warning signs from the Asia-Pacific region, where Japan has already declared a flu epidemic, with many schools needing to close. This early increase has prompted concerns of flu spreading into the wider population in the coming weeks and triggering a "long and drawn-out flu season".

Flu (influenza) is an illness that can be serious and can affect your nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. Healthy individuals usually recover within two to seven days, but for some the disease can lead to hospitalisation, permanent disability or even death.

The best thing you can do to protect yourself, your family and people in your community is to get your flu vaccine.

The Practice has held several clinics, but if you weren't able to attend and are eligible, it's not too late! Some local Pharmacies offer free flu vaccinations. In our area, these are -

STALBRIDGE PHARMACY - High St, Stalbridge. DT10 2LL Phone: 01963 362246 Walk-ins or booked an appointments.

BOOTS - 1 Market Place, Sturminster Newton. DT10 1AS Phone: 01258 472426 Appointments only.

BOOTS - 33 High Street, Shaftesbury. SP7 8JE Phone: 01747 852471 Appointments only

NHS HEALTHY CHOICES

Preventable health conditions are costing lives, burdening the NHS and damaging our economy.

More than a quarter of the population now have a long-term health condition and health inequalities are also widening - people in the most deprived areas of England die 8 years younger and spend 19 fewer years in good health, than those in the least deprived areas.

The Healthy Choices Quiz provides an easy first step for those who want to feel healthier but may not know where to start. After capturing some basic demographic information and exploring different health motivations, the quiz asks a series of lifestyle questions across six main themes: movement, eating, alcohol consumption, smoking and vaping, mental health and sleep. Users will then receive an overall score out of 10 based on their answers.

Upon completion, the quiz signposts users to relevant information and support, including a suite of free digital behaviour change tools. These have proven results and already support millions of people every year.

Take the free NHS Healthy Choices Quiz today: <https://www.nhs.uk/hcquiz>



PPG PATIENT SURVEY

The survey organised every two years by the PPG on behalf of the Practice, has now closed and many thanks to everyone who took part. The results are now being analysed and there will be a full report and feedback in the next PPG Newsletter.

JHOOTS PHARMACY, SHAFTESBURY

The partners have made the difficult decision to forfeit the lease held by Jhoots for the pharmacy building owned by The Blackmore Vale Partnership in Shaftesbury.

We are doing everything we can, working with NHS Dorset and supported by our local MP to try and resolve the longstanding issues around pharmacy provision. However, due to our rurality and the limited pharmacist workforce, this remains a challenge.

Whilst we understand it has been a difficult time for patients, our staff have worked hard to make it as smooth as possible and they have contacted many of those affected, to assist them to choose an alternative Pharmacy.

Patients can also change their own nominated Pharmacy via the NHS app and can collect their prescription from any Pharmacy in England so they don't necessarily need to collect locally. There are also a number of online Pharmacies available, but please be aware that many of these require access to the internet and can take a longer time to deliver, so may not be appropriate for all.

We would like to take this opportunity as well to thank the other local Pharmacies who have worked so hard to deal with the increased workload during this time.

Dr Simone Yule, Senior Partner & Kay Green, Partner & Practice Pharmacist.

PRACTICE NEWS

- In October, there were 8305 SystmConnect requests, 77% of which were responded to within two hours.
- and 8573 Telephone calls answered, an average of 373 per day with an average waiting time of 2m 11 secs.
- Of the appointments with clinicians (excluding nurses) 5407 (75%) were Face to Face, 1671 by Telephone and there were 129 patients who did not attend. If you are unable to take up an appointment, please contact the surgery, so that another patient can have the slot and not waste valuable time and resources.
- Of those appointments, 68.2% were with GPs, 26% were with Advance Care Practitioners and 5.8% with Mental Health Practitioners.
- Also in October, more than 17200 prescriptions were issued and over 12100 Test results reviewed.

NUTRITION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Dorset Nutrition in Ageing People Steering Group, is supporting the development of a local campaign aimed at helping older adults eat and drink well. To do this, they would love to hear directly from people about their experiences.

What does it feel like to try and eat and drink well as an older adult? Your insights and tips will help shape the campaign and may be shared (anonymously) to support others who might be facing similar challenges.

The survey link is here: <https://forms.office.com/e/iWMTzD7AS6>

DORSET WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

The Women's Health Strategy for England, sets out 10-year ambitions for boosting the health and wellbeing of women and girls and for improving how the health and care system listens to women.

Although women in the UK live longer on average than men, the evidence shows they spend a greater proportion of their lives in ill health or disability.

NHS Dorset has been working closely with Dorset Women Community Interest Company (CIC), system partners and women themselves over the past two years to understand how to implement the recommendations from the Women's Health Strategy for England locally across the county of Dorset, as well as women's health priorities overall, driving forward the Dorset Women's Health programme.

As part of the programme, the Dorset Women's Health Website was developed, to be a central point of reference for all information, education, awareness, self-help, and service provision concerning women's health for the women of Dorset, as well as five additional projects: Menopause; Pelvic Floor Disorders; Young Women's Mental and Physical Health; Long-Acting Reversible Contraception; Minority Groups & Mobile Support.

A survey was circulated last year so a follow-up survey is being re-circulated to gather views and experiences from women and girls in Dorset, to find out if anything has changed. It will also help to develop the website and ensure it remains relevant and useful, as well as helping to inform future work being taken forward by teams working across women's health in Dorset.

The survey is live until Tuesday 25th November 2025. All responses are confidential.

Take part using the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DorsetWomensHealthSurvey2025>