

Bridge & Monkseaton Medical Practice

Patient Newsletter

New Year 2025

Welcome to your New Year Newsletter!

This edition we aim to update you on the following:

- Veteran Friendly Accredited GP Practice
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Young Carers
- Green Medicines
- The Green Team



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET YOUR FLU JAB

Contact us or drop in to surgery and stay protected this winter!

See what our patients have to say about us!



Check out our brand new website!

www.bridgeandmonkseaton.nhs.uk

Follow us on Facebook to keep up to date!

@Bridge and Monkseaton Medical Practice

UPDATES

Armed Forces Veteran Friendly Accredited GP Practice

We are an Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice. This means that, as part of the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant, we have a dedicated clinician who has specialist knowledge of military related health conditions and veteran specific health services. This is important in helping individuals who have served in the Armed Forces get the care and treatment that is right for them.

If you have served in the UK Armed Forces, please let your health professional know to help ensure you are getting the best possible care.



More information can be found at:

<https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/case-study/veteran-friendly-accreditation-for-gp-practices/>

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Are you looking for ways to improve your health and wellbeing this year?

Getting outdoors

Even though it is winter, getting out in the fresh air and staying active is a great way to improve your overall wellbeing. Walking can improve overall physical health, combat tiredness and is proven to boost your mood.



Meeting a friend is a great way to stay connected during winter months. Feel like you need some direction? Why not join a walking group where you can meet new people, get out and enjoy the fresh air together.

Find about more activities here, or you can contact the mental health and wellbeing team at the surgery to find out more. <https://www.livingwellnorthtyneside.co.uk/activities>

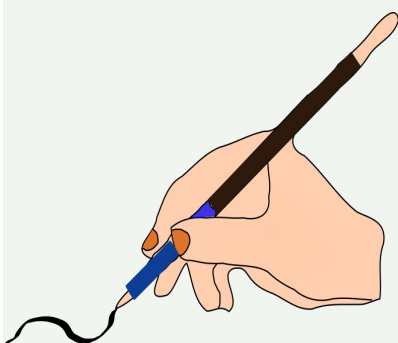
Time to Talk

6th February 2025 is world 'time to talk' day. Time to Talk Day encourages everyone to be more open about mental health – to talk, to listen, to change lives. One in four of us will experience a mental health problem and it is ok to not be ok. If you feel you need support then please contact us at the surgery and we will be happy to listen and help you in any way we can.



Writing for Health

After having successfully ran some 'writing for health' courses last year, Amanda is looking to start more of these classes in 2025. The first sessions start in February and they consist of a 5 week creative writing course with patients from our surgery. It is a small group and a chance to meet new people, try something new and focus on writing as a tool for helping your mental health and wellbeing. Please let the mental health and wellbeing team know if you are interested, who can pass your information on to Amanda who runs the course.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Winter pressures and the cost of living

Financial support

If you find like many others, you are struggling with finances and the cost of living especially at this time of year then please reach out for support. You can find our resource sheet with more information following this link below.

<https://shorturl.at/MSdyO>



North Tyneside's Foodbank

Food

If you find yourself needing help with groceries then please contact the BAY foodbank who can help you. There are also other services such as Whitley Bay Big Local pay as you go pantry. You can go in every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 10am. For range of fresh fruit veg, Milk, bakery items & dried goods and you can pay as little as you need to for access.

Tailored support

If you feel you still do not know where to turn, you can contact Citizens advice who can help guide you to any financial benefits or schemes you may be entitled to.

Address: Camden House North Shields, NE30 1ND

Tel: 08082787822

Here to help

If you do feel you are struggling and need someone to talk to, then please contact our mental health and wellbeing team who would be happy to listen and support you through any difficulties you may be facing. We know winter pressures can be tough, so please do not suffer alone.



HELP FOR YOUNG CARERS

If you're a young carer, it's good to talk to friends and relatives about how you feel. If you find it hard to talk, try writing your thoughts in a diary, poem or letter. This can help to make sense of your thoughts and how you feel.

SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL

Although you might not want people to know about your caring role, it's important to let teachers know so they can understand your life at home and give appropriate support, especially if you're missing lessons or struggling to get your work in on time. If you let just one teacher you trust know that you're a carer, they can give advice, support and make adjustments such as:

Extra time for school work - Assistance for parents getting to parents evening - Time to talk privately - Homework clubs - Phone use during break & lunch to check on who you care for

If

you find it difficult to talk about your home life with a teacher, ask someone in your family to write to the school, it can be easier to talk about the situation if you keep a diary or list of all the jobs you have to do. If you feel you have to miss school to care for someone this can affect your future so try to get help as quickly as possible so the situation does not go on for a long time.



FRIENDS & SOCIAL LIFE

As a young carer, you may miss out on opportunities to play and spend time with your friends because you do not have as much free time or you're thinking about the person you look after. It's important to put some time aside each day for you to do something you enjoy, whether that's playing with friends, reading a book, watching TV or doing your favourite hobby.

Meeting up with other young carers is a great way to make new friends, have some fun and share some of your worries with people in similar situations to your own. If you ask your local young carers project or carers centre, they may be able to help source activities for young carers in your area!

Bullying can include being physically or emotionally hurt or being left out of activities. Young carers are sometimes bullied because the person they care for is ill or disabled, or because they cannot do the things others can. If you are being bullied it's important to talk to school, family or call **CHILDLINE** on 0800 11 11. This is a free, phone line where they can give you advice and get you help. They will not tell anyone that you have called.

HEALTH

If you're worried about your physical or mental health, or the health of the person you care for, speak to a doctor or GP. School nurses are happy to speak with you about health concerns. If you want some support for your mental health, ask to speak to a school counsellor; their job is to listen carefully and give advice in a private setting.

Social workers may be asked to help a young carer's family if there are problems that the family members are finding hard to sort out on their own. A social worker from your local council has to visit, if you or your parents request this and can help



How to go GREEN with your medicines

As the impacts of climate change grow, it's more important than ever for us to take responsibility for reducing our carbon footprint. How can you contribute to this



Switching from liquid to tablets

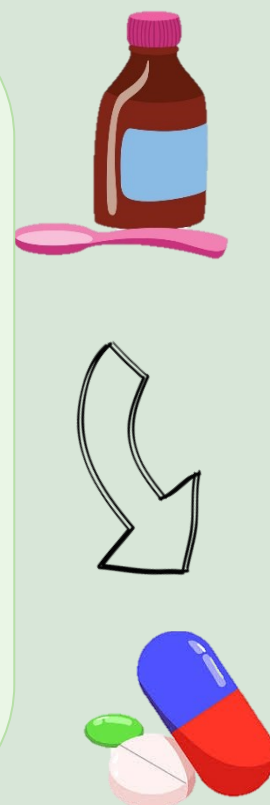
Many patients, especially children and older adults, are often given liquid medications, but tablets may be just as effective—and sometimes better. Research shows that most children can start taking tablets as early as age 4, with some help from their healthcare providers. **If you or your child are having trouble swallowing tablets, don't worry! There are ways to learn how to do it safely with guidance from a healthcare professional.**

Switching from liquid to tablets can reduce waste, as leftover liquid medicine is often thrown away. Tablets also provide more accurate dosing, reducing the chance of errors from measuring or pouring. Plus, tablets usually last longer and don't spoil as quickly.

Another reason to consider switching is the environmental impact. Making liquid medicine can create more carbon emissions compared to tablets, which are more eco-friendly. So, **switching to tablets can help both your health and the planet!** Some links you might find helpful to support you and your child:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwIU-k2FIM>

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/KidzMed-Comic-Poster->



Understanding your inhaler options

Some inhalers use propellants that can be harmful to the environment. These inhalers are still commonly prescribed because they make it easier for many people to inhale their medicine slowly and steadily. However, these types of inhalers may not be the best choice for everyone, especially young children or people with serious lung conditions who have difficulty taking long, slow breaths.

The good news is that there are more eco-friendly inhaler devices, like Turbhalers, Accuhalers, and Easyhalers, which don't have the same environmental impact. These may also be a better option for some people as they require a short, deep breath in to take a dose.

Contact the surgery to speak to one of the pharmacy team, or practice nurses to discuss which inhaler is best for you and whether one of these greener options might work better for you.

How to go GREEN with your medicines

Disposing of unwanted medicines and clinical waste

Improper disposal of unused or expired medicines can harm the environment and human health. To help protect both, it's important to dispose of medical waste correctly.

Key Steps for Proper Disposal:

- **Sharps (needles, lancets, etc.):** Return these to your GP surgery in a sharps bin for safe disposal
- **Tablets and Empty Inhalers:** Take these back to your pharmacy for proper disposal
- **Controlled Drugs (CDs):** If you're returning any controlled drugs, be sure to tell your pharmacist, as these need special handling

General Waste Disposal: For other clinical waste, contact your local council

By following these steps, you can help keep our environment safe and ensure proper handling of your unused medicines.



Single-use vs multiple-use applicators

Single-use containers are often given to patients needing preservative-free doses of medicines or more convenient medication administration. However, it's important to consider the environmental impact of using single-use, non-recyclable materials!

Eye Drops:

Switching to multidose eye drops instead of single-use vials is a simple yet powerful way to reduce plastic waste and energy consumption. Multidose bottles use up to eight times less plastic and nine times less energy for transportation than their single-dose counterparts. Additionally, multidose bottles can be used until the last drop, eliminating product waste, and making them more efficient.



Recycling medicine packaging and 'blister packs'

Several components of medicine packaging can be recycled at home, including cardboard boxes and paper instruction leaflets. Hard plastic tubes or bottles can be recycled as plastic once empty, while glass bottles can go to glass recycling from home.

What about blister packs? They are primarily made of plastics and aluminium, both of which are recyclable. As a result, some pharmacies, such as Boots and Superdrug, have introduced blister pack take-back schemes.



THE GREEN TEAM

As a practice we declared a climate emergency in June 2024 and have since been busy working towards the Greener Impact for Health Bronze award which we were awarded in December.



Some of the changes we have made include a campaign to only boil what you need thus saving water and energy. We have made staff aware of the dual flushing option on the toilets and to use the small flush when able leading to reduced water usage. We have introduced soft plastic recycling which is then taken to a local supermarket. We have promoted the use of Fairtrade products. A switch off campaign has also taken place encouraging staff to switch off electrical sockets before the end of the day thus reducing energy use.

Next on the agenda is a Meat Free Monday which we will promote for staff and patients.