

WINTER 2024



ISSUE 5

NEWSLETTER

BLANDFORD
GROUP
PRACTICE



Keeping Well This Winter

Cold weather and winter bugs can affect our health, but there are things we can all do to keep well. Apps can be a good source of information, advice and motivation.

Visit ourdorset.orchhealth.com for a selection of apps to help you manage your health concerns common for this time for year.

<https://ourdorset.orchhealth.com/en-GB/winter-pressures>

The Effect of Winter Pressures on Your GP Surgery

Dear Valued Patients,

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this winter season. As always, this time of year increases demand on our services.

These winter pressures bring a significant increase in the number of patients with coughs, colds, sore throats, and flu-like symptoms.

Many of these conditions are caused by viruses, which will not respond to antibiotics and will get better after a few days.

Our telephone lines and reception team are under increased pressure due to these seasonal factors.

On an average day more than 1,000,000 patients will see a GP in England and in the winter months this can increase by 30%.

We are striving to answer your calls so please don't hang up when you get in a queue, you can select the call back option if that is more convenient than waiting on the line. The phone lines are often busiest in the morning, if you can call back later in the day, please do, or consider using Anima our online platform.

Please bear with us during the busy winter season.

In the meantime, follow these handy tips to proactively manage your health:

Have your winter vaccinations – particularly true for young children, those over 65, pregnant women and anyone with a long-term condition or if you are a carer.

If you develop a cough, cold or sore throat – take the correct dose of paracetamol, drink plenty of fluid and if necessary, seek further advice from NHS 111, NHS Choices website or your local pharmacy.

Keep warm – Keep your home at 18C (65F) or higher if you can.

Eat well – hot meals and drinks can keep you warm.

Make sure you order and collect your prescriptions early enough – don't run out.

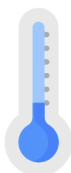
Take regular exercise – Exercise is good for both your physical and mental health.

Everyone should have a medicine cabinet – with a thermometer and common treatments for pain, allergies, diarrhoea and vomiting as well as treatments for minor injuries. Local pharmacists can advise.

Cold Weather

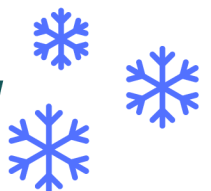
As the weather gets colder, we can be more at risk of illness and health risks from the cold. The NHS website has advice on what to do if you are unwell.

Please visit the following websites for more information:



<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/>

<https://staywelldorset.nhs.uk/>



Winter Vaccinations



Our Winter vaccination clinics began in September and October delivering our Flu and Covid vaccinations to those eligible, we have now vaccinated 7,340 of our most vulnerable patients. We will be holding another clinic on Saturday 14th December so if you still have not had your vaccination there is still time, please call the vaccination booking line on 01258 444526, or come into any of our surgeries to book.

Our staff have worked tirelessly giving up their days off to make this possible, we would like to thank them and all of our volunteers, PPG, and health champion members who have given up their time to support us. Without them our clinic would not run.

We have RSV clinics continuing into next year, please know we are doing everything we can to deliver more clinics. The RSV vaccination is a 1 time vaccination so once you have had this you are protected, for more information pick up a leaflet in surgery or visit – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv/>

Missed Appointments "DNA's"

A DNA is someone who **DID NOT ATTEND** an appointment at the surgery and did not tell us beforehand so we could cancel the appointment and offer it to another patient.

DNAs are a serious problem for the NHS. Research shows that across the UK around 13 million GP appointments and 6 million practice nurse appointments are missed each year.

At the practice, on average, around 100 patients DNA appointments each week.

Did you try to get an appointment and couldn't? We could have had capacity for additional patients if all those who had made an appointment simply cancelled it when they knew they were not going to attend.

Many of our appointments are sent reminder text messages out 24 hours before your appointment – **PLEASE MAKE SURE WE HAVE YOUR UP-TO-DATE MOBILE NUMBER.** There is a function on that text message to cancel your appointment should you no longer need it, this will open that appointment up for someone else.

As part of a new process to improve missed appointments, if you do not attend your appointment, you will receive a text notification from us that will be recorded on your medical record.

We will also be taking steps to address frequent offenders.

PLEASE HELP US BY CANCELLING ANY APPOINTMENT YOU CANNOT ATTEND.



 **BLANDFORD
GROUP
PRACTICE**

Please be aware over the festive period

We are closed

Wednesday 25th December 2024
Thursday 26th December 2024
Wednesday 1st January 2025

Season's greetings
The Blandford Group Practice

If your medication is due to be ordered on these days, please order a few days early.

If you have a medical problem that can't wait until the surgery re opens, please consider using your local pharmacy or contact 111 for advice.

In the event of an emergency call 999

GENERAL PRACTICE AWARDS 2024

We've been shortlisted for the General Practice Awards 2024

Practice Team Shortlisted for National Award

The Social Prescribing Team at The Blandford Group Practice have been shortlisted for a National Award.

The General Practice Awards, supported by Pulse and Nursing in Practice, are a prestigious national celebration for those working in Primary Care and General Practice in the UK. The team here in Blandford have been shortlisted in the clinical improvement category for our social prescribing work which has seen new ways of patient support being developed alongside clinical intervention.

First started back in 2017 this work has continued to grow. Its Health Champion Network now has 40 volunteers delivering support groups on a range of topics including menopause support and fibromyalgia.

Social prescribing sees local agencies such as local charities, social care, and health services refer people to a social prescribing link worker who can help them with non-clinical issues or refer them to other organisations who can offer them support.

According to the British Journal of General Practice, it is thought that around 20% of patients go to see their GP for social issues, and for these people social prescribing might be a better option.

The General Practice Awards take place in London on the 6th of December 2024.

"We're so proud of our team, to be shortlisted at the National General Practice Awards is a real achievement, and testament to the hard work and dedication shown in supporting our patients".

- Dr Purcell Clinical Director

Dry January. Are You In?

Need help to drink less?

Take on 31 days alcohol-free challenge with Alcohol Change UK for a total body and mind reset.

visit - alcoholchange.org.uk

From better sleep and a mental health boost, to saving money and time - there's a whole lot to gain this Dry January.

Reducing your alcohol intake can do wonders for your health. We'll support you to cut down and take control of your drinking.

Contact LiveWell Dorset for support



LiveWell Dorset

0800 840 1628 • MONDAY - FRIDAY
9AM - 6:30PM

Top tips



ALCOHOL CHANGE^{UK}

to help you drink less and improve your health



Have a few alcohol-free days each week



Choose a smaller glass size and a lower ABV



Try alcohol-free alternatives



Keep track of your drinking



January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Find out more about cervical cancer scan the QR code below with your mobile phone camera

Each year, more than 3,200 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in the UK. This type of cancer can affect people of all ages. Here you will find more information about the symptoms of cervical cancer and where you can get support, if you have any questions.

The Macmillan Support Line is a free and confidential service. Call 0800 808 000



Following on from the success of our last drop-in cervical screening clinic, we are having another drop-in cervical screening clinic on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at Whitecliff Surgery, between 08:45am-12:30pm



nhs.uk / lungcancer

Been coughing for 3 weeks? Tell your doctor.

NHS

A persistent cough could be a sign of lung cancer. Finding it early makes it more treatable.

November was Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Find out more about signs and symptoms, and where you can find information and support. You can also find out how you can make a difference following Lung Cancer Awareness Month.

Visit -www.macmillan.org.uk or call free on 0800 808 0000 8am-8pm

The bluest day of the year takes place on the third Monday of January

In 2025, Blue Monday will fall on the 20th of January

Why is it called Blue Monday? Its called Blue Monday because it's the time of year when we're supposedly feeling at our lowest and most "blue".

While Blue Monday hasn't been scientifically proven, it can be difficult not to feel anything but blue on this day due to the widespread association with it.

You can feel less blue if you remember:

we all have good and bad days – everybody's situations are different, and it's therefore impossible for all of us to feel exactly the same way on one particular day.

Four ways to beat those blues:

Focus on the good things – that are happening in your life and try not to be dominated by things that may have gone wrong or aren't going your way

Be grateful for what's happened – this will help you focus on the positive things taking place all around you – no matter how small. For example, you can be grateful for having a good night's sleep, completing your work on time, your colleague helping you out, or having a hobby you enjoy.

Try to smile and laugh more – there's no use forcing it – but studies have found that laughter can help relieve depression, stress, and anxiety. A simple laugh or smile, at ourselves or other people, can instantly lift our spirits

Use positive affirmations – try to start every day with a positive thought, saying, memory, or quote that sets you up for the best possible start. Don't forget to keep reminding yourself of it throughout the day.

If you need support with your mental health, these services offer confidential support from trained volunteers

You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult:

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text "YM" if you're under 19

If you're under 19, you can also call 0800 1111 to talk to Childline.

The number will not appear on your phone bill.