

Armada Family Practice Newsletter

Don't underestimate the risks of FLU

Should you book a Flu Jab today?

Many people think flu is just a bad cold, but it isn't—flu can develop into more serious illnesses, such as bronchitis and pneumonia, which could lead to a stay in hospital or even death in some cases.

The number of deaths from flu varies each year - in the UK it can be as high as 10,000, but it has reached more than 20,000 in a flu epidemic year.

Although many people say they rarely get flu, each year around 15-20% of people in the UK are infected.

Flu spreads easily—flu viruses can survive as particles in the air, or on surfaces such as door handles for several hours. So one person with flu can infect many others.

It is recommended that you have a flu vaccination if you are:

- Pregnant
- Carers
- 2 and 3 year old children
- All patients aged 65 years and over by 31st March 2020
- Asthma patients - taking medication within the last 12 months
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Chronic Heart Disease patients
- Chronic Renal Disease patients, Chronic Liver Disease patients
- Diabetic patients, History of Stroke/TIA
- Patients suffering from immunosuppression
- Patients with a BMI of 40 or above

Eligible patients will be able to book priority appointments to receive their flu vaccination. These vaccinations will be during flu clinics commencing Saturday 14th September 2019.

Saturday 14th September 2019 - **65 years of age and over ONLY**

Saturday 21st September 2019 - **65 years of age and over ONLY**

Saturday 26th October 2019

Saturday 23rd November 2019

Saturday 30th November 2019

Other weekday Flu Sessions will also be available, please ask at reception or call for more information.

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Surgery Opening Times

8:30 TO 6:30PM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Emails

Would you like to receive our surgery newsletter by email? If so please ensure we have your up to date email address.

Facebook

We now have our own Facebook page to keep our patients informed of useful information and details of current affairs within the practice.

You can find us under

Armada Family Practice—
Whitchurch Health Centre



Useful Telephone Numbers

NHS 111 (out of hours)	111
District Nurse	01275 547040
Health Visitors	01275 547031
BRI	0117 923 0000
Southmead Hospital	0117 950 5050
St Peter's Hospice	0117 915 9400
Alzheimer's Society	0117 961 0693
CRUSE bereavement	0117 926 4045
Diabetes Education	0117 959 8970
Dementia Helpline	0845 300 0336
Carers Support	0117 965 2200
SBCH	0117 342 9692
Midwives	0117 342 9841

During August we had 104 GP appointments & 88 treatment room appointments that patients did not attend or cancel. This totals a shocking 192 wasted appointments during August and a cost to the practice of **£4521.60!**

10 Winter Illnesses

Colds - You can help prevent colds by washing your hands regularly. This destroys bugs that you may have picked up from touching surfaces used by other people, such as light switches and door handles. **Top tip:** If you get a cold, use disposable tissues instead of fabric handkerchiefs to avoid constantly reinfesting your own hands.

Sore Throat - Sore throats are common in winter and are almost always caused by viral infections. There's some evidence that changes in temperature such as going from a warm, centrally heated room to the icy outdoors, can also affect the throat. **Top tip:** One quick and easy remedy for a sore throat is to gargle with warm salty water. Dissolve one teaspoon of salt in a glass of part cooled boiled water. It won't heal the infection but it has anti-inflammatory properties and can have a soothing effect.

Asthma - Cold air is a major trigger of asthma symptoms such as wheezing and shortness of breath. People with asthma should be especially careful in winter. **Top tip:** Stay indoors on very cold, windy days. If you do go out, wear a scarf loosely over your nose and mouth. Be extra vigilant about taking your regular medications, and keep reliever inhalers close by.

Norovirus - Also known as the winter vomiting bug, norovirus is an extremely infectious stomach bug. It can strike all year round, but it is more common in winter and in places such as hotels, hospitals, nursing homes and schools. **Top tip:** When people are ill with vomiting and diarrhoea, it's important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Young children and the elderly are especially at risk.

Painful joints - Many people with arthritis say their joints become more painful and stiff in winter, though it's not clear why this is the case. There's no evidence that changes in the weather cause joint damage. **Top tip:** Many people get a little depressed during the winter months and this can make them perceive pain more acutely. Everything feels worse, including medical conditions. Daily exercise can boost a person's mental and physical state. Swimming is ideal as it's easy on the joints.

Cold sores - Most of us recognise that cold sores are a sign that we're run down or under stress. While there's no cure for cold sores, you can reduce the chances of getting one by looking after yourself through winter. **Top tip:** Every day, do things that make you feel less stressed, such as having a hot bath, going for a walk in the park, or watching one of your favourite films.

Heart attacks - Heart attacks are more common in winter. This may be because of cold weather increases blood pressure and puts more strain on the heart. Your heart also has to work harder to maintain body heat when it's cold. **Top tip:** Stay warm in your home. Heat the main rooms you use to at least 18C and use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed. Wrap up warm when you go out and wear a hat, scarf and gloves.

Cold hands and feet - Raynaud's phenomenon is a common condition that makes your fingers and toes change colour and become very painful in cold weather. Fingers can go white, then blue, then red and throb and tingle. The small blood vessels of the hands and feet go into spasm, temporarily reducing blood flow to your hands and feet. **Top tip:** Don't smoke or drink caffeine and always wear warm gloves, socks and shoes when going out in cold weather.

Dry skin - Dry skin is a common condition and is often worse during the winter, when environmental humidity is low. Moisturising is essential during winter. The best time to apply moisturiser is after a bath or shower while your skin is still moist, and again at bedtime. **Top tip:** Have warm, rather than hot, showers. Water that is too hot makes skin feel more dry and itchy.

As most of you are aware the NHS is immensely under pressure. Remember you can also get advice from your local pharmacist for lots of health issues, including when to visit your GP. And there's no need for an appointment. Armada Family Practice patients with a minor illness will be offered a same-day face to face consultation with a community pharmacist at their local pharmacy, ensuring patients are seen close to home in turn creating capacity for GPs to offer appointments to other patients with more complex/ chronic health conditions. The consultation with the pharmacist will then be shared electronically with the patient's GP to ensure all their health information is safely stored for any future or continuation of care.



Be a Soberhero and go 31 days without alcohol this October - say no to the booze and yes to raising money for people living with cancer. And just like every hero's trusty sidekick, Macmillan will be with you every step of the way to help you along your sober journey. By signing up to the challenge you're doing something amazing for people with cancer. All the money raised by those Going Sober this October will help Macmillan support even more people facing cancer.

To sign up please go to: https://www.gosober.org.uk/users/sign_up