

THE FRIENDS OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE

NEWSLETTER No. 53

NOVEMBER 2020

Sponsored by Staplehurst Community Events Group

INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS

Flu jab clinics started during September and because of self-distancing protocols the procedure was different to anything done in previous years. Some sessions were held during the week and some on Saturday mornings, but all clinics ran smoothly and were run by three clinicians which meant that whilst clinics were running there were no other nurses' appointments available. The jabs were given in three of the clinical rooms at the East end of the building on the ground floor. Patients entered the building by the door beside the car park and were checked in at the atrium where they had their temperature taken, asked if they have a persistent cough and whether they were suffering from a loss of taste or smell. If any of these indications were identified, the patient could have been presenting with symptoms of Covid-19 and they were not be able to have a flu jab. Each patient who passed the checks was given a card showing their name, address and appointment time, which the patient handed to the clinician who was administering the jab. Appointments can still be made for flu jabs and patients should attend at their appointed time, not earlier or later as this may result in their having to stand outside; not pleasant if it is cold or raining. On leaving the clinic the corridors form part of a one-way system and after receiving the jab the patient should follow the signs, proceed along the corridor, through the waiting area, along the clinicians' corridor and exit through the door beside the main atrium.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR AN INFLUENZA VACCINATION?

Initially, vaccination is to be offered to all children aged two to ten, those aged 6 months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups, those aged 65 years and over, those in long stay residential care homes, carers, close contacts of immunocompromised individuals, pregnant women, health and social care staff employed by a registered residential care/nursing home, registered domiciliary care provider, or a voluntary managed hospice provider, all school year groups up to year 7, those with pre-existing conditions, and people who are on the shielded patient list and members of their household. **IF YOU ARE OVER 65 AND ENTITLED TO A FLU JAB DON'T WAIT FOR A LETTER, PHONE THE HEALTH CENTRE NOW TO GET AN APPOINTMENT.** Once vaccination of the groups listed above is well under way, the DoH

will work with clinicians to decide when to open the programme to invite patients aged 50 to 64 for vaccination. If you are in one of the groups listed above and are allergic to eggs, please advise the health centre as soon as possible so that a supply of the appropriate vaccine, not egg grown, can be ordered.

HEALTH CENTRE ACCESS FOR CARE DURING COVID-19

NHS England and Public Health England have set out a protocol for GP practices everywhere, (not just Staplehurst) which states that all patients must be triaged and can only visit the surgery if requested by a clinician. This is to reduce the possibility of Covid infection being introduced into the building, which if it happened, would lead to a 2-day shut down for deep cleaning. The receptionists taking patient calls are doing what they have been instructed to do. Please respect them.

The Covid pandemic has meant that the procedures for obtaining care have changed and operate in accordance with NHS England protocol. One can no longer phone and get an appointment with a clinician; instead the patient has to explain briefly to the receptionist what the problem is and the request is passed to the doctor who interviews the patient by telephone, after which the doctor calls in the patient for examination or issues a prescription direct to the pharmacy of the patient's choice. Patients should not E-mail photographs as the surgery is not permitted to download them under Data Protection laws. If you are called in for an appointment, under Government guidelines this will be for 15 minutes, so the number of appointments available in the working day has decreased. Seating in the waiting area has been greatly reduced due to social distancing so don't arrive too early and come alone unless the patient is being cared for or is a juvenile. Only two patients are permitted to wait in the atrium for admission at any one time. Patients with COPD or other respiratory conditions should note that Nurse Kevin is now permitted to carry out spirometry tests. The Covid 19 pandemic has brought enormous pressure on the clinicians at the health centre and on the pharmacist at Lloyds, Staplehurst, who for some time was working 12 hour days. The teams at the health centre and the pharmacy appreciate the support given by the majority of patients. Do remember that you can ask the pharmacy to order your repeat prescriptions from the health centre so that all you have to do is collect them from the pharmacy.

THE FRIENDS CHRISTMAS DRAW AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE WAITING AREA ARE CANCELLED

As a result of logistical and self-distancing issues associated with Covid-19 it has been decided that it is not going to be possible to hold our Christmas Draw. In the past we have sold tickets at the flu jab sessions but this will not be practicable this year. The Christmas Tree will not be in place this Christmas as it cannot be kept clean.

PRESCRIPTION ORDERING & HEALTH CENTRE OPENING & CLOSING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

From 14th to 24th December the Health Centre will be closed between 1.00pm and 2.00pm every day. All prescriptions needed for over the festive season (from 24 Dec. to 4 Jan.) need to be at the Health Centre no later than the 16th December. Please do not leave it until Christmas week. The Health Centre will close at 6.30pm on 24th December (Christmas Eve) and will be closed on 25th, 26th, 27th & 28th December. It will re-open at 8.00am on Tuesday 29th December and will be open on Wednesday 30th and Thursday 31st, but will be closed on Friday 1st January. The Health Centre will re-open on Monday, 4th January.

The Weald Hub will be closed on Sat. 26th Dec but will be open on Sat. 2nd January, 2021.

HEALTH CENTRE CAR PARK

When the Health Centre closes at 6.30pm the car park is locked and any cars left there will be locked in until the following day or whenever the Health Centre re-opens.

HEALTH CENTRE CLOSURES FOR TRAINING

The Health Centre will be closed for professional development training from 1pm on the following dates in 2021:-

12 January 3 February 4 March

DISCLAIMER. Please note that neither NHS Kent and Medway CCG, Staplehurst Community Events Group, Integral Medical Holdings or the doctors and staff at the Health Centre take any responsibility for the contents of this newsletter or for the opinions or the information contained therein.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE FRIENDS OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE. Chairman: Mr. Rory Silkin, Secretary & Treasurer: Mr. Robin Oakley (Tel 01580 891516) Trustees: Mrs. Suzanne Douglas, Sister Alison Edwards, Mr. Lester Gosbee and Mr. Robin Kenworthy.

A message from our sponsors:-

STAPLEHURST COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP

It is with regret that we have to advise everyone that, due to Covid-19, our AGM has been postponed, whilst the French Market/Christmas Fair and Father Christmas on his sleigh have sadly been cancelled this year. This is very disappointing for all of us but the safety of everyone is paramount.

We hope that next year some, if not all of our events will take place and we hope that you will continue to support us just as you have in previous years.

We would like to take this opportunity of sending you best wishes from all of the SCEG and we hope that you all stay safe and keep well.

With all good wishes from SCEG

IN MEMORY – JOHN AND JEANNETTE WHITFORD

It is with regret and sadness that we record the passing of John and Jeannette who had both been members of the Friends since its inception. John died on 13th September, aged 93 and Jeannette died on 19th September, aged 88. Jeannette was a retired nurse, a keen supporter of the Friends, attended the Health Information evenings, and often said how much she enjoyed reading our newsletters. They will both be missed by their family and friends.

ANTIBIOTICS Taking antibiotics when you don't need them puts you and your family at risk, as the harmful bacteria that live inside you are encouraged to become resistant. If you or a family member are feeling unwell, have a cold or flu and you haven't been prescribed antibiotics there are some self-care ways to help you feel better. Ask your pharmacist to recommend medicines to help with symptoms or pain. Get plenty of rest and make sure you drink enough water. If you have a fever it is a sign that your body is fighting the infection and usually gets better by itself in most cases. You can use paracetamol if you or any child over 12 years are uncomfortable as a result of fever, but do read the instructions as to dosage. Make sure you use a tissue for your nose and wash your hands frequently to avoid spreading your infection to family and friends.