

THE FRIENDS OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE

NEWSLETTER No. 52

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Sponsored by Staplehurst Community Events Group

YES, THE NEWSLETTER RETURNS

It seems a long while since the last newsletter was published at the end of February. In some ways it is true to say that a lot has happened although one could also say that the last 6 months have been very boring, especially if you are elderly or vulnerable. The one Health Information Evening on Cataracts had to be cancelled as did the Friends Annual General Meeting, due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Our speaker on Cataracts has agreed to come and talk when we are able to hold meetings without social distancing although when that will be remains to be seen. The medical side of the health centre has remained open although under different admission arrangements, but the dental practice, like the three other practices in the village, have been closed since March. As this is being written at the beginning of July, they are in the process of re-opening.

HEALTH CENTRE ACCESS FOR CARE DURING COVID-19

The Covid pandemic has meant that the procedures for obtaining care have changed. 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 calls and interviews the patient, 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 not currently permitted to carry out spirometry tests because of Covid-19 transmission risk. 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.

INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS

Flu jab clinics will start during September and because of self-distancing protocols the procedure will be different to anything done in previous years. Some sessions will be held during the week and some on Saturday mornings, but all clinics will be run by three clinicians and whilst clinics are running there will be no other nurses' appointments available. The jabs will be given in three of the clinical rooms at the East end of the building on the ground floor. Patients will enter the building by the door beside the car park and they will be checked in at the atrium where they will have their temperature taken, asked if they have a persistent cough and whether they are suffering from a loss of taste or smell. If any of these indications are identified, the patient could be presenting with symptoms of Covid-19 and they will not be able to have a flu jab. Each patient who passes the checks will be given a card showing their name, address and appointment time, which should be given to the clinician who is administering the jab. 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. The corridors will be 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 will 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. 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.

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 your child are uncomfortable as a result of fever. Make sure you use a tissue for your nose and wash your hands frequently to avoid spreading your infection to family and friends.

How long should my symptoms last for?

Common illnesses:	Most people are better in:
Earache (middle ear infection)	8 days
Sore throat	7 – 8 days
Sinusitis (adults only)	14 - 21 days
Cold	14 days
Cough or bronchitis	21 days

If you are not starting to improve by these guide times, contact your GP or call NHS on 111.

Antibiotics are only needed for serious bacterial infections

THE HEALTH CENTRE CAR PARK

After at least 7 years of complaining, the car park brick pavements have been lifted and re-laid where there were hazardous gaps and/or low areas which flooded. The help and co-operation of patients when parking during the work was much appreciated and enabled the work to be completed more quickly than had been anticipated.

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.

CLOSURES FOR TRAINING

The Health Centre will be closed for staff training and continuing professional development on the following days from 12 noon. If you need to contact a doctor urgently on these afternoons, please phone 111.

Thurs. 10 Sept. Tues. 20 Oct. Wed. 11 Nov.

WELCOME TO NEW CLINICIANS WHO HAVE JOINED THE TEAM

For some months the surgery has been trying unsuccessfully to recruit new clinicians which has meant that locum doctors have been standing in. Whilst this solved a problem in the short term, the patients have missed the continuity of service and care, and it has cost the practice a large sum of money. At last the Practice Manager has succeeded in recruiting two new general practitioners and an advanced nurse practitioner, as follows.

Dr. Fedir Marangoz (M)

Dr. Adetutu Palmer (F)

Ms. Sarah Westrap (F) ANP

They join Dr. Robert Rumfeld and Miss Amelia Green (Physician's Associate).

THE FRIENDS CHRISTMAS DRAW IS 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.

Finally, a message from our sponsors:

STAPLEHURST COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP

Under normal circumstances the Fete, 10k run and Party in the Park would have taken place and we are sorry we have not been able to bring these events to the village but as you know this has been due to the coronavirus. Sadly we are not in 'normal circumstances' and we are not even sure that the Christmas Fair/French Market and Santa's Sleigh will take place. These are all events that we enjoy organising and we know that most of you enjoy attending and we can always rely on your support.

We are still in unprecedented circumstances with the virus and the most important thing is that we all stay safe and well. Staplehurst is a great community where we support one another and we know that we will still have your support next year and in the years to come. So please keep safe and well and we will be back again when it is safe to do so. With our best wishes to you all from Staplehurst Community Events Group.