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Compiled by the Patient Participation Group (PPG)
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MILL ROAD SURGERY NEWSLETTER

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included in the vaccination programme and will be offering clinics to include the 5-11 year olds.

Your Surgery News

Compiled by the Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Staffing

Current practice manager, Andy Leonard is retiring after 14 years at the surgery and is being replaced by a new manager, Matt Carter. There will be a transitional handover period culminating in a permanent change of management with effect from 1st April 2022. In addition we are also recruiting a new practice nurse to replace Tina Potter, our respiratory lead nurse who is leaving the surgery in March, albeit may come back to help with some locum sessions on an ad-hoc basis – recruitment interviews are underway to secure the right replacement. Tina has given 9 loyal years to the surgery and we thank her for this. Also retiring from the surgery after 16 years loyal service is our Surgery Co-ordinator, Alison Newstead who will be leaving her role at Mill Road Surgery at the end of February. Lastly on staffing we are currently also interviewing for a care co-ordinator to join our PCN staffing compliment to work across the 5 surgeries in our network

Our 2nd intake of registrars (x3) have now finished their 6 month rotation with us and have now departed onto their next venture – we wish Dr's Saxena, Ezeike and Panneerselvam well in their next posts. We also welcome into our 3rd GP registrar rotation Dr Mansour who commenced her 6 month stint at Mill Road on 2nd February.

Vaccinations

Mill Road Surgery continues to partake in the Covid vaccination program from primary doses through to booster doses. We have also just confirmed to take part in the next cohort



The UK regulator approved the vaccine for use in children aged five and over in December after ruling it was safe and effective.

The benefits are as government advisers modelled how a wider vaccination of this age group would benefit in future virus waves. In a scenario where the wave is severe, for every million children given two doses, it was predicted that 98 hospital admissions would be prevented including three admissions to intensive care.

COVID-19 is usually mild in most children, but it can make some children unwell. 1 dose of the COVID-19 vaccine gives good protection against your child getting seriously ill. But 2 doses gives stronger and longer-lasting protection. Vaccinating children can also help stop the spread of COVID-19 to other people, including within schools.

It is not compulsory and parents will be able to decide whether to give their child the vaccine when it is offered to them, if they do not accept it immediately they should still be able to accept it at a later date, although experts advise taking it at the earliest opportunity. It is possible children

under five could eventually be offered the jab but a decision is likely to be a long way off.

The UK government and health authority have taken time to weigh up the risks and benefits of vaccinations for children and often taken much longer than other countries to confirm it is happy for its youngest citizens to get a coronavirus jab.

At the time of writing this article, all children aged 12 and over (and ages 5-11 immunosuppressed) are eligible for a COVID vaccine. Most children will be offered a 1st and 2nd dose of the vaccine at school during school hours, though Mill Road Surgery have been running clinics additional to this to ensure patient access and choice is being met.

Due to drop off in travel pre and post Covid we have ceased operating as a Yellow Fever Vaccination site and no longer offer this vaccine. This is a chargeable vaccine and there are numerous private clinics offering this service across Colchester.

Flu season is coming to its natural conclusion but we still have plenty of vaccines for all age groups and would encourage anyone who is eligible, and yet to have a flu vaccination to book an appointment with reception. The vaccine program for flu will finish at the end of March 2022.

Appointments:

We continue to offer a mixture of face to face and telephone consultations in line with Covid guidance for primary care. We have also over the past few months reintroduced the ability book a telephone appointment online to avoid having to contact the surgery direct. These are limited but reviewed regularly to ensure the right balance is being maintained. Naturally with Covid restrictions for primary care still in force we have to continue offering this hybrid offer of appointments to ensure we do not overcrowd the surgery at any given point.



About Hay fever

Hay Fever affects up to one in five people at some point in their life.

Symptoms of hay fever include: sneezing, a runny nose, itchy eyes, you'll experience hay fever symptoms if you have an allergic reaction to pollen.

Pollen is a fine powder released by plants as part of their reproductive cycle. It contains proteins that can cause the nose, eyes, throat and sinuses (small air-filled cavities behind your cheekbones and forehead) to become swollen, irritated and inflamed.

You can have an allergy to:

Tree pollen, released during spring, grass pollen, released during the end of spring and beginning of summer, weed pollen, released late autumn.

There's currently no cure for hay fever, but most people are able to relieve symptoms with treatment, at least to a certain extent. The most effective way to control hay fever would be to avoid exposure to pollen. However, it's very difficult to avoid pollen, particularly during the summer months when you want to spend more time outdoors.

Treatment options for hay fever include antihistamines, which can help to prevent an allergic reaction from occurring and corticosteroids (steroids), which help to reduce inflammation and swelling.



With spring right around the corner, it is time to shed the winter doldrums – and any bad health habits you might have picked up. Here are some tips to get your body and mind recharged for the new season.

If you know you are prone to sneezes and sniffles as the weather warms up, now is the time to stock up on allergy medications.

Hydrate from the Inside Out

The average adult human body is 50-65 percent water. You would think this would leave us sufficiently hydrated, but that is rarely the case.

Walk Every Day

Start walking your children to school, make part of your journey to work by foot or go for a stroll in your lunch hour. Regular walking help reduces the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, stroke, and some cancers. It helps people lose weight and feel less stressed, and don't forget it is free. When spring arrives, there is no excuse not to walk.



Carbon dioxide emissions attributed to the NHS in England are greater than the annual emissions from all aircraft departing from Heathrow Airport

Mill Road Surgery achievements so far

- Battery recycling
- Greener paper
- Double-sided printing
- Inhalers
- Trial of reusable PPE
- Biodegradable plastic for urine specimens

Ideas for the future

- Reducing single use plastics
- Reducing paper use further
- Reducing car use/encourage cycling
- Anti-idling campaign in the car park
- Change to a green energy supplier
- Lighting: switch to LEDs and sensors for kitchens/toilets
- Green space: wild flower garden? Patient veg plot?
- Social prescriber led-walk from the practice

Salbutamol Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs) are the single biggest source of carbon emissions from NHS medicines prescribing. Dry Powder Inhalers (DPI) and

Soft Mist Inhalers (SMIs), for example, offer a lower-carbon clinical alternative to MDIs.

Considerations / possible barriers for clinicians prescribing

- ❓ Switches to be done during a face to face consultation in agreement with the patient.
- ❓ Good inhaler technique is essential for inhaler treatment to be effective, irrespective of the type of device.
- ❓ Appropriate training and regular technique checks are required to ensure patients use their inhaler optimally and maximise the benefit of their medication even after.
- ❓ NEECCG producing new guidelines to support clinicians making an inhaler choice when switching to greener inhalers devices
Considerations / barriers
- ❓ Large numbers of patients involved, majority currently prescribed a MDI
- ❓ Some will have had brand switches in the past and will have a preference already
- ❓ Some patients feel lower carbon brands are not as effective when using
- ❓ Dry power inhalers may not be suitable for all patients

(From General Practice Essex & Suffolk Meeting)



Air pollution

We highlight the problem of air pollution and give you some ideas about what you can do personally to improve air quality.

How much of a problem is air pollution in the UK? Air pollution, like Covid-19, is a silent killer. In Colchester, where I work as a GP, one in 20 deaths is related to air pollution and every year across the UK air pollution causes around 40,000 deaths. Air pollution affects us 'from cradle to grave' causing low birthweight, premature births, heart & lung problems, cancer and dementia.

What is air pollution, and where does it come from?

Air pollution is an umbrella term for the many types of pollutants in the air around us. Walking in East Bergholt on a spring morning, you might

be forgiven for thinking that air pollution is only a problem for large towns and cities. But air pollution doesn't only come from transport and factories. Household burning, such as fuel-burning stoves and open fires, is the biggest source of particulate matter, which are tiny particles smaller than the width of a human hair. Solvents in household cleaning products are the largest source of chemicals called volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Agriculture and farming also release pollutants into the atmosphere.

What can you do?

Walk or cycle where possible. Studies show that around 60% of short journeys of 1-2 miles are made by car and so leaving the car at home, even just once a week, can make a difference. We have all seen how much more pleasant the roads were during lockdown. Consider an electric vehicle if you can.

Anti-idling. One minute of a car idling produces enough toxic emissions to fill 60 people's lungs. Children and babies in prams are particularly at risk as they are closer to car exhaust fumes. Turn off your engine when stationary and talk to idling drivers about doing the same. There are many myths about turning off your engine, such as that it wastes fuel when actually the opposite is true. Avoid burning solid fuel. If you do burn solid fuel, make sure the appliance is well maintained and fuel is clean and dry.

National Clean air Day is 16th June, why not show your support for Clean Air Day, as an individual or business/organisation? See

<https://www.cleanairday.org.uk/about-clean-air-day> for free resources, posters and more.

(Article by Dr. Thoroughgood)



Blister Pack recycling

The UK's first medicine packet recycling programme is being rolled out across pharmacies nationwide.

The 'Little Packs, Big Impact' initiative, is a partnership with recycling innovators TerraCycle which allows customers to recycle any empty prescription and over-the-counter medicine blister packets, simply and freely, by dropping them in dedicated bins the next time they visit their local participating pharmacy.

For each shipment of blister packs from a pharmacy, meeting the minimum weight requirements, TerraCycle will credit their account with points which can be redeemed as a cash reward to their charity. The empty blister packaging will then be converted into reusable raw materials using a unique recycling process – preventing blister packs spending a lifetime in landfill.

Patient Participation Groups (PPG)

A Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of patients, carers and GP practice staff who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experience to help improve the service. Since April 2015, it has been a contractual requirement of NHS England for all GP practices to have a PPG and has been designed to assist them and their patients in setting up and maintaining a PPG to improve services for the GP practice population .

Purpose of a PPG:

- To give patients and practice staff the opportunity to meet and
- discuss topics of mutual interest.
- To provide a means for patients to become more involved and make
- suggestions about the healthcare services they receive.
- To explore issues from patient complaints and patient surveys,
- contribute to actions plans and help monitor improvements.
- To contribute feedback to the practice on National Patient Survey

- results and Friends and Family Test feedback to propose developments or change.
- To support health awareness and patient education.

PPG members should open to every patient on the GP practice including all communities, groups, genders, ages, ethnicities, and disabilities representing the patient list and are encouraged to join.

**INTERESTED IN JOINING THE
PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP? (PPG)**
Please ask at Reception or Contact:
mrsppgc@gmail.com