



**Coronavirus Information Update
Wednesday 18th March 2020**

Advice to patients

Advice for any patients with a fever or new persistent cough is that they should NOT present to the GP Surgery, Pharmacy or Hospital. Use the 111 online advice tool and ONLY call 111 if they cannot cope with their symptoms at home, they are getting worse or their symptoms are not improving after 7 days; 111 will then arrange appropriate care.

**REMEMBER – IF YOU ARE UNWELL WITH A SIGNIFICANT ILLNESS, SUCH AS FINDING A BREAST LUMP OR DEVELOPING CHEST PAIN YOU MUST STILL ASK FOR HELP.
PLEASE DON'T IGNORE IMPORTANT SYMPTOMS**

ALL PATIENTS

We are EXTREMELY busy dealing with a lot of understandably worried and anxious people. Please be kind to our staff who are all working flat out under extreme pressure.

Please help us to keep the surgery open:

1. Do not enter the practice unless you need to and especially if you have a cough or fever
2. Please do not call the practice unless you have an urgent need.
3. If you are told to come to the surgery by a clinician, please listen to the instructions carefully as you may be asked to wait in the car or use a different entrance to protect yourself and others
4. Download the NHS App or use SystmOnline to be able to order repeat prescriptions and check the latest guidance
5. Limit all visits to the practice to when strictly necessary
6. Do we have a nominated pharmacy for you? This will ensure that any prescriptions will be sent straight to your nominated pharmacy. Dispensary is working flat out, so allow at least 72 hours from your request before coming to collect your items.
7. Look out for your friends, family and neighbours especially if they are elderly

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I have my medication early this month and/or can I have 2+ months supply?

PLEASE DO NOT ASK THE ANSWER WILL UNFORTUNATELY BE NO.

We are following NHS guidance to continue to issue medication under the normal 28-day prescription rule and following our normal protocols. This is to avoid excessive work on our GPs, dispensers and pharmacy colleagues and most importantly to avoid a peak in supply leading to

medication shortages (which would be much more critical than the loo-roll situation). We need to keep the medication supply chain running smoothly. Please do your bit in this and please do not get upset with our staff when they say no. We're under enough pressure at the moment.

How do I get my medication if I am self-isolating?

If you are able to, contact friends, family or neighbours to help. If you are online, the Facebook group Sherborne Viral Kindness is willing to pick up and deliver medication through their volunteer network. For patients that are really stuck, we will link you with a volunteer who can help but please only ask if you genuinely need help and can't access help in other ways yourself.

I've sent someone else to pick up my medication what do they need to know/bring?

When collecting medication for someone else from the dispensary (or from a pharmacy), the person collecting will be asked for full name and address of the person they are collecting for. Other helpful information would be the number of items of medication they are collecting, if there is a fridge item and when the prescription was ordered. The person collecting may also be asked for their name and address and identification depending on the medication given.

If the prescription contains controlled drugs, the person collecting will also need identification and we will need to be told in advance who is collecting before we are able to release these.

I still have an appointment booked, should I still come?

If you have one of the following appointments you should still attend as close to your appointment time as possible to avoid sitting unnecessarily in the waiting room. Please check in at reception where you will be asked a couple of initial screening questions. Please do not be offended, we are asking everyone.

We are still currently seeing:

- All wound management
- Leg and foot ulcers
- Stitch removal
- INR clinics
- Vitamin B12 injections
- Prostag, Denusomab and other hormone injections
- Contraceptive coils and implants
- Childhood Immunisations
- Midwife appointments
- 6 week mother and baby checks
- Clinically indicated blood tests for those undergoing treatment
- Diabetes reviews will continue at present with some appointments being conducted over the telephone/video with patients. If this is the case you will be contacted.

Other appointments:

- Asthma and COPD reviews will be conducted over the telephone/video with patients.

We are no longer seeing for the time being:

- Spirometry
- Cervical Smears
- Ear Irrigation/Syringing
- Travel health assessments and vaccinations

- Minor operations and Cryotherapy
- Routine annual blood test for those that are well.
- Private foot health, chiropractic, citizens advice and physiotherapy appointments

All patients who are being seen are asked to use the hand gel provided and may be asked to wear a mask or other protective equipment by the clinician. All our clinicians and patient facing staff are wearing masks and other protective equipment for their safety and yours.

I'm self-isolating for the 14 day period because myself or someone I live with has symptoms can I have a sick note for work?

We will NOT be issuing sick notes to those self-isolating as the measure is a directive from the Government. You are able to self-certify and employers are directed to the ACAS website for more information and are expected to be understanding. <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

My work has sent me home because I have an underlying health condition and I have been told not to come in for 3 months, can I have a sick note or evidence that I have an underlying condition?

We will NOT be issuing sick notes or providing evidence to employers. It is for the individual and their employer to have a discussion about individual working practices during this time. Employers should be directed to the ACAS website for more information. <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

Do you have supplies of hand gel, face masks, paracetamol etc. that you can sell us?

No we don't, we are not able to sell retail items. All the supplies we have are needed to support our patients in the surgery. We are finding it challenging to get enough for our own use. Please do not ask and please don't steal it from us.

I use Ibruprofen, should I stop taking it?

Current advice is that there appears to be no evidence that Ibruprofen or over anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) increase the chance of acquiring COVID-19. NICE (the UK medication review body) has been asked to review this urgently. Current advice is for patients, who have confirmed COVID-19 or believe they have COVID-19, that they use paracetamol in preference to NSAIDs. **Those currently taking NSAIDs for other medical reasons (e.g. arthritis) should NOT stop them.**

Can you advise me whether I should go and see my elderly relative or friend or the person I care for?

Each situation is very unique and we are unable to make that decision for you. Please read all the latest advice and do what you feel is best for your situation. If you are worried because you care for someone, then do carry on with suitable precautions for as long as you are able as this is the lifeline that person needs. If you can't go in, then consider asking for help from a local care agency or volunteers such as the Sherborne Viral Kindness Group or other local support.