

Patient Newsletter

Summer 2020



We hope this message finds you in good health, and sincerely hope that COVID-19 has not affected your families or friends on a personal level. As we are sure you are aware, delivering healthcare is more challenging. We are trying to restart many of our 'on-the-day' and routine services again, but as we're sure you can appreciate, these will be different from before.

The New 'NOW' at Vine Medical Group

As you may be aware, we have been open throughout the pandemic, with the vast majority of care being delivered over the phone or via video. We have performed many tutorials with patients via video, including leg dressings and have conducted many routine GP and Long Term Health reviews on the phone. The IT challenges have been extremely testing at times, as we find secure ways of contacting patients and have enabled some of our team to work from home. We know we are not alone with this! We are constantly being offered new technological solutions as we embrace this new online or virtual method of providing your care.

What can I expect during the clinician telephone call?

If, during a phone call, the clinician requires to "see" you via video, a secure link will be sent to your mobile device. To simplify the process, choose the "Continue in Browser" option when prompted. You are also able to upload photos if required by your clinician when prompted. We are very pleased to hear feedback from patients saying that they are enjoying the "virtual" approach, finding it convenient and easy to use,

reducing unnecessary attendance and keeping us all safer for longer.

On the rare occasion that a GP requires to see you in person, you will be offered an appointment at Stakes Lodge or Forest End site. The clinician will be wearing a face mask and visor.

We are starting to offer more face-to-face routine Nurse and Health Care Assistant appointments, as guided by NHS England and the government.

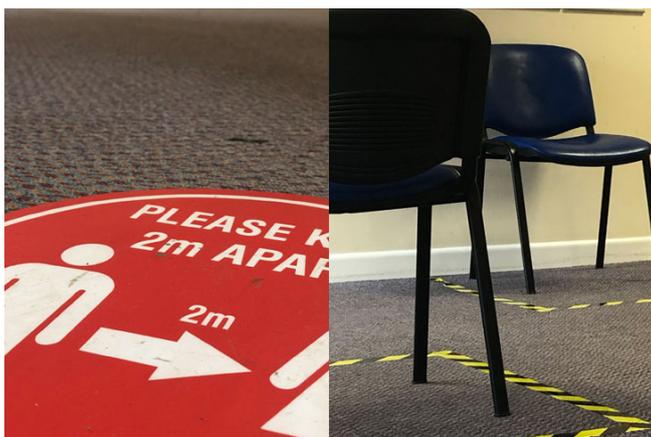
Initially, as expected, these include routine vaccination and screening appointments, e.g. childhood immunisations, cervical smear screening, blood tests, complex dressing appointments. Many of these appointments will be available online for you to book directly via the NHS App or Patient Access (from our website).

Please note that all patients with a booked appointment are pre-screened for COVID-19 symptoms and redirected if COVID-19 is suspected.

We are working hard to keep you as safe as we possibly can.

24 hours before your appointment we will contact you to ensure you are free from COVID-19 symptoms.

We encourage all patients aged 11 and over to wear a face covering on arrival at the surgery, with the exception of those with a disability, breathing difficulties or travelling with someone who relies on lip reading.



What can you expect on arrival for your appointment:

The building and team look different. With screens and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) being used.

Please use the hand sanitiser provided on entering the building.

Check-in at reception.

You may wait in your car, outside or have a seat in the waiting room, whichever you prefer. The chairs are clearly marked, with 5 or 6 in each waiting room. If in your car, we will contact you once the clinician is free to see you.

As I am sure you can appreciate, we are taking longer to see each person, as the clinicians put on, and take off, their PPE; wiping all physical equipment and surfaces in-between patients. As a result we have to be far more creative with how we gather information about your symptoms and collect up to date statistics (blood pressures, temperature etc), ensuring that the time we spend with you face to face is used on examinations or procedures that cannot be dealt with online, over the phone or on video. In the future we will be telephoning, emailing and texting links enabling you to provide this information, prior to your appointment or consultation. We would like to reassure you that your and our welfare, are at the forefront of the care we provide.

In August we will be launching an easy to use 24/7 'online access' system

with the aim of:

- Allowing you to contact us online whenever suits you, so no waiting for "telephone timed" contact periods
- Enabling Same Day telephone contact and treat, when it is needed, and booking future appointments where it is not
- Increasing continuity of care, so you speak to the same clinician about the same problem
- Provide a consistent approach to care whether you contact us online, or call us.
- Providing us with "live" data, enabling us to better predict our workflow, providing the appropriate number of staff to assist you, per day, and even per hour, as trends appear.



This system will replace our current eConsult service, and we believe will offer an improved and comprehensive experience.

Farewell



It is with much sadness that we said goodbye to Dr Clarke-Williams at the end of June. She and her husband have

moved to the green and rolling hills of Wales to be nearer their son. Dr Clarke-Williams retirement is truly a loss for both the Vine Team, and you, her patients. Her knowledge and skills, built up over the many, many years, has been shared throughout the team, and she leaves with all of our good wishes for a healthy, happy and long retirement. Obviously, during this unusual time, all "normal" retirement celebrations were postponed, and a virtual party was held instead.

All of Dr Clarke-Williams' patients have been reallocated to alternative GPs within the practice.

"I have really enjoyed my 28 years as your family GP. It has been an immense privilege to care for you. Vine Medical Group is a fantastic team, always working to put the needs of our patients first, and I am happy to leave you in their expert hands. I wish you all the very best in these difficult times, and I am sorry not to be able to say goodbye to you in person."

~ Dr Clarke-Williams

Social Prescribers

We have called over 1700 Shielding and Vulnerable patients over the past 3 months to ensure necessary care and support is in place. As we move towards the next phase of this pandemic, it is worth advising you about 2 of our latest recruits, Kasia and Caroline.

They are Social Prescribers with excellent experience working with MIND and Social Housing. They have written a brief summary of how they may help you:

Social prescribing is designed to support people with a wide range of social, emotional or practical needs, and many schemes are focused on improving mental health and physical well-being. Those who could benefit from social prescribing schemes include people with mild or long-term mental health problems, vulnerable groups, and people who are socially isolated.

Social prescribing schemes can involve a variety of activities which are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

For more information, please watch the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9azfXNcqD8. Hampshire County Council have also recently set up a new website www.ConnectToSupportHampshire.org.uk to support people to make informed choices about care and support that helps to maintain their independence in their own community.

Medication

In order to support you in managing your medication during the COVID-19 pandemic you may wish to consider switching to electronic repeat dispensing. This will allow you to pick up prescriptions over a longer time period without having to visit/contact your GP. Electronic repeat dispensing helps to avoid medicines wastage and protect the medicine supply chain to ensure that all patients can get access to their usual repeat medicines. Please contact our prescription team via e-Consult or telephone if you would like more information.

Finally we would like to thank you, our patients, for all the recent kind words, pictures and positive feedback during these challenging times. It is always lovely to hear about positive personal experiences and goes a long way to keeping the motivation of the team high during this ever changing and difficult period. We would also like to recognise the sacrifices you are making to keep safe, ensuring we can too.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.

All constructive feedback is always welcome, so please either write, telephone or complete a comments sheet with any thoughts you may have.

Elaine Korab, Business Manager