

Dr Pals Surgery

The latest news and information from your local surgery

Summer 2020

Covid -19

This edition of the newsletter, like many aspects of our normal lives, is dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, but although, sadly, many of us have experienced hardship, illness or loss during this challenging time in our lives, we have also witnessed many examples of positivity, resourcefulness and human kindness.

We are highlighting as many of these as we can in these articles.

We hope you are able to enjoy the summer weather, that you keep safe and well, and that we continue to work together to care for our wonderful community.

Help slow the spread of #COVID19 and identify at risk cases sooner by self-reporting your symptoms daily, even if you feel well. Download the app <https://covid.joinzoe.com/>



Thank You to all of our patients for your Support

On behalf of all the staff at Dr Pals Surgery we would like to say a big thank you to all of our patients for your support during recent weeks.

All of your kindness goes a long way to helping us keep our morale up, and seeing all the signs and rainbows on display around Wigan and hearing the Thursday applause is very moving and most appreciated.

Obviously we have had to adapt the way we have traditionally offered our service - minimising face to face contact where possible, maintaining safe distancing, wearing PPE, isolating some patients and carrying out remote consultations where possible.

All of this has only been possible with your cooperation and understanding and we have been really impressed with your response. We have done our best to communicate any updates to the service through our website, and via texting and emails (please sign up for texting and email communications if you haven't already done so), but even if you have experienced unexpected changes or inconveniences you have all been very understanding.

Your great response (including using self-care resources and reducing the number of appointments requested) and the changes to the way we practise and have helped us to reduce the pressure on local hospitals so they are able to concentrate their resources in critical care. We think that we have collectively made a real difference.

As lockdown measures gradually relax, we will try to build on the lessons we have learnt and use our experiences to develop and improve our service so that we all benefit from the sacrifices we have made in the future.

Changes to the Surgery Building

We unfortunately had to close the Ashton Branch Surgery temporarily due to COVID-19 and only when it is felt safe to do so will we be reopening the surgery. We will keep patients up to date regarding the opening of the Ashton Branch Surgery.

We will also be making numerous changes to the fabric of the building and if you have visited recently, there are also some changes to the way you access the reception area at the Golborne main site.

If you have been invited to an appointment at the surgery, you will be advised to inform us by telephone when you have arrived on the carpark. We will then contact you when the Dr or Nurse is ready to see you, this will reduce the amount of patients waiting in the surgery. Once you are called, you will need to press the button 'Dr Pals' on the left hand side of the main door. A receptionist will answer your call and buzz you through to the building. Before your appointment you will also receive a text message or phone call from the surgery to check for any symptom's including, fever, loss of smell/taste and cough. If you have any of these symptoms please do not attend the surgery.

We ask all patients who have repeat prescriptions to order were possible online, if you do not have access to this please speak with one of the reception team who will be able to guide you through this simple process. Please do not attend the surgery to drop off your prescription request. For the time being due to covid-19 and to reduce the footfall into practice we will accept over the phone prescription requests, but we do ask patients were possible to order online to reduce the waiting times on our telephone lines.

New IT Systems

One response to the coronavirus has been an accelerated adoption of new IT systems. Many of these focus on communications and web-based consultation. Telephone triage is taking place every day.

The surgery has a new text message system "AccuRx Chain". This is an easy-to-use messaging service that allows practice staff to instantly send text messages to patients from within their electronic notes. It can be used to send advice, notify a patient of results, remind them to book appointments, follow up after a consultation, and much more. Every message is also automatically copied into your medical record.

We have been able to send normal text messages for a while now, but one additional advantage of this new system is that you can now reply to us, and send a photo from your smartphone if you wish, which is saved directly to your record.

Electronic repeat dispensing has also taken off - using this system, your doctor can issue an electronic version of your prescription directly to a pharmacy of your choice. The pharmacist can then prepare the medication so all you have to do is arrange for it to be collected, with no need to visit the surgery.

Our GPs now have access to laptops with special NHS security hardware, allowing them to log in and work remotely when required.

Online E-Consult

For those patients who regularly check our website, you may have noticed a banner at the top of the website which is available to all patients who are registered at the practice. This is a fantastic new way to seek help or advice and consult our doctors 24/7.

Home Opening Times Appointments Prescriptions Clinics & Services Tests & Results New Patients Practice Staff Contact Details

NEWS: The practice was recently mentioned in the Wigan Todays Pa-

Consult with your Doctor online
Online Consult
Healthcare at your fingertips

Learn more >

Visit us on Facebook

Welcome to Dr Pals Surgery

With patients' needs at the heart of everything we do, our website has been designed to make it easy for you to gain instant access to the information you need. As well as specific practice details such as [opening hours](#) and [how to register](#), you'll find a wealth of useful pages covering a wide range of health issues along with links to other relevant medical organisations of [healthcare](#)

Quick Links

- Online Services
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- Get Involved
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- Friend & Family Test
- Survey Report

Further Information

- Events
- Practice Achievements
- Low mood, depression and Anxiety

There is a wealth of up to date self-care advice so you can find out how to manage a wide range of common conditions yourself. You can also request medical help by completing a questionnaire. If you require medical your information is collated and forwarded to the practice where a doctor or member of the admin team will respond within two working days.

Some advantages of e-Consult have become apparent straight away to those who have used it:

- You can provide all your information in your own time without feeling anxious or hurried.
 - Available 24/7
- The system prompts you to answer specific questions which identify or eliminate any possible serious conditions.
- The system presents all your information to the doctor in a structured and orderly way so that when they speak to you, they already know all the relevant facts.
- All of your information is automatically recorded in your record for future reference.
- You may not need to visit the surgery at all to get what you need.

We think that e-Consult is going to become the “go to” route for seeking support, advice and care in the future and we hope that you find it a positive addition to the service we offer.

There is a link to e-Consult on the main page of our website (<https://www.drpalashton-golborne.co.uk/>)

PPE



One change you may see if you require a face to face consultation is the attire worn by our front line staff. We have also been given some fantastic face visors which were made using 3D printers by local High schools, St Peters in Orrell and St Edmund Arrowsmith in Ashton and Makerfield. These were not available through our normal suppliers so we were delighted to receive them. Front line staff have a rigorous donning and doffing, cleaning routines and procedures associated with face to face appointments which are now beginning to feel like normal practice. It probably feels a bit alarming to be confronted by a fully gowned, masked and gloved doctor or nurse, but we are sure everyone understands the need for us to take every precaution to maintain your good health and that of the staff involved.

Medication Reviews

All patients on repeat prescriptions need to have their medication reviewed regularly. The purpose of the review is to check that you are still taking the most appropriate medication for your condition and that your condition is being effectively controlled. It is also a good opportunity to adjust your prescription if required, removing unnecessary items or making changes if you aren't getting on well with the current medicine.

You can find out when you are due for a review by checking the printed prescription sheet that is attached to your medication when you collect it from the pharmacist.

If you are overdue for your medication review you may be contacted by the pharmacy or the surgery, but we hope that you will take responsibility for keeping up to date by calling us before then.



Before your Medication Review

Before your review can be done the doctor requires you to do the following:

- If you are asked to book a blood test as part of your medication review please do so through reception.
- If you do need to discuss your medication please make a telephone appointment, it can be booked at the same time as booking the blood test but please make sure that the appointment is at least four days after the test, so that the results are available to the doctor.

We are gradually trying to align these reviews so that they happen during the month of your birthday, which should be easier to remember.

Please contact the surgery

(Call reception on 01942 481620)

Please note that without regular monitoring we may consider it unsafe to continue to prescribe your medication.

Video Consultations

This is an aspect of general practice that we have been considering for a while, but when we were forced to close our doors at the beginning of the shutdown, we had to move fast to implement a system. Our GP consulting room computers now have webcams and many of you may have already experienced a video consultation through your smartphone. There are, of course, situations when a “face to face” consultation is essential. One very positive way in which our patients have really helped us manage demand, has been the increase in the use of self-care services. In the past we have occasionally treated patients for minor conditions which could be managed by themselves, perhaps with some simple advice or an over-the-counter remedy.

Because many are now avoiding coming into the surgery when possible, and using other sources of advice, we have been more available for patients with serious conditions.

We have listed below, a number of useful resources that we encourage you try before resorting to making an appointment for a minor problem.

If we can all work together to make the best use of our valuable NHS resources - even after the threat of Covid-19 has diminished, we will be more able to maintain an excellent service in the future

Lastly - Please don't forget that your local Pharmacist can give advice for a wide range of common conditions and provide over-the-counter medications and products.

Recommended Self-Care Resources

- Practice Website (<https://www.drpalashton-golborne.co.uk/index.aspx> (links to all of our services and to other agencies)
- E-Consult <https://www.drpalashton-golborne.co.uk/index.aspx> (link on our website) (Our new on-line system
 - NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/> (NHS online advice - with A-Z of health and medicines)
- Patient UK <https://patient.info/> (advice on a wide range of conditions with easy search feature)

Patient Participation Group

This is a group of volunteer patients who are involved in making sure the surgery provides the services its patients need.

You can find more information on our website <https://www.drpalashton-golborne.co.uk/> or alternatively ask at the reception desk and we will be happy to provide you with the information to join.

Our PPG set up a coffee morning at Golborne library bi monthly earlier this year but unfortunately due to covid this has been cancelled- instead the PPG would like to set up a zoom meeting with patients who would like a chat. If you would be interested in joining this virtual coffee meeting please contact the surgery.

Mental Health

We hope you are keeping well & safe at this difficult time. While it is expected that emotions and anxiety may be naturally running high at this time, it is still important to take care of your mental health & well-being, especially now more than ever. It can be a difficult period for many to speak about how they are feeling, when all these other things are going on in the world. However, the Making Space team are still working hard to support everyone and anyone as they can at this time. If you feel like you could do with additional support right now, please contact the surgery.

Recalling for chronic disease monitoring

During lock down we have also spent some time looking at our chronic disease registers and have now set up a recalling service that we should be able to start using shortly as restrictions ease. We will be calling patients by their birthday month and be bringing them in for all their needs for one appointment instead of numerous appointments throughout the year. You may be asked to have blood test before this appointment and your appointment may last longer than usual especially if the Dr or Nurse is dealing with multiple chronic diseases. Although, if a patient feels that they need to be seen they can be seen throughout the year but we will try to keep reviews annually in patients birthday months.

Due to the year already starting we will be working back from April and recalling these patients initially.

Breast and cervical screening

We are pleased to inform you that the National breast screening programme is due resume shortly after pausing during March 2020 due to restrictions relating to Covid-19. We would like to reassure all eligible women that they will receive an invitation for their breast screening appointment in due course. The appointment may be later than expected but this is due to a high volume of patient appointments being cancelled during the outbreak of Covid -19. Invitations will include instructions related to COVID-19. Please contact you're the surgery if you have any concerns regarding breast symptoms.

From 6th June 2020, cervical smear invitations and reminder letters will begin to return to normal.

Thank you to all our wonderful staff

Finally, we would like to thank all of the wonderful staff who have worked so hard on the front line to keep our practice running during these difficult times. As well as our dedicated doctor and nurse who provide excellent clinical care, there are managers, administrators and secretaries who deal with hundreds of documents, phone calls and tasks every day.



Some have volunteered to cover extra sessions and even worked during bank holidays.

Everyone working at the practice has been supportive during these challenging times and we hope to come through this even stronger than we were before

