



We are fast approaching flu vaccination season and I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone who is eligible to book in for their NHS flu jab. Text messages will be sent out inviting patients to book via a link, or alternatively they can be booked by calling the Surgery on telephone 01206 250691. Flu vaccinations will be available this year for all patients aged 65 and over and those under 65 with chronic health conditions.

Our Flu Clinics will be starting in October 2023. We will of course continue to provide vaccinations opportunistically during normal routine appointments for eligible patients, so there is no need to book a separate flu appointment if you are seeing a clinician for a face-to-face appointment after the 1 October 2023.

Flu is an unpredictable virus that can cause mild or unpleasant illness in most people, BUT it can cause severe illness and even death among vulnerable groups including older people, pregnant women and people with an underlying health condition. If you are not sure if you are eligible, please give us a call. We are unable to provide private vaccinations, but many local pharmacies do.

By having your flu jab, you are not only helping yourself, but you are also helping to protect the wider population from this nasty virus which can easily spread to vulnerable people who are much more at risk from complications.

Autumn Covid Booster

The autumn Covid boosters will not be administered by the Surgery this year. At the time of writing this Newsletter, we do not have details of where patients will be able to attend to get their booster. We will however keep you updated once we have further information about this.

September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month

Blood cancer is a type of cancer that affects your blood cells. Leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma are some of the most common types of blood cancer. There are also types called MPNs and MDS.

Blood cancer is caused by changes (mutations) in the DNA within blood cells. This causes the blood cells to start behaving abnormally. In almost all cases, these changes are linked to things we can't control. They happen during a person's lifetime, so they are not genetic faults you can pass on.

Some types of blood cancer affect children. Symptoms and treatment can be different between children and adults.

Over 40,000 people are diagnosed with a blood cancer each year in the UK, and over 250,000 people are currently living with blood cancer.

There are different types of blood cancer, including **leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) and myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN)**. They each have different symptoms, treatments and prognoses. (Prognosis is the medical term for what's likely to happen in the future.)

If you're diagnosed, you'll be told more about the specific type of blood cancer you have. For example, types of lymphoma include Hodgkin lymphoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Types of leukaemia include chronic lymphocytic leukaemia (CLL) and acute myeloid leukaemia (AML).

Blood cancers are sometimes described as acute or chronic. Acute means fast-growing and chronic means slower growing.

People with blood cancer may experience a range of symptoms, including:

- Weight loss that's unexplained
- Bruising or bleeding that's unexplained
- Lumps or swellings
- Shortness of breath (breathlessness)
- Drenching night sweats
- Infections that are persistent, recurrent or severe
- Fever (37.5°C or above) that is unexplained
- Rash or itchy skin that's unexplained
- Pain in your bones, joints or abdomen (stomach area)
- Tiredness that doesn't improve with rest or sleep (fatigue)
- Paleness (pallor) – the skin under your lower eyelid looks white rather than pink.

Surgery Training Afternoon

Along with all other surgeries in the area we will be shut from 12 noon on Wednesday, 27 September 2023 for staff training. If patients require urgent care on this afternoon then they can contact 111 for assistance.

Patient Participation Group

The next PPG Meeting will be held on Thursday, 21 September 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Mitchell Room at Great Bentley Village Hall.

Sue Mitson
Operations Manager