

*don't miss
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are entitled
to a FREE
Seasonal flu
vaccination*

Influenza Update

With concerns about flu running high, here are some simple facts about "ordinary" seasonal flu, swine flu and also a reminder: don't miss out if you are entitled to a FREE Seasonal flu vaccination.

FREE seasonal flu vaccination

We saw a 20% increase in the number of patients taking up their free flu vaccination last year and we expect up to 7,000 patients to take it up this year.

Don't worry if you're not sure if you are entitled to a FREE seasonal flu vaccination. In September/October, we will write to every patient entitled to a free vaccination inviting you to make an appointment. This is a change to the 'drop-in' culture of previous years so please call us if you receive a letter and make sure you don't miss out.

Do I need a seasonal flu vaccination?

The Department of Health's annual report shows Flu levels last winter were the highest for almost 10 years and double the number of recorded cases of the previous year.

We have heard from some patients that they are unsure if they still need a seasonal flu vaccination if they have received Tamiflu this year. The answer is YES; about 6000 people in the UK still die of "ordinary" seasonal flu every year, so you need your vaccination as ordinary flu is a different virus strain to swine flu.

Who should get vaccinated?

Each autumn, from October, we provide a free flu vaccine for the over 65s and everyone, including children over six months of age, in the following clinical risk groups:

- serious heart disease
- serious lung disease, like emphysema, bronchitis, cystic fibrosis or asthma

- serious kidney or liver disease
- a long-term health problem, like diabetes
- a weakened immune system - e.g. from chemotherapy, radiotherapy, steroid treatment or HIV/Aids

As the flu virus changes each year, the flu vaccine needs to match the latest version of the virus. This means that you need to have the flu-jab every year. Also, if you are the main carer for older or disabled people then you should ask your GP whether you should be vaccinated so that you can continue to look after them.

You can find out more about the seasonal flu vaccination program at;
<http://www.immunisation.nhs.uk/Vaccines/Flu>

Do I need a seasonal flu jab if I have already had swine flu or Tamiflu?

YES. Swine Flu and seasonal flu are different virus strains; immunity to one will not protect you against the other. Treatment with Tamiflu (or Zanamivir) only provides relief against flu while you are taking it, which for most people will be just 5-days. Remember, ordinary seasonal flu kills up to 6000 each year in the UK and it is vitally important that you have your flu jab if you are in an "at risk" group.

Will I need a Seasonal flu Jab and a Swine Flu Jab when it becomes available?

YES. The government will soon begin a vaccine programme for Swine Flu. Remember, seasonal flu and swine flu are different strains of virus and so two separate vaccinations are required.

The Seasonal flu jab will NOT protect you against Swine Flu and vice versa, so if you want the highest level of protection it is important that you have both vaccinations as and when they are offered, even if they are close together.

practice news

The Red and Green Practice

Issue 4

*thank you
for your
support*

Practice Merger

The Red and Green Practices formally merged to become a single practice on 1st July 2009 to be known as "The Red and Green Practice". The doctors, nurses and staff of Waterside (Hythe) and Blackfield Health Centres thank you for your support.

On Monday, 3rd August, Dr Julian Lewis MP spent an afternoon with us to visit the Waterside Health Centre at Hythe and see for himself the changes we have made. Dr Doug Campbell, Senior Partner (left) is pictured with Dr Julian Lewis, MP (centre) and with John Carr, Chairman of the Patient Participation Groups (right).



Appointments

One of the biggest changes we have made is to improve the appointment system and telephone systems. Getting through to the Health Centres is now easier, as is making an appointment at a time and day to suit you.

Same Day Appointments

To assess patients with urgent care needs, Waterside (Hythe) and Blackfield Health Centres now run a Duty Doctor 'triage' team every day from 08:00am to 6:30pm to ensure patients with urgent care needs have priority access to same day appointments.

This is an expansion of the nurse-led triage team. If you call the surgery and ask for a same day appointment you will be asked if your need is urgent and your details passed to the Duty Doctor/triage team who will call you back, usually within half an hour. They will discuss your problem and can book an appointment with you directly.

Next Day and Advance Appointments

A sharper focus on urgent care has allowed us to better serve all of our patients, especially those with long term conditions. By freeing up over 60% of all appointments to be booked in advance, you also have a far better chance of seeing your regular doctor.

The fact most patients no longer need to call the surgery at 08:00am to get an appointment that day, or face having to call again the following day, has been greatly appreciated by the patients our Patient Participation Groups have spoken to.

Telephone Consultations

You told us you value telephone consultations with our doctors and we continue to offer telephone consultations, including pre-bookable in advance.

Extended Hours

Waterside Health Centre

08:00am to 08:00pm Monday to Thursday

08:00am to 06:30 pm Friday

Tel: 023 8084 5955

Blackfield Health Centre

08:00am to 08:00pm Tuesday and Thursday

08:00am to 06:30 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Tel: 023 8089 9119

Telephones

We have made changes to our telephone systems and you should find that your call is answered much quicker than before. Once you get through, the person taking your call is no longer at the front reception desk but is now in a quiet and private area, able to discuss your needs with you in confidence.

Patient Participation Groups

The patient groups at Waterside and Blackfield have helped us to shape a better service for our patients. If you would like to join a patient group, they meet the first Monday of each month, at each surgery and the chairperson can be contacted at either surgery.