

Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2021 which due to current lockdown restrictions we are only sending electronically. This does have the advantage of being able to include longer and more detailed articles which we hope you find useful. You will see we have a couple of events planned which you can join in from the comfort of your own home, and we hope many of you will.

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The Friends of Parkfield Medical Centre
– Registered Charity No. 1075710

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Guide To Covid Vaccines

The GP led hub for our area at Allum Hall in Borehamwood has been operational for several weeks. Staff from our Practice, including Drs Dain and Ferris, have been delivering vaccinations at the hub. Patients are being called by the surgery to arrange appointments on an age priority basis.

Additionally, some patients are being contacted with a national NHS letter to book to receive their vaccination at one of the mass hubs. For Hertfordshire this is at Robertson House in Stevenage, although others are coming “on-line”. Details for booking the appointments are given in the letter.

This situation is rapidly evolving, the information is correct at the time of writing, but may change as rollout proceeds.

Thank you to Dr Dain for the information in the following article.

Patients with Covid-19 symptoms

Individuals currently experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 disease should not attend for vaccination until they have recovered. This is to avoid wrongly attributing any new symptom or the progression of symptoms to the vaccine.

As some people with COVID-19 disease can continue to develop new symptoms or experience worsening of their symptoms for up to 2 weeks after infection, vaccination should ideally be deferred until around 4 weeks after onset of symptoms, or from the first positive test in those who are asymptomatic.

Those with a previous history of COVID-19 disease (whether confirmed or suspected) can still receive COVID-19 Vaccine because it is not yet known how long antibodies made in response to natural infection persist and whether immunisation could offer more protection. There is no evidence that it is harmful to receive a COVID-19 vaccine if antibodies have already been made to the disease following natural infection. Vaccination in these circumstances would be expected to boost any pre-existing antibodies

Pfizer vaccine

How effective is the vaccine?

In phase 1 human clinical trials, antibody responses to the spike protein were seen 21 days after the first dose; these responses increased further after the second dose. Levels of neutralising antibodies, which bind to the virus and block infection, were the same as, or higher, after two doses of vaccine compared with the level of neutralising antibodies seen in patients recovering from COVID-19 disease. A good T-cell response was also seen in those who received the vaccine in the clinical trials.

The phase 3 trial demonstrated a vaccine efficacy of 95%, with consistent efficacy across different age, gender, racial and ethnic groups. The observed efficacy in adults over 65 years of age was 94%. The trial also showed around 95% efficacy in the participants at risk of severe COVID-19, including those with one or more comorbidities that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 disease (e.g. asthma, chronic lung disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or a body mass index ≥ 30).

It is not yet known how long protection will last, whether booster doses will be needed, and whether the vaccine stops people from catching and spreading the virus, or just prevents them from becoming ill. It is possible that protection will wane over time and people may need booster doses or possibly an annual vaccine as is given for flu.

As with any vaccine, this vaccine may not protect all recipients and a diminished immune response may be observed in immunocompromised persons or those receiving immunosuppressant therapy. Protection in different age groups may also differ.

Post-vaccination side effects:

Common reactions:

The COVID-19 vaccine may cause a mild fever which usually resolves within 48 hours. Isolation is not required unless there are epidemiological or other clinical reasons to suspect SARS-CoV-2 infection. Feeling generally unwell, shivery, achy and tired were also symptoms reported by vaccine recipients in the clinical trials.

Generally, these symptoms were found to resolve within one to two days without treatment but antipyretics and/or analgesics can be taken, if necessary, to relieve any of these symptoms.

Local reactions - Over 80% of trial participants reported pain at the injection site. Swelling and redness at the injection site was also reported. This occurred within 7 days after the injection and resolved after a few days.

Systemic reactions - In clinical trials, the most frequently reported systemic reactions in participants were tiredness (>60%), headache (>50%), muscle aches (>30%), chills (>30%), joint pain (>20%) and a raised temperature (>10%). These symptoms were usually mild or moderate in intensity and resolved within a few days after vaccination.

These symptoms normally last less than a week.

AstraZeneca Vaccine

How effective is the vaccine?

Following vaccination with COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca, trial participants in all age groups made high levels of both neutralising and spike protein-binding antibodies after the first vaccination and levels of these increased after a second dose. Spike-specific T cell responses were also shown to be induced after a single immunisation and were maintained after the second dose. Leaving a longer interval between the two doses has been shown to increase the immune response.

Trial data showed evidence of very high protection against severe disease and hospitalisation. It also showed that participants who had one or comorbidities had an immune response and vaccine efficacy similar to that observed in the overall study population.

In an analysis of over 11,000 patients in the phase 3 study, overall vaccine efficacy against symptomatic disease was 70.4%.

It is not yet known how long protection will last, whether booster doses will be needed, and whether the vaccine stops people from catching and spreading the virus, or just prevents them from becoming ill.

It is possible that protection will wane over time and people may need booster doses or possibly an annual vaccine as is given for flu. The vaccine may also need to be altered if the virus mutates.

As with any vaccine, this vaccine may not protect all recipients and a diminished immune response may be observed in immunocompromised persons or those receiving immunosuppressant therapy. Protection in different age groups may also differ.

Side-effects:

The side-effects seen in clinical trial recipients following vaccination with COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca were mild to moderate and usually self-resolving within a few days of vaccination.

Local reactions, such as redness, swelling, warmth, itching, pain and tenderness at the injection site were commonly reported after vaccination by 60% of trial participants. These are all reactions commonly seen after other vaccinations such as flu vaccine. COVID-19 vaccine may cause a mild fever which usually resolves within 48 hours. This is a common, expected reaction.

Systemic reactions such as tiredness (50% of trial participants), headache (50%), fever, nausea, chills, muscle aches (> 40%) and joint pain (>20%) were also reported

When compared with the first dose, adverse reactions reported after the second dose were milder and reported less frequently.

Adverse reactions were also generally milder and reported less frequently in older adults (≥65 years old).

Flu Vaccine

In South and West Hertfordshire more than 80% of over 65's have received the flu vaccine this season. If anyone in this group hasn't yet received their flu vaccine the surgery does have remaining stock so please contact them for an appointment. Those aged 50 – 64 have recently been invited to receive the vaccine and again the surgery currently has good stock.



The image is a promotional poster for the NHS flu vaccine. It features a woman in a blue NHS uniform on the right side. The text on the poster includes: 'Have you had your flu jab yet?', 'Flu can be more dangerous for people aged 65 or over, those with an existing health problem and pregnant mothers.', 'That's why they are eligible for a free flu vaccination.', 'Children aged 2, 3 and 4 plus primary school children in years one and two can also be protected with a simple, free nasal spray.', 'www.nhs.uk/staywell', '#staywell', and 'Don't put it off. Make sure you and your loved ones are protected from flu.' The NHS logo is in the top right corner, and 'STAY WELL THIS WINTER' is in a box at the bottom left.

Blood Pressure

What is a normal blood pressure reading?

A normal blood pressure reading is below 140/90, but if you have heart or circulatory disease, diabetes or kidney disease, your blood pressure should ideally be less than 130/80. Hypertension means your blood pressure is constantly above recommended levels. Low blood pressure is a measurement of 90/60mmHg or lower. Your doctor can advise you what is an appropriate blood pressure range for you.

If you want to monitor your blood pressure at home, it can be a good idea to get a blood pressure machine that lets you keep a track of your blood pressure readings at times that are suitable for you, in the comfort of your own home.

How to check your blood pressure using a blood pressure machine

1. In order for it to be an accurate reading it's important that you're resting and that you're not feeling anxious or stressed.
2. Sit upright in a chair, your back against the back of the chair, and place your feet flat on the floor.
3. Rest your arm on a table if you have one and just make sure your hand and arm are relaxed on the table. It's important that you don't clench your fist when you're taking your blood pressure.
4. Place the cuff over your upper arm and tighten the cuff over your arm, making sure you can fit two fingers underneath the cuff. You want the cuff to be over the upper part of your arm with the tubing leading down the centre or slightly to the right of your arm.
5. When you check your blood pressure, don't talk and just relax. Press the on button, and then press the start button.
6. You'll feel the cuff inflate quite rapidly. It may temporarily be a bit tender or uncomfortable as the cuff inflates and deflates automatically, but this will only be for a short period of time. If it is too tender/uncomfortable you can just press the 'Stop' button and the cuff will instantly deflate.
7. Once you get your reading, make a note of it. Some blood pressure machines now come with a printer. This allows you to stick your print outs in your diary.
8. A few minutes after you've taken your blood pressure, it's a good idea to check it again, to make sure the readings are similar and accurate.

If you've been asked by your GP or nurse to check your blood pressure, take it twice a day – morning and evening – unless instructed otherwise, they may ask you to submit it in the format below. **Please only send in readings if you've been requested to do so.**

Please reply by e-mail to admin.parkfield@nhs.net

Name _____

DOB _____

Home blood pressure readings.

Please sit quietly for 2-5 minutes and relax. Then take 2 blood pressure readings, one after the other, at least 1 minute apart from each other. Please record both readings each morning and each evening that you measure.

Date	Morning BP – first reading	Morning BP – second reading	Evening BP- first reading	Evening BP- second reading
Average (For Dr use only)				

Clinical Pharmacist

Zoom Health Talk - Wednesday 14th April 7.30 pm

Joy Oyebokun, our Clinical Pharmacist, will be telling us all about her role and how she can support patients in our Health Talk. This will take place on Zoom, in the form of a 30 minute presentation followed by an opportunity for questions. To receive the link, please email us at friendsofparkfieldppg@gmail.com.

Introduction from Joy:

“My name is Joy and I am one of the clinical pharmacists in the Potters Bar Primary Care Network. I am one of two pharmacists working at Parkfield Medical Centre and our role is to manage and resolve day-to-day and long-term medicine issues. As clinical pharmacists, we are highly qualified experts in medicines and we work as part of the practice team to improve patient safety, outcomes and value. Some of the tasks I do on a day-to-day basis include running medication review clinics, providing advice to those on multiple medicines, answering medicine-related questions from patients, dealing with changes from patients recently discharged from hospital, managing the care of those on high-risk medicines and managing medicines shortages by providing suitable alternatives.”

Information about Clinical Pharmacists:

The clinical pharmacist role, when integrated into the medical practice team, provides a valuable resource to patients and a complementary skill set to fellow clinicians.

A large proportion of GP time is taken up with medicine-related work such as repeat prescription reauthorisation, medication reviews, medicines reconciliation on discharge, and acute medication requests.

Clinical pharmacists in GP practices can help resolve day-to-day medicine issues and work with patients directly to improve their adherence to their medication. As experts in medicines, we help to improve efficiency and support medicine optimisation effectively within the practice.

The variety of roles that can be performed by practice pharmacists are;

- Managing prescribing process which includes high risk drug monitoring, managing medicines shortages
- Being the point of contact for all medicine-related queries
- Long-term conditions clinics
- Reviewing patients on complex medication regimens and polypharmacy
- Quality improvement services
- Implementing drug alerts and withdrawals, for example, MHRA alerts.
- National service specifications – support in development, implementation and delivery of services

Practice pharmacists assist with improving communication and developing relationships with pharmacists across networks and the wider healthcare system.

Practices with clinical pharmacists have been able to:

- Reduce waiting times for appointments
- Improve screenings and diagnosis of chronic and common ailments
- Improve patient safety and health outcomes
- Reduce the wastage and overuse of medicines
- Reduce A&E admissions

Ultimately, pharmacists may help to contribute to an improved work-life balance for GPs, whilst also improving safety and quality across the whole practice.

Zoom Quiz Number Two - Saturday 27th February 7.30 pm

Following the success of our first quiz held on Zoom last October we will be holding another on Saturday 27 February at 7.30pm, which may or may not be during Lockdown 3. Either way we hope that many of you will join us for this enjoyable way of passing an evening.

As usual the quiz will be presented by Steve and the format will be similar to last time, including a picture and a music round. We are sure this will be varied and interesting, with enough challenging questions to keep everyone on their toes! It will be open to household teams, pairs and singles and, on this occasion, we will not be charging to participate. Please book through friendsofparkfieldppg@gmail.com so that the joining link can be emailed to you. Full details will be provided with the acknowledgement of your booking.



We hope you can join us for this fun evening

New Dermatoscope



PPG donations have been used to purchase this new piece of equipment which will prove invaluable in patient consultations. This instrument helps to differentiate between worrying and non-worrying lesions with very much more confidence than a simple magnifying glass.

Several of the doctors have done additional training to enhance their skills in using this equipment, often enabling them to confidently reassure a patient that a skin lesion that concerns them is benign. Conversely, they are also more confident in identifying lesions that need urgent referral to hospital and may need excision.

Donations

Thank you to all those PPG members who continued to make donations, enabling us to carry on supporting the Surgery and its patients. We are always grateful for your generosity. For practical reasons we are not requesting completion of a membership renewal this year. If you would like to give a donation please make cheques payable to **Friends of Parkfield PPG** and send to the surgery marked for our attention. To enable us to match it with our membership records, please provide your name and address. If you'd prefer to donate electronically, please email us.

New Surgery Website Coming Soon

Behind the scenes the Surgery has been working on a new Website and this will be up and running soon. The new site will provide more information for patients, be easier to navigate and be more interactive. We look forward to the benefits this site will bring, for example an easy way for patients to update their contact information.

Podiatry Service Relocation

After twenty four fantastic years at Parkfield medical centre, I'd like to say a huge thank you to all the staff and management for making me feel a part of the workplace. Fortunately, I have been able to continue to offer podiatry services throughout the lockdown and I am very grateful to all of my patients for their support during this very difficult time. I will be moving to St Marys Church, small hall, from February So please do contact me if you require podiatry treatments.

Asha Bhundia 07976 422 682