

# BUNTINGFORD & PUCKERIDGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

[www.buntingfordandpuckeridgepractice.co.uk](http://www.buntingfordandpuckeridgepractice.co.uk)

## Newsletter - winter 2020

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### [Have you made any New Year Health Resolutions for 2020?](#)

Many of us will have made a healthy New Year's resolution – maybe to lose weight, quit smoking or drink less – and we all know how hard it can be to stick to it. Our team of healthcare professionals are here to help motivate you and offer you advice and guidance.

#### Want to lose weight and get fit?

Our nurses and healthcare assistants can help you with trying to lose weight and get fitter. They are happy to weigh you and check to see if your BMI is within the normal range and to offer you some advice about healthy eating and ways to increase your daily activity levels. Our nurses may be able to refer you for free to a local slimming club (conditions apply). Many people feel that the extra help and support they get from going to a weekly slimming meeting helps to keep them on track when trying to lose weight.

#### Keen to finally stop smoking?

Our healthcare team can assist you in your goal to finally stop smoking with our smoking cessation sessions. They will offer you practical health and advice and suggest ways that you can try to achieve your goal. We all know how bad smoking is for us and the long-term damage it can do to your health so why not make 2019 the year you finally stop?

#### Worried out your alcohol intake?

Recent press articles have reminded everyone how important it is to make sure our alcohol intake is not higher than it should be. After the festive excesses of too much food and drink January is a good time to try to reduce how much alcohol we drink. Please make an appointment to see a GP if you are concerned about how much alcohol you are currently drinking.

#### Feeling low in mood, anxious, tired or lethargic?

Many people feel low in mood during the winter months and find it hard to get motivated. Improving your diet, increasing your activity levels and getting some natural daylight each day are all ways you can try to improve your general wellbeing. If you are feeling particularly tired, anxious or low in mood then please remember our doctors and nurses are here to help you.

Alternatively, there is some very good self-help advice available at [www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp](http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp) where you can find some useful information and leaflets about health and wellbeing.

#### Aged between 40 and 74?

Our nurses and healthcare assistants can help you in lots of ways if you are trying to improve your general health and if you are aged between 40 and 74 years old, you are entitled to a free NHS health check so look out for your invitation.

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## 'Health Help' available 24 hours a day at the QEII in Welwyn Hatfield

Do you know the best place to get help when you have an urgent health concern?

The Urgent Care Centre at the New QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Urgent Care Centre can treat lots of health problems, such as burns, scalds, sprains, minor cuts and suspected broken bones; but it isn't the right place for everyone and there is a more limited service staffed by nurses after 11pm. If you're unsure about whether the Urgent Care Centre can help, please call NHS 111 before you travel. Calls to NHS 111 are free from any phone.

NHS 111 is available 24/7 over the phone and online. Trained advisers will ask you questions about your symptoms. Depending on your health need, they will give you advice, may put you in touch with a doctor or nurse over the phone, or make you an overnight or weekend appointment with a GP at the New QEII Hospital, if you are assessed as needing one. They have all the health information at their fingertips and will know the best place for you to receive care.

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## Practice Update

The Buntingford & Puckeridge Medical Practice would like to respond to patient concerns relating to ongoing housing development in Buntingford and the recent announcement of the closure of the Orchard Surgery.

In May 2014, anticipating an increase in population and a need to strengthen the provision of primary medical services in the town and surrounding villages, the Partners from the Buntingford Medical Centre and The Standon and Puckeridge Surgery, merged their practices. Since then we have undertaken to increase capacity and doctor access.

The practice has recently welcomed two new permanent members of staff to the Buntingford team: Dr Grenfell, Nurse Noemia. There is an Advanced Nurse Practitioner at both sites, who are able to prescribe and our Primary Care Practitioner works across both of the practice sites.

A planned extension of the Puckeridge premises is due to commence in the New Year and expansion opportunities continue to be explored for Buntingford Medical Centre. Perhaps the biggest challenge we face is car parking at present. We continue our plea to local residents not to use the surgery carpark to park their cars, despite polite notices there are a number of individuals that ignore the request. Space is limited which makes life very difficult for those more frail or elderly patients that need to drive and park.

With a robust clinical team in place and improving premises, the practice is committed to providing and supporting traditional high quality, sustainable family orientated medical services for existing and new patients. We continue to offer on the day appointments for urgent medical conditions and routine appointments for all medical conditions with evening appointment availability, including general health checks for those over 40, male and female health, skin health, sport injuries, minor surgery and joint injection clinics, midwife, community diabetes services and counselling services. We have recently launched a pilot of in house Physio assessment clinics.

The practice continues to work closely with the local CCG to ensure these valuable services are sustainable for the future.

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## Patient Survey

Thank you to all patients who completed the recent survey. Results and feedback are being reviewed - Look out for an update in the future newsletters!

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## WHAT TO DO WHEN THE SURGERY IS CLOSED



If you need medical assistance when the surgery is closed please consider the following options:

**Call 999 in a medical emergency** when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk e.g.: choking, chest pain/heart attack, blacking out, bleeding heavily, stroke.

**A&E departments deal with genuine life-threatening emergencies.** There are A&E departments at The Lister, The Princess Alexandra and Addenbrooke's Hospital.

**Call 111 for non-emergency medical help** (see below for details).

**Minor Injuries Units (MIUs) can treat:** cuts, bumps, bruises and sprains, broken bones, scalds or burns. No appointment is needed and there are MIUs at the Herts & Essex, Cheshunt and St Albans Hospitals.

**Urgent Care Centres can treat:** minor injuries and urgent minor illnesses when your GP surgery is closed. There is an Urgent Care Centre at the New QEII Hospital (open 24hrs a day, every day) and the Hemel Hempstead Hospital (open 8am to 10 pm).

**Your local pharmacy can help with:** medicines, coughs and colds, aches and pains, vomiting and diarrhoea, allergies, minor illnesses. Remember to check when your local pharmacy is open over the holiday period.



### NHS 111 THE NON- EMERGENCY NHS NUMBER

When you call 111, you can now get advice from a wider range of healthcare professionals including: GPs, nurses, pharmacists, emergency dentists, mental health professionals, emergency care professionals.

**111 is the NHS non-emergency number.** NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. Call NHS 111 if:

- You need medical help fast but it's not an emergency
- You don't have a GP
- You need to access a GP but your surgery is closed
- You don't know who to call
- You need health information or reassurance about what to do next

When you call NHS 111, a team of fully trained healthcare advisors, supported by clinical advisors, is there to help you. They will ask you questions to assess you and will ensure you receive the right care for your condition.

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## Prescriptions

Please remember to order you repeat medication in plenty of time.

**Please allow up to three full 'working' days for prescriptions to be processed** and remember to take weekends and bank holidays into account.

Repeat prescriptions will be accepted in the following ways:

1. **Online** - you must be registered for online services to use this option. To request repeat medication follow the link on the website under the prescription dropdown menu.
2. **By hand** - drop your repeat slip in to the red prescription box in reception having clearly marked the items required or pick up a form from reception.
3. **By post** - send the request to us including your full name, address, date of birth and exact medication, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope if you require your prescription to be posted back to you.

The surgery will **no longer be accepting requests for prescriptions via email**, please call into the surgery and ask for an online request form, this will need to be filled in and taken to the surgery with photo id, when this information is processed you will be given an id and password where you will be able to order all future medication.

This form can also be downloaded from the Buntingford and Puckeridge website. Your most recent request will be processed this time only.

**We cannot accept prescription requests over the telephone**

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## Appointments

### Triage Appointments

Please remember that triage same day appointments are reserved **for urgent medical issues only**. If you feel you need to see a doctor or nurse urgently please bear in mind that the duty doctor will allocate an emergency appointment if necessary, please note that these appointments will be late morning.

You will need to give the receptionist some brief medical details so that the duty doctor can triage all appointment requests efficiently.

### Routine Appointments

If you need to see a doctor for a routine medical problem you can book an appointment up to four weeks in advance, this allows you more flexibility in booking your appointment so that it is easier for you to choose a date and time convenient for you.

### Wasted Appointment Time - Did Not Attend

We continue to see high volumes of wasted appointment time due to non-attendance. In December Buntingford had 271 no shows and Standon & Puckeridge had 142 no shows.

**Please remember to advise the surgery as soon as possible if you cannot attend an appointment so that we can offer the appointment slot to another patient.**

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Drop in for a free tea or coffee, a chat, information and support at the...

- Are you forgetful?
- Are you worried about your memory?
- Are you caring for a loved one who is?

## MEMORY Café

Held monthly from 11:30am to 1:30pm  
in the foyer at Hertford Theatre before a  
dementia-friendly movie screening. See overleaf for details.

2020	
22nd January	Memory Café followed by Meet Me In St Louis
19th February	Memory Café followed by Grease
18th March	Memory Café followed by Easter Parade
22nd April	Memory Café
20th May	Memory Café
24th June	Memory Café followed by Cabaret
22nd July	Memory Café followed by Love Me Tender
23rd September	Memory Café followed by Bugsy Malone
21st October	Memory Café followed by Gentlemen Prefer Blondes
18th November	Memory Café
29th December	Memory Café followed by Live Christmas Show

Timings and films might be subject to change, please check Hertford Theatre website for details.

For more information go to: [www.hertfordtheatre.com](http://www.hertfordtheatre.com) and look under the 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' section.

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## Choose if data from your Health Record is shared for research purposes

Your health records contain a type of data called confidential patient information. This data can be used to help with research and planning.

You can choose to stop your confidential patient information being used for research and planning.

The national data opt-out was introduced on 25 May 2018, enabling patients to opt out from the use of their data for research or planning purposes, in line with the recommendations of the National Data Guardian in her Review of Data Security, Consent and Opt-Outs.

### What is confidential patient information

Confidential patient information is when 2 types of information from your health records are joined together.

The 2 types of information are:

- something that can identify you
- something about your health care or treatment

For example, your name joined with what medicine you take.

Identifiable information on its own is used by health and care services to contact patients and this is not confidential patient information.

### How we use your confidential patient information

#### Your individual care

Health and care staff may use your confidential patient information to help with your treatment and care. For example, when you visit your GP they may look at your records for important information about your health.

#### Research and planning

Confidential patient information might also be used to:

- plan and improve health and care services
- research and develop cures for serious illnesses

**Patients can view or change their national data opt-out choice at any time by using the online service at [www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters)**

**Or: by calling 0300 3035678.**

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Have you had your flu jab yet? If not we still have a supply of flu vaccinations, so please contact the surgery to book an appointment. The flu jab is an annual vaccination and is free on the NHS for anyone over 65 or who falls in to certain categories.

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## HELPING TO RAISE CANCER AWARENESS

As many of you may have noticed the NHS has been working hard to raise the public's awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer. We have also been encouraging people to take part in the various cancer screening schemes (such as the breast, cervical & FIT screening programmes) that are available. Screening tests are for people without symptoms and they can help detect the disease at an early stage and some can prevent cancer too.

For more information on signs and symptoms please visit our 'Be clear on Cancer' page on our website: <http://www.buntingfordandpuckeridgepractice.co.uk/>

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### Non-NHS Services

Some services provided or requests received are not covered under our contract with the NHS and are therefore classed as private work, below are a few examples:

- Letters from your GP
- Insurance Claim Forms
- Medicals for Pre-employment/driving requirements (HGV, PSV etc.)
- Prescriptions for taking medicine abroad
- Vaccination Certificates
- Private Sick Notes

**Please bear in mind when asking for these that as they are Non-NHS work and sufficient time is needed for it to be carried out, this work may also incur a charge.**

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## Surgery Car Parks - A Polite Request

The surgery car parks have limited space and should only be used by patients and visitors to the surgery. We continue to experience vehicles being left in the surgery car parks whilst the drivers visit the neighbouring schools or shops.

We kindly request that the car park is only used when visiting the surgery and that patients do not use the doctor parking spaces which must have access in to and out of at all times in case of emergency.

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## Up-To-Date Contact Details

Please make sure that we have all your correct contact details. It is especially important that we have your up-to-date telephone number for when the surgery needs to contact you or for when you have requested a telephone call from a doctor.

If you have a change of address or telephone number, please ask reception for a change of personal details form. Not only are these details important for the surgery's use but they are equally important if we refer you on to another service or hospital.

You can also change your details by downloading the form from our website, simply follow the link then click on the 'You contact details' section: <https://www.mysurgerywebsite.co.uk>

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Have a question – not sure where to go to get the answer?

Why don't you visit our website: <http://www.buntingfordandpuckeridgepractice.co.uk>

Our surgery website is full of useful information and advice, including forms, phone numbers and general information.

You can also gain access to the online services which allows you to book, cancel and amend appointments as well as request medication.

**Please note if you are looking to register with us it is currently not possible to complete the registration process online, as we require a signature and ID documentation.**

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## [Living with Isabel](#)

For those patients who are living with a more serious illness there is a wide range of support and advice available from services such as the Isabel Hospice. Their Living Well services offers patients a variety of options to support them and those close to them living with serious, long term and life limiting conditions.

They run a variety of groups, sessions and courses designed to advise and support people to help them best cope with the consequences of living with their condition. Their Living Well services include: Living Well Exercise Group, Living Well Relaxation, FAB (Fatigue and Breathlessness) course, Coping Well Course, Feel Good Singing, Creative Café, Social Drop In Sessions. More information can be found at the Isabel Hospice website: [www.isabelhospice.org.uk](http://www.isabelhospice.org.uk)

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## [Living with a Chronic Illness?](#) [Don't Forget To Attend Your Annual Review](#)

If you are living with a chronic medical condition, such as asthma or diabetes, it is very important that you attend the surgery when you are invited for your annual review. The word "chronic" is used in medicine to refer to any disease or condition that persists over time or is frequently recurring.

We regularly invite our patients who have a chronic illness to attend for an annual review, usually with one of our practice nurses. This enables us to monitor your condition and to see if there is any additional help or advice you might need. It is very important that you attend your appointment when you receive a reminder so that we can make sure you are looking after your health as best as you can.

When you next get an annual health review reminder why not book the appointment straight away rather than put it off till another time. The letter will advise you if you need to book a blood test before your appointment and will give you any other information you might need about preparing for your appointment. You can book appointments up to four weeks in advance so you choose a day and time that is most convenient for you.

By working alongside a health care professional and attending your regular health review you can make sure that you are doing everything you can to stay as fit and healthy as possible.

There is more information about living with a chronic illness available on our website under the 'Your Health section'.

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Do you have a carer or are you someone that cares for a spouse, family member or friend. There are a large number of unpaid carers in our community who have not been identified, usually because they do not see their role as 'a carer' and are therefore not aware of the services and support available to them. If you have someone that cares for you, or you are a carer, please ask our reception team for a **Carers' Welcome Pack**.

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