

# NEWSLETTER



BIRCHWOOD  
SURGERY

COLOUR COPY AVAILABLE THROUGH WEBSITE!

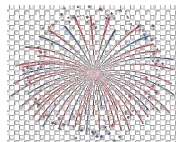
ISSUE 8: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2018



## WINTER IS COMING!

After a very long, hot summer, autumn is rearing its ugly head and the winter chill is creeping in! A new season brings a new newsletter and a new checklist of autumn / winter essentials.

No matter if it's trick or treating, watching a firework display or carol singing, we want to make sure you are wrapped up warm and taking precautions against all those winter bugs.



With the flu back in full force, make sure you read our section about who is eligible for the flu jab. Please ask at reception to book your flu jab.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable couple of months and we shall see you in 2019 for our next issue!



## LUNCH TIME CLOSURE

A reminder to all of our patients that since Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2018, we now close our surgery everyday between 12:30pm and 1:30pm for lunch.

Our phone lines are also closed during this time for non-urgent enquires.

However if you need a home visit or urgent medical advice, our emergency desk is still manned during this time. Just call our surgery and follow the instructions on the recorded phone message.

Should you need any medical advice during this time, please call NHS 111.

**Should you require any emergency medical attention during this time, please call 999.**

## NEW PATIENTS

Since 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017, the surgery has not been registering new patients, after receiving approval from NHS England to close our list. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and hope to be open again soon to new patients.

## BIRCHWOOD TEAM

### Doctors

Dr R J O Graham – Senior Partner

## PREScription REQUEST & COLLECTION

Prescription request handed in:	Prescription ready by:
Monday	Thursday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Tuesday	Friday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Wednesday	Monday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Thursday	Tuesday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>
Friday	Wednesday <u>AFTER 3PM</u>

PLEASE TAKE BANK HOLIDAYS INTO ACCOUNT AND ALLOW US AN EXTRA 48 HOURS WHEN REQUESTING YOUR PRESCRIPTION

### WHEN TO CALL BIRCHWOOD

If you are looking to book an appointment, a reminder that we book **emergency appointments** on the day and **routine appointments can now be booked four weeks in advance.**

These appointments become available at 8:30am each morning.

We ask that if you are calling for prescription queries, general enquires etc. you call from 10:00am onwards as between 8:30am – 10:30am is a very busy time for us. If you are waiting for test results, please call after 2pm.

### OPENING HOURS

Monday – 8:30am – 6pm  
Tuesday – 8:30am – 8pm  
Wednesday – 7am – 6pm  
Thursday – 8:30am – 6pm  
Friday – 8:30am – 6pm  
Saturday – Closed  
Sunday – Closed

Remember appointment booking is only available from 8:30am each morning.

### EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS TELEPHONE NUMBER

If you require urgent medical advice Monday to Friday between 6:30pm-8:30am, weekends and bank holidays please call NHS 111

# GDPR

## General Data Protection Regulation



The General Data Protections Regulation (GDPR) is a ruling intended to protect the data of citizens within the European Union. The GDPR is a move by The Council of the European Union, European Parliament, and European Commission to provide citizens with a greater level of control over their personal data

What sort of data will fall under the General Data Protections Regulation?

- Name
- Photo
- Email address
- Social media posts
- Personal medical information
- IP addresses
- Bank details



Here at Birchwood we want to make sure that we are implementing new procedures to comply with the new GDPR regulations.

**The biggest change we have had to make is that you will now need to provide ID to pick up anything from us. Or, if you need someone to pick something up on your behalf you will have to make us aware of who will be picking it up for you, and then that person will need to show us ID when they get into the surgery. Items that you will need to show ID for include:**

- Sick notes
- Insurance documents
- Any GP letters
- Blood test forms
- Blood test results
- Online user details



For more information and guidance on GDPR regulations, please take a look at [www.wired.co.uk/article/what-is-gdpr-uk-eu-legislation-compliance-summary-fines-2018](http://www.wired.co.uk/article/what-is-gdpr-uk-eu-legislation-compliance-summary-fines-2018)

## What is Flu?

We are now in flu season and it is important for those eligible to ensure that they have receive their flu jab. It is also important to recognise the signs of flu and what to do should you think you have it.

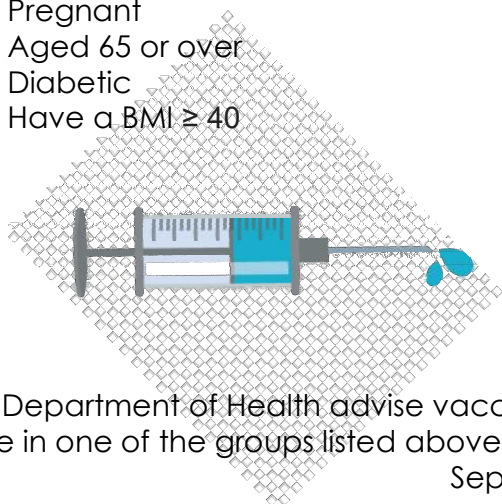


Flu is a highly infectious disease with symptoms such as fever, chills, aches and pains in the joint or muscles, headaches and extreme tiredness. Flu is actually worse than a bad cold and you may need to spend a few days in bed recovering. Although serious infections are less common in healthy adults, they can sometimes lead to hospitalisations, permanent disability and even death.

Each year the NHS prepares for the unpredictability of flu. For most healthy people, the flu is unpleasant but usually self-limiting with recovery generally within a week.

However, there is a particular risk of severe illness from catching flu for those who are:

- Pregnant
- Aged 65 or over
- Diabetic
- Have a BMI  $\geq 40$



Or if you have a long-term condition of the:

- Lungs, e.g. Asthma or COPD
- Heart
- Brain or nervous system
- Kidneys
- Liver
- Immune system
- No spleen

The Department of Health advise vaccination to be your best option for protection so if you're in one of the groups listed above, don't underestimate the flu – book your jab from September 2018.

## What should you do before you get your flu vaccination?

Inform your surgery if:

- You have ever had a reaction to a previous flu vaccination
- You are feeling unwell or have a raised temperature
- You are allergic to hen's eggs

Please arrive in good time for your appointment. You can also help the clinic run smoothly by taking off your coat and rolling up your sleeve (on the arm you don't write with) before you are called for your vaccination.

Flu season will start in September and each year the surgery plans to vaccinate as many of our 6000 entitled patients as possible. Your pharmacist can also give you a flu jab, however unlike your surgery they will not give you other vaccinations that you may be eligible for (for example, pneumococcal or shingles).



Patients aged 70-76 (born after 01/09/1942) and 78 – 79 are entitled to a shingles vaccination. This helps protect against this painful infectious disease which can have long term effects.

We also offer pregnant women the whooping cough vaccination alongside flu which your pharmacy will not. Having the whooping cough vaccination boosts immunity in women so that the whooping cough antibodies are passed from mother and baby to protect infants in the first few months of life.

Letters + SMS invites will start to go out from September to eligible patients. If you have not received an invite and feel you may be eligible then please ask at reception.

### Who is eligible?

Children Aged 4,5,6,7,8 + 9yrs - Will be vaccinated at school

Children 6m-3yrs and 10-17yrs - Will be invited by the surgery for vaccination

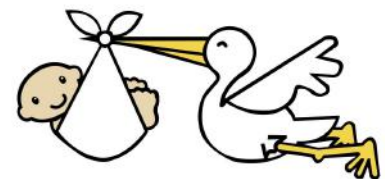
Adults 18-65+ - Will be invited by the surgery for vaccination

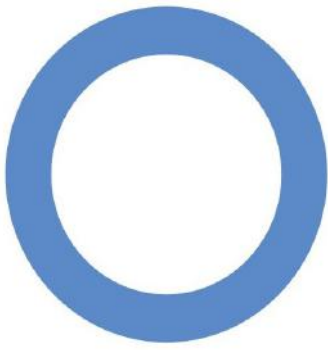
Housebound patients will be contacted and visited by a doctor or nurse throughout the flu season.

### Pregnancy

Why is flu more serious in pregnancy?

During pregnancy, a woman's natural immunity to infections reduced in order for your baby to grow. This therefore means pregnant women are more susceptible to getting flu and the serious complications associated with it, such as pneumonia which can follow on.





## Diabetes

Why is flu more serious for people who have diabetes?

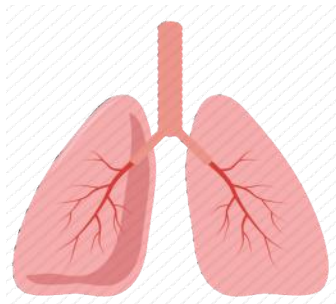
Diabetes can have an effect on the immune system which leaves diabetics more susceptible to infections. In diabetics flu can cause blood sugars to become deranged which can lead to hospital admissions and even death.

## 65 and over

Why is flu serious if you're aged 65 or over?

With age the immune system weakens, leaving older people more susceptible to flu and then develop complications such as pneumonia.

65+



## Asthma & COPD

Why is flu serious for people with Asthma or COPD?

Patients with lung problems like Asthma or COPD are more likely to catch flu. Flu can be more serious in people with these conditions as it is possible they will go on to develop pneumonia.

## Children

Why is flu serious for children?

For most people, flu is limited to being an unpleasant disease. However, for the very young the flu can be serious.

The virus can be contracted at nursery, school or at home and it can spread easily.

By vaccinating your child against the flu you help to protect them, and make it much harder for the flu virus to spread.

For most children under the age of 18 their flu vaccination is a painless but tickly nasal spray!

**FLU CLINICS**





**Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of October**

**9am – 12pm**

**Patients Eligible 65 +**

**Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October**

**9am – 12pm**

**Patients Eligible Under 65**

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## **ONLINE SERVICES**



Did you know that you can sign up to use our online services? It is a que free, paperless and simple way to be able to order your prescriptions, ask our Doctors and nurses questions and see your own medical record!

To sign up for this all you have to do is pop into the surgery with a form of identification (a driving license, debit card etc.) and we can issue you a username and a password. It's as simple as that!

## **MINOR ILLNESS NURSES**

Our Minor Illness Nurses are available to help with acute problems and illnesses and can prescribe medication where appropriate.

Conditions where seeing a doctor/minor illness nurse is **NOT** usually necessary:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Conjunctivitis
- Most sore throats
- Coughs and colds
- Emergency contraception
- Insect bites within first 72 hours
- Chicken pox
- Hayfever
- Backache
- Scabies/lice/worms
- Mild joint pain/soft tissue injury

The Doctor's advice for these conditions is to seek self-care advice from

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk) or your local pharmacist.

Patients who **CAN** be booked in the Minor Illness Clinic:

- Breathing problems
- Mild to moderate abdominal pain
- Sore throat (for more than 5 days)
- Ear pain (for more than 5-7 days)
- Prolonged/worsening coughs especially asthma/COPD patients
- Severe back/joint pain
- UTI's
- Unwell with a rash

Anything ongoing or previously prescribed for is not appropriate to be in minor illness clinic and will need to be seen by a Doctor.

## **ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING (EPS)**



To recap for those of you who may not have read our last issue of the newsletter, the electronic prescription service (EPS) allows prescribers to safely and securely send your prescription electronically to your local/usual pharmacy online. This means less paper waste, less time waiting in queues and is efficient and convenient for both yourself and our staff. In the future, EPS will become the default option for the prescribing, dispensing and reimbursement of prescriptions in primary care in England.

You don't need a computer to start using EPS, as long as both your GP surgery and the pharmacy (or other dispensing appliance contractor) offers the service then it is available to you!

You can nominate any pharmacy, whether it is the one closest to your home, on your route to work or where you shop – and you are able to change this any time!

All you need to do is pop into the pharmacy you wish to collect your prescriptions in and nominate them as your designated pharmacy and we'll do all the work from there, simple!

If you wish to change or cancel this service at any time then all you have to do is make your pharmacy aware that you wish to move or cancel the service and it will be done for you.

#### A few changes...

At Birchwood surgery we try and act on all the feedback we get from our patients. Over the last couple of months we have made some slight changes to our booking system. These are:

**We no longer offer phone call appointments with the Doctors.**  
**You can now book routine appointments up to four weeks in advance.**  
**We no longer do travel health consultations (see further on for advice on travel health).**

#### NOTICE:

We would like to remind our patients that although our reception staff are not medically qualified, they do receive training from the Doctors to be able to determine the most clinically appropriate appointment for you when you call. We do appreciate that sometimes you may not wish to tell us what is wrong and our reception staff understand this and will make a note against your appointment. Please keep this in mind when talking to our reception team.

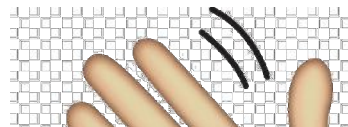
**Hello & Goodbye**



In November we see the return of Dr Whelan who has been on maternity leave. As mentioned in our previous issue we are delighted for her and her family for the news of their little baby boy.

for over 30 years will be retiring in the middle of November. As well as

While Dr Whelan was off on maternity leave we



Hertfordshire Partnership **NHS**  
University NHS Foundation Trust

Are you...

embarrassed

feeling  
judged

unhappy

anxious and  
worried

experiencing  
panic attacks

lacking  
confidence

stressed  
out

**The Wellbeing Team**  
can help you work out how to feel better...

We offer workshops, online self help, guided self help with telephone support, individual sessions and other techniques aimed at helping you to find ways of coping and get you back to your usual self.

Our  values  
Welcoming Kind Positive Respectful Professional

welcomed Dr Clarke to our surgery. It will be sad saying goodbye to her, but luckily for us it won't be for long as she's joining us again on a part time basis at the start of November!

This November marks another big goodbye here at Birchwood. Dr Brooks, who has been a GP at Birchwood

being an outstanding senior partner and a dedicated GP, Dr Brooks is a passionate, funny and supportive colleague and we will all be sad to see her go.

Are you experiencing any of these feelings? Don't suffer in silence – talk to someone  
[www.hpft.nhs.uk](http://www.hpft.nhs.uk) - 03007770707

## Ear Wax – courtesy of British Tinnitus Organisation

### What is ear wax?

Wax is an important and natural secretion found in the ear. It keeps the ear canal lubricated and protects the ear against dust, dirt and bacteria, which helps to prevent infection.



Wax, or cerumen as it is also known, is composed of epithelium (skin cells), dust and oily secretions from the sebaceous and ceruminous glands in the ear canal. These secretions lubricate the ear canal and prevent it becoming too dry. The composition of wax varies from individual to individual depending on diet, age and environment.

### What should you do about ear wax build up?



If wax is not causing any problems, it is best left alone. The ear is self-cleaning and the wax should clear naturally, so it is unnecessary to try to remove the wax yourself. If wax is noticed on the outer ear, a wipe with a clean flannel may be all that is needed. Sometimes, however, wax may build up, particularly if it is very dry or if the person has a narrow or hairy ear canal. Wax may also build up if it has been pushed down the canal by cotton buds, hearing aids, hair clips or other implements. Cotton buds can also irritate the ear canal, stripping it of its natural oils and causing it to feel itchy. When water gets into the ear during swimming or showering this may cause the wax to expand, giving a sensation of 'blockage' in the ear and increasing the perception of tinnitus.

If wax build up is causing deafness, problems with hearing aids, or is uncomfortable, it may need to be removed. Some people with tinnitus feel that their tinnitus is more troublesome when their ears are full of wax.

### How can you treat ear wax at home?

If you have any pain in your ears, or any discharge from them, do not attempt any treatment at home, but see your GP. Should your GP feel that syringing is required or suction, then a referral will be made to ENT or Ernest Gardiner, as this service is not offered by Birchwood Surgery.

Most people tend to use ear wax softening drops as the first option for wax removal. These may soften the wax enough to aid the natural expulsion from the ear. There are many ear drops on the market. Some proprietary drops may be harsh to use, particularly if the person has a sensitive skin or any skin condition such as eczema or psoriasis. Sodium bicarbonate ear drops can also be effective but again some people find them very drying.



Rather than use such ear drops, many people find that olive oil is easily available, comfortable to use and does not need to be warmed before use. Two or three drops, twice a day for one to two weeks is usually sufficient, and the wax will often then come out by itself.



When introducing drops into the ear, it is best to use a dropper and lay with your head on one side for a couple of minutes to allow the drops to move along the ear canal. After this period, tissue may be used to soak up any excess from the outside of the ear. Some people find it easiest to instil the ear

drops when they are in bed, first thing in the morning and last thing at night.

If you often get a build-up of ear wax, using a couple of drops of olive oil once a week may help prevent the build-up.

**If you have any more questions please take a look at  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/earwax-build-up](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/earwax-build-up) for more advice.**

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## Christmas Opening Hours

Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	8:30am – 6pm
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	CLOSED
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	CLOSED
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	8:30am – 6pm
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	8:30am – 6pm
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	CLOSED
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> of December 2018.....	CLOSED
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> of December 2018.....	8:30am – 6pm
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2019.....	CLOSED
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> of January 2019.....	7am-6pm

If you need medical advice over Christmas and Birchwood Surgery is closed, you will need to call 111.

**If it is an absolute emergency you need to call 999.**



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## Birchwood Surgery Travel Health Advice Leaflet

The following information will help you to stay healthy on your trip.  
Please make sure you read it following on from your appointment with us.

### **WATER**

Diseases can be caught from drinking contaminated water, or swimming in it.

Unless you know the water supply is safe where you are staying,  
**ONLY USE** (in order of preference)



1. Boiled water
2. Bottled water or canned drinks
3. Water treated by a sterilising agent.

This includes water used to make ice cubes in drinks and water for cleaning your teeth

### **SWIMMING**

It is safer to swim in water that is well chlorinated. If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean, avoid swimming in fresh water lakes and streams. You can catch a parasitic disease called schistosomiasis from such places. This disease is also known as Bilharzia. It is also wise never to go barefoot, but to wear protective footwear when out, even on the beach. Other diseases can be caught from sand and soil, particularly wet soil.

### **FOOD**

Contaminated food is the commonest source of many diseases abroad. You can help prevent it by following these guidelines:

- ONLY EAT WELL COOKED FRESH FOOD
- AVOID LEFTOVERS and REHEATED FOODS
- ENSURE MEAT IS THOROUGHLY COOKED
- EAT COOKED VEGETABLES, AVOID SALADS
- ONLY EAT FRUIT YOU CAN PEEL
- NEVER DRINK UNPASTEURISED MILK
- AVOID ICE-CREAM
- SHELLFISH IS A HIGH RISK FOOD
- AVOID BUYING FOOD FROM STREET VENDORS' STALLS AS A GENERAL RULE

*Two phrases to help  
you remember*

**COOK IT, PEEL IT, OR LEAVE IT!  
WHEN IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT!**



Another source of calories is alcohol! If you drink to excess, alcohol could lead you to become carefree and ignore these precautions.

### **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the 'faecal-oral' route. To help prevent this, always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating and before handling food. Using hand gel is another sensible option.

### **TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA**

This is the **most common illness** that you will be exposed to abroad and there is **NO vaccine against it**. Diarrhoea is caused by eating and/or drinking food and water contaminated by bacteria, viruses or parasites. Risk of illness is higher in some countries than others.

**High risk areas** include North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, S.E. Asia, South America, Mexico and the Middle East.

**Medium risk areas** include the northern Mediterranean, Canary Islands and the Caribbean Islands.

**Low risk areas** include North America, Western Europe and Australia



You can certainly help **prevent** travellers' diarrhoea in the way you **behave** - make sure you follow the food, water and personal hygiene guidelines already given.

### **What is travellers' diarrhoea?**

Travellers' diarrhoea is 3 or more loose stools in a 24 hour period often accompanied by stomach pain, cramps and vomiting. It usually lasts 2-4 days and whilst it is not a life threatening illness, it can disrupt your trip for several days. The main danger of the illness is

**dehydration**, and this, if very severe, can kill if it is not treated. **Treatment** is therefore **rehydration**. In severe cases and particularly in young children and the elderly, commercially prepared rehydration solution is extremely useful.

### **Travel well prepared**

A good tip is to take oral rehydration solutions with you. These can be bought over the counter in a chemist shop, available in tablet or sachet form — for example:

**DIORALYTE or ELECTROLADE or DIORALYTE RELIEF.** (The latter is a formula containing rice powder which also helps to relieve the diarrhoea, particularly useful in children). Prepare according to instructions. Take care regarding their use in very small children and seek medical advice where necessary.

**Anti-diarrhoeal tablets** can be used for adults but should NEVER be USED in children under 4 years of age, and only on prescription for children aged 4 to 12 years.

Commonly used tablets are IMODIUM® and LOMOTIL® or NORMALOE®.

**None of these tablets should ever be used if the person has a temperature or blood in the stool.**

### **Do contact medical help if the affected person has:-**

- A temperature
- Blood in the diarrhoea
- Diarrhoea for more than 48 hours (or 24 hours in children)
- Becomes confused

In some circumstances, antibiotics are used as a standby treatment for travellers' diarrhoea. Such medication is not usually available on the NHS in anticipation of you being ill when away and needs to be prescribed. A woman taking the oral contraceptive pill may not have full contraceptive protection if she has had diarrhoea and vomiting. Extra precautions must be used - refer to your 'pill' information leaflet. If using condoms, take a supply of good quality ones with you which are CE approved.

### **HEPATITIS B and HIV INFECTION - these diseases can be transmitted by**

- Blood transfusion
- Medical procedures with non-sterile equipment
- Sharing of needles (e.g. tattooing, body piercing, acupuncture and drug abuse)
- Sexual contact — Sexually transmitted infections or STIs are also transmitted this way



### **Ways to protect yourself**

- Only accept a blood transfusion when essential
- If travelling to a resource poor country, take a sterile medical kit
- Avoid procedures e.g. ear and body piercing, tattooing & acupuncture
- Avoid casual sex, especially without using condoms

**Remember!** Excessive alcohol can make you carefree and lead you to take risks you otherwise would not consider.

### **INSECT BITES**

Mosquitoes, certain types of flies, ticks and bugs can cause many different diseases. e.g. malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever. Some bite at night, but some during daytime so protection is needed at all times.



### Avoid being bitten by:

- Covering up skin as much as possible if going out at night, (mosquitoes that transmit malaria bite from dusk until dawn). Wear loose fitting clothes, long sleeves, trousers or long skirts.
- Use insect repellents on exposed skin. (DEET containing products are the most effective. A content of up to 50% DEET is recommended for tropical destinations). Clothes can be sprayed with repellents too or clothing specific sprays .g. permethrin. Check suitability for children on the individual products. If using sunscreen always apply first, followed by an insect repellent spray on top.
- If room is not air conditioned, but is screened, close shutters early evening and spray room with knockdown insecticide spray. In malarious regions, if camping, or sleeping in unprotected accommodation, always sleep under a mosquito net (impregnated with permethrin). Avoid camping near areas of stagnant water, these are common breeding areas for mosquitoes etc.
- Electric insecticide vaporisers are very effective as long as there are no power failures!
- There is **no scientific evidence** that electric buzzers, savoury yeast extract, tea tree oil, bath oils, garlic and vitamin B are effective.
- Homeopathic and herbal medications should NEVER be used as an alternative to conventional measures for malaria prevention.



### MALARIA

Malaria is a disease spread by mosquitoes; there is no vaccine yet available. If you are travelling to a malarious country, the travel adviser will have given you a separate leaflet with more details, please read it. Remember malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. If you develop flu like symptoms, including fever, sweats, chills, feeling unwell, headaches, muscle pains, cough, diarrhoea – then seek medical help immediately for advice and say you've been abroad. This is VITAL, don't delay. Remember the ABCD of malaria prevention advice:

- A**wareness of the risk
- B**ite prevention
- C**hemoprophylaxis (taking the correct tablets)
- D**iagnosis (knowing the symptoms and acting quickly)



### ANIMAL BITES

Rabies is present in many parts of the world. If a person develops rabies, death is 100% certain.

### THERE ARE 3 RULES REGARDING RABIES

1. Do not touch any animal, even dogs and cats
2. If you are licked on broken skin, scratched or bitten by an animal in a country which has rabies, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for 10 - 15 minutes, then apply an antiseptic solution if possible e.g. iodine or alcohol. Such precautions also apply if you are licked by the animal with their saliva coming into contact with your eyes or inside your mouth (essentially any mucous membranes)
3. Seek medical advice **IMMEDIATELY**, even if you have been previously immunised, **this is absolutely essential**



## **ACCIDENTS**

Major leading causes of death in travellers abroad are due to **accidents**, predominantly road traffic accidents and swimming/water accidents. You can help prevent them by following sensible precautions

### **PRECAUTIONARY GUIDELINES**

- ✓ Avoid alcohol and food before swimming
- ✓ Never dive into water where the depth is uncertain
- ✓ Only swim in safe water, check currents, sharks, jellyfish etc.
- ✓ Avoid alcohol when driving, especially at night
- ✓ Avoid hiring motorcycles and mopeds
- ✓ If hiring a car, rent a large one if possible, ensure the tyres, brakes and seat belts are in good condition
- ✓ Use reliable taxi firms, know where emergency facilities are



## **PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provide excellent information about this. They have information for many different types of travel and also advise on travel to specific destinations in times of political unrest and natural disasters. Please go to their website for more information at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

## **INSURANCE COVER**

- Take out adequate insurance cover for your trip. This should possibly include medical repatriation as without it, this service is extremely expensive if needed.
- If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, make sure you inform the insurance company of these details and check the small print of the policy thoroughly.
- If you travel to a European Union country, make sure you have obtained an EHIC card before you travel which takes some time to obtain. Further information about the EHIC is found at <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/Applyingandrenewing.aspx>
- Please note, additional travel insurance is still advised even if you have an EHIC card.

## **AIR TRAVEL**

It is sensible on any long haul flight to be comfortable in your seat. Exercise your legs, feet and toes while sitting every half an hour or so and take short walks whenever feasible. Upper body and breathing exercises can further improve circulation. Drink plenty of water and be sensible about alcohol intake which in excess leads to dehydration. Further information can be obtained from the websites detailed at the end of this leaflet with more specific advice and information on travel-related deep vein thrombosis.

## **SUN AND HEAT**

Sunburn and heat-stroke cause serious problems in travellers but in the long term can be a serious cause of skin cancer. There is no such thing as a safe suntan, but the following advice should be taken:

### **PRECAUTIONARY GUIDELINES**

- Increase sun exposure gradually, with a 20 minute limit initially.

- Use sun blocks which contain both UVA and UVB protection and sufficient sun protection factor (SPF) and a minimum of SPF 15. Children under 3 years should have a minimum of SPF 25 and babies under 6 months should be kept out of the sun at all times. Reapply often and always after swimming and washing. Read manufacturer instructions
- Always apply sunscreen first followed by an insect repellent spray on top
- Wear protective clothing – sunhats, T shirts and sunglasses etc.
- Avoid going out between 11am - 3pm, when the sun's rays are strongest
- Take special care of children and those with pale skin/red hair
- Drink extra fluids in a hot climate – be aware alcohol can make you dehydrated



## Have a good, but safe and healthy trip!

Here are some examples of interesting website addresses for more information:

Name/description	Web address
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Easy to access resources in one place from Jane Chiodini</b> (author of this leaflet)</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.janechiodini.co.uk/news/help/tar">www.janechiodini.co.uk/news/help/tar</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fit for Travel</b> - Scottish NHS public travel site for general advice on all aspects of travel and country specific information, including malaria maps</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk">www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NaTHNaC</b> - National Travel Health Network and Centre England based, with similar information to above</li> </ul>	<a href="http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/">http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NHS Choices</b> – look at travel health in the 'A-Z' section and also travel health in the 'Live Well' section (these are both different). Excellent general website also.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FCO</b> - Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office, especially useful for safety and security and specific pages for types of travellers, e.g. gap year, responsible tourism. Also look at 'Our Publications'</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sunsmart</b> - is the Cancer research website providing information about skin cancer and sun protection advice</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.sunsmart.org.uk">www.sunsmart.org.uk</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Travel health products</b> to take away with you – these are just a small selection of many resources available. Please note</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.lifsystems.co.uk">www.lifsystems.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk">www.nomadtravel.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.safariquip.co.uk">www.safariquip.co.uk</a>

the Village Medical Centre is not endorsing such items, merely providing information.	<a href="http://www.travelpharm.com">www.travelpharm.com</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Medex</b> – Useful advice booklet on 'travelling at high altitude'</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.medex.org.uk">www.medex.org.uk</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Medic Alert®</b> - life-saving identification system for individuals with hidden medical conditions and allergies</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.medicalert.org.uk">www.medicalert.org.uk</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kids Travel Doc™</b> - a paediatrician's guide to travel and outdoor recreational activities</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.kidstraveldoc.com">www.kidstraveldoc.com</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Diabetes UK</b> – information specific for those with diabetes who wish to travel – go to 'Guide to diabetes' then to the 'living with diabetes' section then go to 'travel'</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.diabetes.org.uk">www.diabetes.org.uk</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Global travel clinic locator</b> from the International Society of Travel Medicine</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.istm.org">www.istm.org</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>IAMAT</b> – International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT)</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.iamat.org/doctors_clinics.cfm">www.iamat.org/doctors_clinics.cfm</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Google translate</b> – Free online translation service</li> </ul>	<a href="http://translate.google.com">http://translate.google.com</a>

Please find copies of this leaflet and other relevant information at  
[www.birchwoodsurgery.co.uk/digitalpractice/travel-service](http://www.birchwoodsurgery.co.uk/digitalpractice/travel-service)



## THINK

Don't let

Here is a

- Colds
- Flu
- Painful joints
- Cold hands and feet





## PHARMACY!

winter bugs get you down!

list of common winter complaints that can be dealt

The main things to remember are to stay hydrated, stay wrapped up and try to stay at home to avoid spreading any germs to other people

- Dry skin
- Flu



**NHS**

**Your pharmacy team can help you with minor health concerns**

We're healthcare experts who can give you clinical advice, right there and then. And if symptoms suggest it's more serious, we'll ensure you get the help you need.

We're here to help you and your family stay well.

**STAYWELL**

[nhs.uk/staywellpharmacy](https://nhs.uk/staywellpharmacy)

Prameet Shah, Community Pharmacist

## NHS tips on how to stay healthy this winter



### Banish winter tiredness

Many people feel tired and sluggish during winter. This is due to the lack of sunlight, which disrupts our sleep and waking cycles.

Try these tips:

- get outdoors in natural daylight as much as possible
- get a good night's sleep – go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- destress with exercise or meditation – stress has been shown to make you feel tired

### Eat more fruit and veg

When it's cold and dark outside, it can be tempting to fill up on unhealthy



comfort food. However, it's important to ensure you still have a healthy diet and include five portions of fruit and veg a day.

If you find yourself craving a sugary treat, try a juicy clementine or satsuma instead.

Winter vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, swede and turnips can be roasted, mashed or made into soup for a comforting winter meal for the whole family. Explore varieties of fruit and veg that you may not normally eat.

### Drink more milk

You are more likely to get a cold in winter, so make sure your immune system is in tip-top condition. Milk and dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are great sources of:

- protein
- vitamins A and B12
- calcium, which helps keep our bones strong



Choose semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk – rather than full-fat – and low-fat plain yoghurts.

### Try new activities for the whole family

Don't use the cold winter months as an excuse to stay in and lounge around. Instead, get out with the whole family to try out a new activity –maybe ice skating, or taking a bracing winter walk on the beach or through the park.

Regular exercise helps control your weight, boost your immune system, and is a good way to break the tension that can build if the family is constantly cooped up inside the house.



### Have a hearty breakfast

Winter is the perfect season for porridge. Eating a warm bowlful on a cold morning isn't just a delicious way to start your day; it also helps boost your intake of starchy foods and fiber.

These foods give you energy and help you feel fuller for longer, stopping the temptation to snack mid-morning. Oats also contain lots of vital vitamins and minerals.



Make your porridge with semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed milk, or water, and don't add sugar or salt. Add a sliced banana, berries or other fruit for extra flavor and to help you hit your 5 A Day target.

## MISSED APPOINTMENTS

A reminder from early in the year – between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2018, we recorded that **252 appointments were missed**. This equates to **3,300 minutes worth of appointment time which was not fully utilised**. This is a big difference from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2017 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017, where we recorded that **674 appointments had been missed**. That equated to **9,433 minutes worth of appointment time which was not fully utilised**. We want to say a big thank you for the huge improvement and remind you that if you wish to cancel an appointment you can call us, write to us online, use our automatic voice message on our phone line or sign up to our SMS service and when you get a reminder for an appointment you no longer need, you can just reply 'CANCEL' and we will cancel it for you. Thank you for your ongoing co-operation!

## EXTENDED ACCESS

12PointCare GP Federation are committed to improving access to General Practice.

From October 2018 patients will be able to see a GP or another health professional between:

**6.30pm and 8.00pm on weekdays**

**8.00am and 4.00pm on Saturdays**

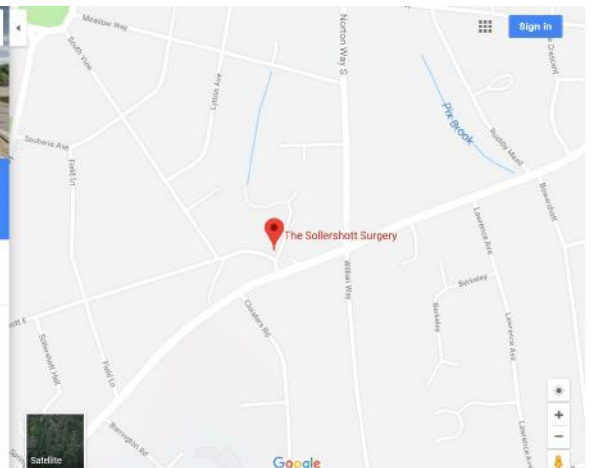
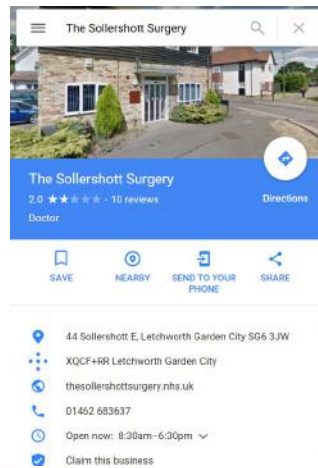
**8.00am – 12.00pm on Sundays**

at one of our eleven Federation Practices:

**Sollershott Surgery, 44 Sollershott East, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3JW.**

Our health professional team for the North Herts Extended Access Service consists of GPs, Practice Nurses and Healthcare Assistants.

If you would like to make an appointment in the Extended Access Service, please call us (Birchwood Surgery) and we will arrange



this appointment for you.

## PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP!

### What is a Patient Participation Group?

Members of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) are volunteers who work with the practice to represent patients, offering views on the services and facilities that are provided. Patients also have the option to be involved in the wider health issues across North Hertfordshire.





### **When do we meet?**

We aim to meet at the practice at least 4 times a year. We usually hold the meetings on a Tuesday evening from 6pm onwards. The meetings usually last a couple of hours. All details of the meeting are forwarded to members in advance.

### **What are we not?**

We are not a forum for individual agendas or personal complaints. Complaints must be made directly to the practice to comply with the standardised NHS complaints Procedure and be handled under a strict code of confidentiality. If you have a complaint, please either speak to the practice team or pick up the practice information leaflet on complaints.

### **What do we have planned for the future?**

We want to encourage additional patients to join the group. It is expected that the PGG will become more visible and assist the practice with new initiatives and ideas.

We always welcome suggestions and ideas that contribute to the patient experience when you visit the practice. Your suggestion can be forwarded to the Practice Manager to be discussed with the PPG where appropriate.

### **Want to know more?**

If you are interested in knowing more, take a look at our PPG board in the corridor opposite the waiting room. Also, you can let our reception team know and we will be able to send you one of our information packs.



**Have a safe and fun festive  
season and we will see you in  
2019!**

**Birchwood Surgery**