

# Newsletter

*St Thomas Medical Group*



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## Practice Update

*Written by Chris Stoppard - Practice Manager*

We have had a few changes in the surgery since the last newsletter. We are happy to announce we have a new phone system, leading to more efficiently managed queues, informing you of what position you will be in the queue, and consequently leading to a more efficient way of booking appointments.

Following this, we have also introduced our quick and easy to use Online Consultation service. This is a service for non-Emergency medical queries. You can find this service on the homepage of our website. These forms get triaged by a GP, and you are then allocated the appropriate appointment requested by the triage GP. We are already noticing shorter call queues due to this, and hoping to see more improvements, like this one, over the coming weeks.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued patience with us, as we are still going through some of our busiest times. Like many organisations, we are continuing to have staff off sick or having to isolate. This has unfortunately resulted in longer waiting times to see a GP.

## Healthy Diet:

It's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet for your overall health. You do need to consider calorie intake, but that's not the only consideration. Fat, sugar and salt should only be eaten in moderation to ensure you stay fit and healthy for life.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

The Eatwell guide helps to visualise what a well-balanced diet should look like. If you can't balance each meal, then try to balance intake across the day or week.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

## Child Abuse and Safeguarding:

In general practice we place emphasis on ensuring children are well cared for. If you are concerned about a child, you know and are worried that they may be at risk of neglect, abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, or other issues, the NSPCC can give help and advice. Their helpline is 0808 800 5000.

If you are under the age of 18, ChildLine offers confidential support and advice on 0800 1111. For over 18's, you can contact the Samaritan's via text or call on (877) 870 4673.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://samaritanshope.org/>

## Childhood Immunisations:

Routine childhood immunisations are important for the health and well-being of your child. We offer vaccinations for common childhood illnesses that can cause serious, and even life-threatening complications. Children are offered vaccinations as babies, pre-schoolers and as teenagers. All of which are vital in ensuring that our own children stay well, but also in continuing to protect us all by making it harder for these diseases to spread. For more information, please contact the surgery, or visit the website below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

## Prescriptions:

Please remember when requesting prescriptions, that it can take up to five working days for these to be processed. So to ensure you aren't without medication, always allow up to five days when putting in your repeat prescription.

## EPC and Extended Hours:

Just to remind all patient's, that we do offer evening and weekend appointments. Especially for blood tests, in hope to make attending our surgery easier and more accessible for those that work and can't attend in our regular hours.



## Sexually Transmitted

### Infections:

Symptoms of sexually transmitted infections (STI's) can include unusual discharge, warts, rashes, urinary symptoms or itching. While there are many other conditions that can cause similar symptoms, if you've had unprotected sexual contact, you might want to consider getting checked. We have a sexual health clinic in Exeter, this is within the Walk in Centre on Sidwell Street.

<https://www.devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk/>

Following that, if you are between the ages of 16-24 and don't feel comfortable attending the Walk in Centre, you can order a free test kit on <https://www.freetest.me/> . Please be aware this doesn't test for everything, so we advise you attend the clinic for a full screening.

For more information on STI's, please see below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/>

## COVID-19 - Staying Safe In Our

### Surgery:

While we appreciate that restrictions to protect against COVID-19 are now being removed, we have vulnerable patients in surgery, and we'd like to continue protecting them as we have done since the start of the pandemic. Therefore, please:

- Continue to wear a face mask while in the surgery
- Don't attend the surgery with Coronavirus symptoms unless you have discussed this with a clinician.
- If you have tested positive for Covid, please do not attend the surgery unless asked to by a clinician.

### Annual Health Checks:

Attending reviews for long-term conditions helps us to support you in the best possible way. Long-term conditions are often areas in which a lot of research is being done, and new treatments become available over time. Improved recommendations can make big differences to our understanding of patients' conditions. If you haven't attended a review in some time, you might want to make your review appointment, so we can talk about how we can improve things for you.

### Covid-19 Boosters:

If you're over the age of 75, you're eligible for your Spring COVID19 Booster.

To get this booked in, please call 119 or google 'GrabAJab' for more information.