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**Surgery Update January/February 2021**

**COVID Practice Update**

The new strain of COVID has spread rapidly across our locality causing much suffering for individuals and great strain in our hospitals. In order to minimise the risk of COVID within our practice, we are contacting as many patients as possible by telephone, e-Consultation or video and only patients with no possible COVID symptoms attend Hartfield Surgery. We are operating social distancing, compulsory face masks for staff and patients, hand washing and the one-way system in Hartfield Surgery. We have a limit of 3 patients in the waiting room at any one time, so if when you attend an appointment it is full, please return to your car and phone the surgery to inform us that you are waiting in your car. Please attend any appointments alone but if this is not possible due to your needs, please restrict this to only one other person.

We request that any patient who develops possible COVID symptoms within 48 hours of attending the surgery informs us immediately, obtains an urgent COVID test and informs us of the result as soon as possible so that we can arrange deep cleaning of any affected areas if the result is positive.

Unfortunately, COVID can cause a wide variety of early symptoms in addition to the three well-known ones of cough, fever and loss of smell. Fatigue and headache are frequent early symptoms at all ages and increased confusion is common in older people. The Covid Symptom Study App (C-19 by ZOE) for smartphone users is a national research project monitoring user’s daily symptoms that will advise you to get a COVID test if you report any suspicious symptoms. It provides a valuable source of information about COVID and daily reports of disease activity in your area. Please download it and participate in some citizen science!

**COVID Vaccine Update**

Our entire clinical team, along with all practices in our locality covered by the High Weald Primary Care Network (PCN), have offered to work whatever additional hours are required to provide COVID vaccination to our patients. Unfortunately, the logistics and technicalities around the administration of the Pfizer vaccine have required each PCN to nominate a single site to deliver these vaccines. Our PCN site is Saxonbury House Surgery in Crowborough and it will receive its first batch of 975 vaccines on 15th January, with two further batches arriving within the following week. Our surgery will be allocated 76 vaccines from each batch and we will be on track to vaccinate all our patients over the age of 80 by the end of January.

We are grateful for the leadership role of Saxonbury House Surgery and for our own staff who have volunteered to help with the vaccination program. We are looking for volunteer marshals from our patient population to assist with escorting patients from Waitrose carpark, or from the parking bays outside Saxonbury surgery for those with poor mobility, into the surgery for vaccination registration and out from the waiting room where they must remain for 15 minutes after the vaccination. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact our practice manager by email to michael.wells1@nhs.net.

Patients will be contacted by the surgery to book their vaccination in line with the Government’s priority groups. We are bound by this arrangement, so please do not contact the surgery in the hope of securing an earlier vaccination because of your perceived risk. We hope that as the Oxford Astra-Zenica vaccine is rolled out we will be given permission to vaccinate from our surgery which would enable us to vaccinate our housebound patients and the rest of our practice population quickly and effectively. We encourage you all to attend for your vaccine when called for the benefit of your own health and that of the wider community.

We expect to be extremely busy with the vaccination program over the coming weeks and, therefore, respectfully ask that you seek updates to the vaccination program from the practice website or the local community online forums. We remain open, as we have been throughout the pandemic, for all of your primary care medical needs.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and stay safe.

Dr Andrew Wolfle and Dr Matt James