



COVID-19 Update

We are now seeing steadily increasing numbers of the COVID infections locally and admissions to the local hospitals. Please follow the latest government guidelines and keep protecting each other. Please note we are awaiting clarification on the COVID vaccine and availability and cannot currently offer this, but we are monitoring the situation very carefully and will update our patients as soon as we are able.

Christmas Opening Hours

Please note we will be closed on Christmas Day; Boxing Day & New Year's Day. We will also be closing between 12 noon and 2pm throughout December, we would be very grateful if you could avoid calling or attending the surgery during these times for non-urgent requests. If you have not already done so, please register for online services to assist us through this very busy period.

Seasonal Flu Vaccination Update

- Having the flu vaccine is more important than ever to avoid healthcare systems becoming overwhelmed treating both patients with flu and patients with COVID-19.
- Unsurprisingly there has been exceptionally high take up this season with nearly 2000 of our patients vaccinated to date, more vaccine is due to keep up with the demand.
- We are aware that some people are yet to be invited for a flu appointment and want to reassure you we are still contacting patients, but with the majority of patients vaccinated we are now happy to also take phone bookings without overwhelming the system, thus if you are over 65; have an eligible long term condition; are a carer; or are living in a previously shielded household, please contact us for an appointment.
- Please note that under NHS England guidance further vaccine will be released countrywide for patients aged **50-64, (without underlying health conditions)**, only once the most vulnerable groups as listed above have been vaccinated. We will start the vaccination programme for this group as soon as we are given the go ahead.

Appointment Guidance - (Please remember to wear a mask when attending the surgery)

Please continue to use our telephone and online services, we will see patients face to face whenever necessary but **kindly ask that you wear a mask!** Only attend the surgery if invited to do so by a doctor or nurse; to collect a prescription; or for your flu vaccination. If you are attending in person, please remember the **Hands – Face – Space** guidelines.

We are strictly enforcing the wearing of masks by visitors to the Surgery not only to protect staff but the community as a whole and are saddened by the level of abuse of our staff who are simply trying to prevent the spread of infection by asking you to don face protection. Please remember that even if you do not have symptoms you could still be carrying and spreading the virus. We look after 7000 people and some of these people are very vulnerable and at high risk if they contracted the virus. It remains vitally important that we all stay safe and continue to control the virus to save lives and we appreciate your help in doing this in whatever small way possible.

We would also like to do our bit to protect not only our community but the environment; reusable masks are available to our patients for free or a voluntary donation which will support various local community schemes, such as a carers café; a gardening project; fitness initiatives; etc. This will avoid thousands of masks going to landfill and we would like to thank everyone who has donated their time and effort into making masks.

Health & Wellbeing Collective

There has been a lot of recent publicity about general health and wellbeing thanks to the impact of COVID on lifestyles. As well as our excellent clinical team, we are pleased to introduce our new Health & Wellbeing Team, supported by NHS England. Together they can offer advice on support on general health conditions and management of long-term medical conditions; Fitness and weight management; Stress, Anxiety or depression, or just feeling overwhelmed; And lots more... Please contact the team by phone or email wccg.sarumwbc@nhs.net and they will be happy to talk to you and offer advice, or signpost you to someone that can. We are looking for patients to participate in supporting the health & wellbeing project and if anyone would like to offer assistance and can volunteer we would be happy to hear from you.

Merry Christmas from all the team at Downton Surgery x