

Update from the Surgery 26.08.22

Well... A very good friend of mine was arguing the point that in the UK we should just forget trying to work in August as there is so little productivity and much of Europe shuts down anyway. Normally, August is our quiet month - this year has turned on its' head. I would love to forget August as we have been busier than ever and had to fight with Staff Covid sickness, Staff leave and huge difficulty with supplies. As well as HRT, some of our really common medication has simply been unavailable from suppliers and during the hot weather the delivery vans became too hot and couldn't transport medication to us within the safety limits set by manufacturers.

Because of this, August has been a really difficult time and we are grateful to those that have been patient and understand the frustration caused. With a lot of extra work, we seem to have caught up - for now at least. This is a problem for all dispensing doctors and chemists; I hear the wait in some chemists locally is as much as two weeks which makes me feel proud of the work we have put in to stay within 3-5 days. There will, inevitably be further shortages which we simply have to request every day and see what turns up - not ideal for anyone but there is no other option.

Time for good news! We can celebrate Dr Henrique Lourenco's new post as a GP at Hamstreet Surgery and as a doctor in Pilgrims' Hospice. It is really pleasing to see one of our trainees being retained locally, especially within the PCN. I'm sure you will all wish him well with his future and we have enjoyed his time training with us at Woodchurch.

It has also been liberating to renew our appointment system after feedback from the Patient Participation Group and a revision of our Covid risk assessments. In essence, all appointments are now bookable as either telephone consults or face-to-face appointments. We will try to keep to time as much as possible, however, sometimes a case just takes longer or a priority crops up causing a knock-on effect on timing.

We have less waiting-area space and more patients than pre-covid so hope this hybrid system does not lead to overcrowding. We continue to ask that people with fevers and coughs wear face masks and where possible wait outside or in cars so we can come and get you, as long as we know you are here. A touch-screen check-in will be by the door which should be installed mid-September so should help this.

### **Flu and Covid News**

We are expecting delivery of Flu Jabs on 7th September and are putting on Flu clinics now. Please call and book in your Flu jab if you are over 50 or if you are under 50 and have a long-term condition. We will be cracking on with this as soon as the stock arrives.

Covid jabs will arrive on the 12th September and we expect a limited stock for the Care Homes and people that are Housebound. We think we will mainly get Moderna which has been on the news as being more protective from some of the new strains. We may also have some Pfizer but are not expecting any of the "Oxford" AstraZeneca. To be honest I

would take any booster at the moment and am not sure if Moderna is any better than the others, so please don't delay for fear of getting the "wrong jab".

When we have achieved the first goal we will then work through the old cohorts - ie over 80's and clinically vulnerable, then over 70's etc... I think the tactic is to involve the GPs to do the hard work for the groups that can't make it to the vaccination centres. In light of this please call 119 and book into a Chemist and avoid delay for your Covid jab. We will be offering vaccines throughout the next few months but as we are being rationed, please use the Chemists where you can.

I wish you all the best, I apologise for the disruption, although I also realise that this is a problem that affects just about every industry at the moment. Being kind to those trying to help you will bring out the best in people and lead to the best outcome in these difficult times.

A happy September on behalf of Woodchurch Surgery, Jack Hickey - GP

Dr Jack Hickey  
GP Woodchurch Surgery