

Update from Woodchurch Surgery 10th October 2021

We have now signed up to the Covid Booster programme. We will run alongside the Central Booking Service and initially focus on the Carehomes and those who are housebound that cannot travel to another site. Once we have done these we will be arranging a couple of large clinics at Charing Surgery and then some smaller ones from Woodchurch Surgery.

The message is very firmly that if you are invited, by text message or email, by the Central Booking Service please follow the links to book your Booster. The flu jab can be administered at the same time so it may be worth asking if you haven't had it.

The local rates of Covid are the highest we have had until now. By far the highest number is in those age 8-14, which was expected after the children returned to school with greatly reduced Covid measures. As predicted they have generally had a very mild illness and so far those vaccinated are also getting only a mild illness. The cultural shift seems to have turned from one of fear to one of inconvenience. My own experience is that it was hugely frustrating to feel well but not be able to leave the house (and also that losing your sense of smell is a mixed blessing). People are still dying, being hospitalised and getting long-Covid symptoms though, so it is important to do what you can to protect yourselves and others so please keep up the precautions.

October marks Breast Cancer awareness month and also celebrates Black History Month. Approximately 15% of the population identify themselves as an ethnic minority and it is well recognised that in the UK people from a BAME background still have higher rates of all matters of health inequality. The Kings Fund has tried to look into this in more detail and can simply be summarised as "very complex". We trying to identify those people that are in the group of ethnic minorities so we may well ask you what your ethnic group is so that we can continue to try and reduce the gap in inequality.

Breast Cancer is fortunately one of the most treatable cancers due to the massive research and investment over the years. Sadly, little can be done for prevention as generally it is not a cancer influenced greatly by lifestyle. Therefore, we still rely on screening and self-checks. All women in the UK will be invited for screening between the ages of 50 and 53 and will be recalled every 3 years until the age of 71. Generally the advice for younger women is that if a lump is suspected to check if it is still present after a period. However with the ethos that early diagnosis is best, we encourage anyone finding a breast lump to come and see us. It is important to remember that men can get breast cancer too so don't dismiss lumps guys...

In view of the high circulating Covid numbers we are still trying to avoid people congesting the waiting area while also increasing the numbers of face-to-face appointments. The telephone appointments are not a replacement for seeing a doctor but can be a practical approach to problem solving in a number of cases and does help us to arrange the in-person consultation at a better, mutually convenient time. We are trying to work the tight reception area into a practical solution for the winter so please bear with us. For those that find collecting prescriptions difficult we have a daily delivery from the Surgery so please use this if needed. An email or phone call to the Surgery should enable us to set this up.

Best wishes from the Surgery team. Next month is Movember which I can't wait for... Jack Hickey GP