



## **MATLOCK AND ASHOVER SURGERY**

### **SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER**

2020 has brought with it a pandemic like no other. Lots of things have had to change, especially the way we interact with patients. For safety reasons both for the staff and patients we had to lock our front door to patients and asked that they did not come down to the surgery unless advised to. The pandemic has allowed us to quickly introduce new ways of working and how we deal with patients in the first instance by changing to telephone triage and also introducing video consultations.

Our GP's have continued to see patients in the surgery when needed and as lockdown restrictions ease providing we adhere to social distancing requirements this should in time increase. Our clinical team both GP's and nurses wear full personal protective equipment including full face masks at all times and we ask patients coming in to the surgery to wear masks and gloves at all times. Our nurses are continuing to see patients, all be it in new ways with most patients either being seen in their cars or under our temporary construction outside. At Ashover, patients are being seen at the back of the Surgery outside by the Fire Door or under the front canopy of the Surgery if raining. Currently our practice nurses are carrying out chronic illness reviews by telephone and video consultations.

#### **Coronavirus Symptoms**

Everyone with symptoms can book or order a free test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119. Essential workers and members of their households can access priority testing on GOV.UK. Home tests no longer need to be returned by courier but can be posted in priority post boxes.

A home test user can check where their nearest priority post box is. A process of marking all priority post boxes with stickers has also begun across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Anyone who receives a home testing kit will also receive instructions about how to return the kit safely, including wiping down the box with an antiseptic wipe, following social distancing guidelines and wearing a mask when posting the kit.

Anyone who is shielding, vulnerable or too unwell to leave the home can still use the courier service or call the customer contact centre for further help.

### **Dispensary in Ashover**

The Dispensary in Ashover is also having to work in a different way due to the pandemic. In the first few weeks, the dispensary increased its workload by over 40% and staff worked really hard to ensure everyone still received their medication. We have introduced a system whereby medication is handed to patients via the dispensary window and this system will remain in place for the foreseeable future. If any patient is struggling to collect their medication, we have also implemented a system where we have volunteers who can help deliver prescriptions and we would like to thank all our volunteers for their help during this stressful time. The dispensary window is closed between 12.00pm and 2.00pm and 6.00pm and 6.30pm daily to allow staff to stay on top of the workload. Please be understanding of this decision. If patients wish to make appointments or have any queries, please telephone the surgery rather than come to the dispensary window.

### **Immunisations**

It is important that all immunisations continue to be done to protect patients throughout the pandemic. This is to prevent an outbreak of preventable diseases. We are actively contacting patients and parents to book appointments for these to be done. Our practice nurses are happy to talk with patients prior to coming to the surgery for any immunisations/vaccinations.

### **Smears**

These are still being carried out for women, current entry to the building is direct to a clinic room via a fire exit. At Ashover patients are seen in the Treatment room but are required to enter the building via the fire door at the back of the Surgery. Patients are asked to wear masks and gloves and our nurses are in full PPE.

### **Flu Campaign**

This year's flu campaign will begin in September. It is important that those who are eligible for the vaccine continue to support the practice by attending the surgery for the vaccine. We are currently investigating how we can ensure that our flu vaccinations are carried out with the minimum of risk to patients by ensuring we adhere to social distancing. This may mean that we give patients a specific appointment time instead of operating a "drop in clinic". We will send information out to patients via our text service and on our website as soon as dates and arrangements have been finalised.

## Technology

The pandemic has allowed us to introduce new technology. We are in the process of introducing a text message service so that we can contact patients via a text to their mobile phone to inform them of things like blood results and appointments. We will also be launching a service that will allow us to contact patients to inform them of information regarding the practice; for example opening hours and also about campaigns we are running like the flu.

The GP's currently use the SMS service to carry out video consultations and to send information regarding certain self-help/diagnosis and illness that will have been discussed during a consultation.

Earlier in the year we signed up to a new consulting system called **online consult**. The link can be found on the practice website at [www.imperialrdgroupsurgery.co.uk](http://www.imperialrdgroupsurgery.co.uk) or [www.ashovermedicalcentre.co.uk](http://www.ashovermedicalcentre.co.uk) It is a quick, convenient and secure way of digitally contacting a GP and the service is available 24/7 so you can contact us without waiting for the surgery to open or on the telephone. It gives you fast access to information and advice and allows you to send information to the GP if required. A member of staff including clinicians will respond to the enquiries. We would appreciate you trying it and welcome your feedback which is important to us.

## Retirement & New Staff

In March Dr Jones retired as a GP from Ashover. He had worked at the surgery for over 20 years and more recently occasionally working at Imperial Road. He will be missed by all the patients and staff as well. We are very pleased that we have secured a new addition to the practice Dr Clare Shell joined us from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and will work both at Ashover and Imperial Road Surgery. Dr Shell has 13 years' experience and has a specialised interest in joint injections and palliative care.

## The Future

We are constantly planning for the future and taking into account the experiences of the last few months when our surgery does eventually re-open the front doors to the public you will see that we will have introduced many changes both in terms of social distancing and safety for the patient and the staff. We hope that our patients will appreciate the need for the changes and also help us by embracing the technology.

## Thank you

We would like to thank our patients for their patience and co-operation at this fundamental time. Your safety and health is very important to us. We have had had some lovely and generous gifts from the public which have immensely helped to keep staff morale up, some of which are below.



This is a challenging and sometimes lonely time, but it will pass. There will be lots of hugs, shared pots of tea, parties and celebrations in the future. For now let's be as kind as possible to ourselves and others.

## **Important Message**

**Please always ensure that you keep us updated with your mobile telephone number as we are going to be increasing our communication through text messages and we want to ensure that the information is sent to the correct patient.**