

Marylebone HEALTH CENTRE

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Dear All,

I write during these difficult times to explain how the practice is responding to the COVID crisis.

We continue to open as usual albeit in a somewhat different form. In accordance with national recommendations our doors are kept locked and all non-planned appointments are first triaged by telephone. The doctors are increasingly using video consultations to help aid assessments and decrease the need for face to face consultations. If after the initial consultation it is thought best that you be seen in the surgery we will provide you with a mask and gloves, which the clinician will also wear to minimise the risk of infection.

The practice is continuing to provide routine essential services such as blood test monitoring for people taking certain medications, wound dressings and the administering of certain injectable medications. As guided by the government we are also continuing to vaccinate children to help prevent an increase in other infective illnesses. For this important reason we strongly encourage parents to ensure their children are vaccinated as per their current immunisation schedules.

There are concerns within the health community that some people are not seeking prompt medical care due to a fear of contracting the infection. As a result we are hearing anecdotal stories of delayed diagnosis in people with other major medical conditions such as severe childhood infections and heart attacks.

Please do contact the surgery if you or your children are experiencing any concerning new or worsening symptoms so that we can ensure you receive the most appropriate timely care.

There has been confusion regarding who qualifies for governmental support due to a major underlying medical condition. An "extremely vulnerable" group has been initially identified centrally and continues to be further refined by both central and practice based searches. We continue to review the list adding people not initially identified and removing those added in error.

This "shielded" group have been advised to stay at home at all times, except to attend an essential medical appointment and avoid any face- to-face contact until the end of June. For further information regarding which medical conditions are included in this group and for advice regarding more detailed measures those identified should take please refer to the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

The practice has also been contacting those identified as being at "high risk". This includes the over 70s and those with underlying health problems as defined in the following link. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/> If you haven't been contacted and would like further advice regarding the current recommendations or require additional support please contact the practice. Alternatively Westminster council has a helpful website which includes a map of community led organisations as detailed below <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>. They can be contacted directly at westminsterconnects@westminster.gov.uk.

We look forward to the time the practice can resume normal activity. In the meantime we will continue to provide care as recommended by national guidelines and keep you updated as to any changes in our service delivery.

Dr. Andy Goodstone
Marylebone Health Centre