

Coleridge Medical Centre

Winter Newsletter

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CMC Awarded Veteran Friendly Accreditation

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We are proud to have become a Veteran Friendly practice, a status awarded by the Royal College of GPs. If you served in the Armed Forces, even for one day, you are classed as a veteran and there is a whole host of NHS services and support available to you. Please let us know if you are a veteran so that we can update your record and offer you support and advice, if needed. Our Veterans Champion is Practice Nurse Emma Blake. Emma has a

specialist interest in support for veterans and a wealth of knowledge about the services available, and shares this information with the other practice staff to help improve the advice and support we can offer.

As our Veterans Champion, Emma B can speak to patients who are veterans to signpost them to services that may benefit them; please request a telephone appointment with her if

you feel this would be valuable to you. If a referral is needed from the practice to a certain service or you wish to discuss mental health concerns, please book an appointment with the GP. Lots of the services available can be accessed via self-referral, so an appointment may not be necessary and it may be quicker for you to self-refer. Details of which services accept self-referral can be found below.

For more information on being a Veteran Friendly Practice, please visit the practice website: www.coleridgemedicalcentre.co.uk



Armed Forces Veteran friendly accredited GP practice



Armed Forces Veteran friendly accredited GP practice



Being a Veteran Friendly Practice: Commonly Asked Questions

Who is classed as a veteran?

A veteran is anyone who has served for at least one day in the Armed Forces, as either a regular or reserve, and can be of any age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality. It means the same as "ex-service personnel" or "ex-forces".

Why is it important that we are a Veteran Friendly GP Practice?

There are 1.8 million veterans in the UK, with 52% of them having a long-term illness or disability. Being Veteran Friendly means we have a strong process for identifying patients in this group, clear referral pathways to specialist veteran support, and faster access to priority services. Practice Nurse Emma is our Veterans Champion, meaning we have someone in practice who has a specialist interest in support for veterans and a wealth of knowledge about the services available to them.

As part of the Veteran Friendly scheme, we can provide a better patient experience and improved outcomes for veterans and their families.

Veterans and Reserve Mental Health programme (VRMHP): this specialist service provides mental health assessments and treatment advice for veterans and reservists. It works closely with the NHS and Defence Medical Services (DMS) to provide appropriate treatment. Referrals to the service can be made by your GP.

Veterans' Gateway: this charity can help with a wide range of issues such as housing, living independently, employment, mental wellbeing, physical health and finances. Access this service by self-referring; you can speak to one of their advisors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 0808 802 1212.

You can also email them via their online form: (www.support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/ask), text them on 81212, and have an online live chat with them (https://support.veteransgateway.org.uk/app/chat/chat_launch)



VETERANS' GATEWAY



SSAFA: The Armed Forces Charity: this organisation provides support for both veterans and currently serving personnel. Their Devon branch can be contacted on 0800 260 6767 or via their online live chat: <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/forcesline>



Statins

We are currently contacting lots of our patients with information about a type of medication called statins. Our practice pharmacist, Gail, has made a video explaining why we are recommending them. The video contains lots of information which we hope will answer any questions you might have. Please visit www.coleridgemedicalcentre.co.uk/statins to view it. Gail has also produced the below Frequently Asked Questions document and more information is available on the above website page.

Why am I being offered a statin?

You may have a long term condition that means you have a higher risk of heart disease or stroke for example chronic kidney disease or peripheral vascular disease.

Alternatively we may have calculated your risk of having heart disease or a stroke over the next 10 years (called QRISK). If this risk is above 10% statins are recommended. QRISK considers age, gender, weight (BMI) blood pressure, cholesterol, existing medical conditions, medication, and family history.

The more risk factors you have, the higher the risk, and your risk will increase as you get older.

What do statins do?

- Remove unhealthy cholesterol
- Protect the heart and reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes even in people with normal cholesterol



How long do I take statins for?

Statins are given as a preventative medication; so they are usually taken long term. When they are stopped, the protective benefit stops too.

How do I take statin tablets?

Statin tablets are to be taken once a day.

Atorvastatin or Rosuvastatin can be taken any time of day with or without food, and you can have grapefruit or grapefruit juice in moderate amounts.

Statins are normally taken long-term for many years. You can stop taking it whenever you want, but this would mean the benefits from it would also stop.

Do I need blood tests?

Before you start taking statins, if you haven't had a recent blood test in the last 6 - 12 months, then you will have a blood test to check how well your liver works and what your cholesterol levels are.

Once you start your statin, you will need a further blood test in 3 months time, to check that it's working. After that annual blood tests will be done as part of your annual medication review.

What about side effects?

Like all medicines, statins can have side effects in some people, but many experience no side effects at all. The most common are muscular pains (2 in 100 people).

Serious problems with statins are very rare. If however, you experience any severe pain, tenderness or weakness in your muscles while taking a statin then let your GP know.

Any side effects need to be weighed against the positives, in that statins are generally safe to take and dramatically reduce the risk of heart disease and strokes, which could be fatal.

CHRISTMAS

OPENING HOURS

22nd Dec	Friday	8.00 – 18.30
23rd Dec	Saturday	Closed
24th Dec	Christmas Eve	Closed
25th Dec	Christmas Day	Closed
26th Dec	Boxing Day	Closed
27th Dec	Wednesday	8.00 – 18.30
28th Dec	Thursday	8.00 – 18.30
29th Dec	Friday	8.00 – 18.30
30th Dec	Saturday	Closed
31st Dec	New Year's Eve	Closed
1st Jan	New Year's Day	Closed
2nd Jan	Tuesday	8.00 – 18.30

Please ensure you have enough medication to last you over the Christmas period. Please allow up to 2 working days for the practice to process your prescription request.

Services over Christmas

If you need medical advice during the festive period and the surgery is closed or your condition is not appropriate for a consultation here, the following options are available:

- Go to www.111.nhs.uk or call 111 for urgent medical conditions
- Minor Injuries Units and Walk in Centres are available

if you have a medical problem that's not critical or life-threatening, including for blood pressure checks and minor cuts and wounds. To view their opening hours over the festive period, visit: www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/news/minor-injuries-units-and-walk-in-centre-christmas-and-new-year-opening-times/

- Community Pharmacies can deal with a range of minor health concerns. Each pharmacy has different opening times, so check online or phone them before visiting.
- Attend A&E or call 999 for emergencies

Appointment Times & Booking

In this year's GP Patient Survey, 48% of respondents said they did not know what appointment times we have available. We have therefore created the below guide, which we hope you will find useful.

Appointments can be made by calling the practice and speaking to a member of staff or using our automated telephone booking system by ringing 01404 814447, online by using SystmOnline (systmonline.tpp-uk.com) or the NHS App. You may also be invited to book an appointment via text message, such as for long-term term condition. (This only applies to patients who have consented to text messaging.)

The annual GP Patient Survey is an independent survey run on behalf of NHS England. To see the results, please visit: www.gp-patient.co.uk We use the results to help us understand what is working well, what changes could be made, and what information needs to be communicated more to patients, such as our appointment times and types.

We have a range of different appointments available at the practice, including:



Extended Access - morning appointments

We often have telephone appointments with the GPs available between 8.00 and 8.30am.

Routine appointments during the day

There are face to face and telephone GP appointments available between ~9.00 - ~12.00 and ~2.30 - ~5.00pm on most days.

"Extended Access" refers to appointments we provide outside of our core opening hours.

Urgent GP appointments

We have GPs every day who are "on call" and will triage urgent medical issues. They will phone you and then take the next course of action as appropriate, such as deal with the problem over the phone, book you in with a clinician to be seen, or advise on self-care.

Nurse Practitioner appointments

We have routine and urgent appointments almost every day with our Nurse Practitioners. They are highly trained clinicians who can assess and treat many of the same issues as GPs and can prescribe you medication if needed. Some of these appointments are available during our Extended Hours clinics, such as between 8.00 and 8.30am.

Extended Access - Saturday appointments

We provide EA appointments on Saturdays - usually once a month - which are a mixture of face to face and telephone.

"Extended Access" refers to appointments we provide outside of our core opening hours.

Extended Access - evening appointments

We often have telephone appointments with the GPs available between 6.30 and 8.00pm.

Physio appointments

We have appointments available with two Musculoskeletal (MSK) First Contact Practitioners. They are highly skilled, specialised, and can deal with a wide range of orthopaedic problems.

Staff Updates

The practice has recently taken on three new members of staff:

- Practice Nurse Sarah has joined the team and has a specialist interest in wound care.
- Diane has become our new Office/Medical Records Assistant, taking on the role from Anne-Marie, who is now a Medical Administrator.
- Bethany has joined us as a Medical Administrator.

We have also sadly said goodbye to two members of the team:

- Medical Administrator Debra left last month; she was with the practice for nearly two and half years and has been an asset to the medical centre. We wish her the best of luck for the future.
- GP Registrar Harriet recently went on maternity leave and is not returning to the practice afterwards, due to having nearly completed her GP training. We wish her every success in her next adventure and best wishes for the birth of her baby.

When is my preferred GP working?

Dr C. Dilley Tues * Weds * Thurs	Dr S. Kerr Mon * Tues * Fri
Dr K. Gurney Tues * Thurs	Dr J. Nelson Mon * Tues
Dr S. Caswell Weds * Thurs * Fri (AM)	Dr S. Fletcher Mon (AM) * Tues (AM) * Weds * Thurs (AM)
Dr A. Jones Tues * Weds * Thurs (AM)	Dr A. Werhun Mon * Weds * Fri
Dr L. Knight Mon * Tues	Dr S. Olsen Tues * Thurs
Dr L. Freyne * Currently out of practice - due back March 2024 *	Dr C. Bates Weds * Thurs
Dr J. Hudson Mon * Weds * Thurs (AM)	Dr N. Khan (GP Registrar) Weds (AM) * Thurs

Many of our GPs also have second jobs, which they do on days they are not in the practice. Some of them, for example, hold positions at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. GPs also have to regularly use the time that they are not in practice for other work related tasks, such as study days, preparation and completion of their appraisals, meetings, and helping to train other healthcare professionals.

Winter Wellbeing



With winter now firmly upon us, there are some important things we can do to stay well, including getting your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations.

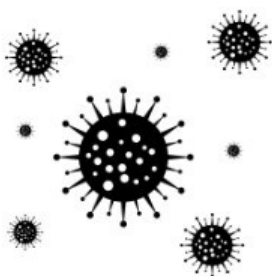
Please contact the practice to book your flu jab. You are eligible for a flu vaccination if you are:

- 65 and over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2024)
- have certain health conditions, for example diabetes or asthma
- are pregnant
- are a carer
- live with someone who is more likely to get a severe infection due to a weakened immune system

For all the latest information regarding how to book an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccination, please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination/getting-a-covid-19-vaccine/>

You are eligible if you are:

- 65 and over
- in a clinical risk group



- a frontline health and social care worker
- a household contact of someone immunosuppressed

Staying well in the cold

Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather than others, including:

- those aged 65 and over
- babies and children under the age of 5
- people on a low income (so cannot afford heating)
- people who have a long-term health condition
- people with a disability
- pregnant women

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, and depression.

Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. It's best to keep your bedroom windows closed at night.

Check your heating and cooking appliances are safe; contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure they're working properly. You can find an engineer at www.gassaferegister.co.uk/

Be careful if using open fires to keep warm:

- always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers
- make sure embers are under control and properly put out before you go to bed
- keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained
- fit a carbon monoxide alarm in all rooms with fuel burning appliances.

If you're struggling to afford to heat your home, check that you're getting all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits and advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating and help with bills. Visit www.gov.uk/check-benefits-financial-support or call the government helpline 0800 444 202 to find out what you're entitled to.

More information on looking after your health in the winter is available on www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health

