

Monthly Patient Newsletter



Covid Spring Boosters: Your vaccinations have been ordered, and invitations to eligible patients have been sent

We are currently inviting those aged 75 + and over and those who are immunosuppressed for their Spring Covid booster vaccination. It does not matter which Covid vaccine you have had previously. Please be reassured you will be contacted when it is your turn for the vaccines.

This year, we have sent letters to patients aged 75 and over. For those who are immunosuppressed and aged under 75 we have sent a booking link invite via text message. This means that patients can book a clinic appointment at a time and date on a Covid Clinic Day that suits them. Please be reassured that this is not spam or a scam.

Patients who have not consented to receive text messages will receive a letter instead. Please bring this letter with you to the clinic.

In this newsletter you can expect:

[Covid Vaccinations Spring Boosters](#)

[Covid Vaccinations FAQs](#)

[Update form the PPG](#)

[Understanding Bowel Cancer](#)

[The Importance of cancelling your appointments in good time](#)

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When are the Covid Clinics?

We are currently sending letters to all those eligible to have their Spring booster vaccinations

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in a care home for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed

North Somerset

The North Somerset clinic will be held at Langford Surgery: Pudding Pie Lane, Langford, BS40 5EL

Sunday 6th April

- 8am - 8:45am (under 75 immunosuppressed only)
- 9am - 4:30pm

Sunday 27th April

- 8am -12:30pm

Please note that at each clinic, there will be scheduled breaks from 10:00am to 10:30am and 12:30pm to 1:00pm for vaccine preparation and decontamination. No vaccinations will be administered during these times.



Bristol and South Gloucestershire

Saturday 5th April

- Coniston Medical Practice – 8:15am - 9:15am
- Sea Mills Surgery – 10:45am – 12:30pm
- Southmead Family Practice – 1:45pm – 2:45pm
- Monks Park Patients at Orchard School

Saturday 26th April

- Coniston Medical Practice – 8:30am – 9am
- Sea Mills Surgery – 9:30am -10:15am
- Southmead Family Practice – 11:15am -11:45am
- Monks Park Patients at Orchard School – 12:15pm – 12:45pm

Bristol Clinic Addresses

Coniston Medical Practice, The Parade, Coniston Rd, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5TF

Sea Mills Surgery, 2 Riverleaze, Bristol BS9 2HL

Southmead Family Practice, Ullswater Rd, Southmead, Bristol, BS10 6DF

Orchard School, Filton Rd, Bristol BS7 0XZ



Covid Clinic Frequently Asked Questions

I cannot make the time given to me in my invitation letter.

We strongly encourage patients to make every effort to attend for these important vaccinations on the date and time given to you or the time/date you've booked. Appointments are spread across the day to avoid overcrowding and queues to keep people safe. If you are unable to attend the appointment date and time, an alternative date has been given to you in your letter. **You do not need to contact the surgery to say you are coming at another day/time.**

Do I need to bring my invitation letter to the vaccination clinic?

Yes, it is essential that you bring your letter as it includes your personal details which are needed to record your vaccination status. Should you forget to bring your letter, you will be asked for these details so we can add the vaccination to your health record. If you have been invited via text message, please just turn up on the slot time you have booked. If you are having problems booking onto a clinic time using the link, please contact the practice after 11am and we can do this for you.

I am not over 75 or at risk, can I have the Spring booster?

No, unless you have received an invitation letter or text message from us you cannot have a vaccination at these clinics.

I don't want the vaccines.

Not a problem, please let us know by ringing the surgery, and we can mark your record as 'declined'.

I don't want the vaccinations; I have told my surgery, but I have still received a letter.

If you have previously told the surgery that you don't want the Covid or Flu vaccination, but you have received a letter, we apologise and understand that this could be frustrating for you. Your decision to refuse the vaccinations is only valid per vaccine. You may have changed your mind since we last got in touch and we want to ensure every eligible patient has access to the choice of having a vaccine. This means you will need to inform the surgery so we can mark your record as declined.

For more information, including FAQs please go to our website:

[MVMG | Covid 19 Vaccine](#)



Update from the Patient Participation Group

This month we had the second virtual PPG meeting of the year. hosted by Virtual PPG chair, Heather Pitch on the 12th March. The group was well attended and discussed and explored a range of topics related to improving the patient experience of primary care services. Topics included:

- Questions related to eConsult, including its operating hours, triage process, contact times, and prescription request procedures.
- Feedback and discussions regarding Congresbury - More information coming soon
- Clarification on discharge letters, specifically hospital instructions for primary care.
- Enquiry about the process for booking double appointments.

If you would like to join the Virtual PPG, please complete the PPG form on the website: [Patient Participation Form | Mendip Vale Medical Group](#)

WELLBEING LIFESTYLE

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GROUP

Our aim is to encourage people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by making simple changes to their lifestyle.

We try to provide an informal atmosphere to give help and information on a variety of lifestyle topics including:



Exercise



Healthy Eating



Mindfulness



Coping with
anxiety



Using creativity to
benefit wellbeing

WHEN?

SESSIONS EVERY 4TH
THURSDAY OF THE MONTH



10AM - 12MD



YATTON METHODIST HALL
BS49 4DW



REFRESHMENTS
PROVIDED

Sessions Free to Attend



The most important post you'll receive

The bowel cancer screening programme now includes everyone over 50.

You'll automatically be sent an NHS Bowel Screening Kit when you become eligible.



Regular screening can detect early signs of bowel cancer, even before symptoms appear.

peninsulacanceralliance.nhs.uk/bowel-cancer-screening

Understanding Bowel Cancer: Symptoms, Risks, and Early Detection

What is Bowel Cancer?

- Bowel cancer is cancer that's found anywhere in the large bowel, which includes the colon and rectum.
- The large bowel is part of your digestive system. It helps absorb water from your food and removes food waste from your body.
- How serious bowel cancer is depends on how big the cancer is, if the cancer has spread, and your general health.
- Bowel cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the UK.
- [Bowel cancer screening](#) can pick up bowel cancer early, which may mean it's easier to treat.



What are the symptoms?

- changes in your poo, such as having softer poo, diarrhoea or constipation that is not usual for you
- needing to poo more or less often than usual for you
- blood in your poo, which may look red or black
- bleeding from your bottom
- often feeling like you need to poo, even if you've just been to the toilet
- tummy pain
- a lump in your tummy
- bloating
- losing weight without trying
- feeling very tired for no reason

Bowel cancer can cause anaemia (when you have fewer red blood cells than usual), which can make you feel very tired, short of breath and have headaches.

What is bowel cancer screening?

Bowel cancer screening uses a test called a faecal immunochemical test (FIT) to look for blood in a sample of your poo. This could be a sign of bowel cancer.

You collect the sample at home and send it by post to be tested.

It can help find cancer early, and before you have any symptoms, which may mean it's easier to treat.

Who bowel screening is for?

Bowel cancer screening is currently offered to everyone aged 54 to 74 every 2 years. It will soon be offered to everyone aged 50 to 74, so you may be sent a home test kit now if you're aged 50 or over.

This is because your risk of getting bowel cancer gets higher as you get older.

You can also get screening for bowel cancer every 2 years if you're aged 75 or over, but you need to call the bowel cancer screening helpline on 0800 707 6060 and ask for the test.

How to get a bowel cancer screening home test (FIT kit)

If you're aged 54 to 74 and registered with a GP, you'll automatically get a bowel cancer screening home test kit (FIT kit) through the post every 2 years.

If you're aged 75 or over, you can ask for a home test kit every 2 years by calling the bowel cancer screening helpline. If you think you're eligible for bowel cancer screening but you've not been invited, or had your test kit, call the bowel cancer screening helpline

The Bowel Screening Helpline: 0800 707 6060.

It's your choice if you want to have bowel cancer screening. Screening does not stop you getting bowel cancer, but it is the best way to find cancer at an early stage.

If you do not want to be invited for screening, call the bowel cancer screening helpline to be taken off the screening list. You can ask to be put back on the list any time if you change your mind.

For more information go to our website:

[NHS | Bowel Cancer Screening](#)



The Importance of Cancelling Your Appointment in Good Time

We understand that life can be unpredictable, and sometimes, attending a scheduled appointment may no longer be possible. However, **letting us know as soon as possible if you need to cancel** is essential for ensuring that valuable appointment slots don't go to waste.

Why Cancelling in Good Time Matters

- **Helps Other Patients** – Many people are waiting for appointments, and an unused slot could be offered to someone in need. By cancelling in good time, you give another patient the chance to see a GP or nurse sooner.
 - **Reduces Wasted Appointments** – Missed appointments, known as Did Not Attends (DNAs), put additional strain on the surgery and make it harder for everyone to get seen when they need to.
 - **Improves Efficiency** – When appointments are cancelled in advance, staff can manage the schedule more effectively. This ensures that clinicians make the best use of their time for either administrative work or set time aside to prepare for their next
 - **Supports the NHS** – Every missed appointment costs the NHS money and resources that could have been used elsewhere. Cancelling promptly helps us make the most of our services.
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How to cancel your appointment

If you can't make your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible by:

✔ **Calling the surgery** – Speak to a Patient Co-ordinator to cancel your appointment and to reschedule if necessary.

✔ **Using the Check and Cancel Telephone feature** – When calling the practice follow the automated instructions to our check and cancel feature which is available 24/7. This allows you to check and cancel your appointments without speaking to a member of the team.

✔ **Replying to your reminder** – If you received a text reminder, simply reply to cancel.

Important: If you have multiple appointments on the same day, such as a double appointment, please ensure that **each appointment is cancelled individually.**



Is your baby 2 months old? Or will be soon? We need your help!

Purpose

The HIE-CONNECT study investigates the brain development of healthy babies in comparison to the brain development of babies who suffered a lack of oxygen around birth (hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy, HIE). These babies are more likely to have learning and physical difficulties later in life.

Your Contribution

- Offer valuable information on brain development.
- Contribute to improving the care of newborns following HIE.

What is Involved:

We will measure your baby's brain activity simply by placing a soft cap, with sensors, on their head at 3 and 6 months of age.



**JOIN THE
HIE-CONNECT
STUDY**



Contact Info:

To hear more about HIE-Connect or if you have questions about the study, please contact the research team at hieconnect-study@bristol.ac.uk

eConsult – Responding to your Feedback

“I understood that I could not request a GP appointment myself, that I had to complete an e-consult form first. Then a decision would be made as to the best way to proceed - whether to see a GP or another practitioner. A GP appointment is not a given in these circumstances. I think I may have misunderstood how the system works. Is the e-consult service just for non-urgent problems or is it the first port of call? Sorry, I am confused!”

Thank you for your feedback. eConsult is used for not urgent appointments. Upon submission, your eConsult will take 3 working days to be triaged by a GP and be in contact with you with an appointment, if one is necessary. This should be allocated within two weeks from your original submission. If you have an urgent problem, that needs to be seen by a clinician on the same day, please call the practice so we can put you on the Duty Doctor list.

“I was satisfied because I was able to put down all my concerns, ask for help and was acknowledged, given an appointment and validated in less than a week. The process is ongoing as part of the treatment pathway.”

Thank you for your feedback! We're so glad to hear that you were able to express your concerns, receive timely assistance, and be acknowledged throughout the process. It's great to know that the appointment and treatment pathway are progressing smoothly. Your experience is important to us, and we'll continue working to ensure you feel supported every step of the way.



“There is no way to book a routine face to face appointment with a GP without using e-consult. This must change. Very presumptuous to presume everyone has access to online systems. Allow appointments to be made via phone. Not customer friendly and could result in serious repercussions.”

Thank you for your feedback regarding the eConsult system. We fully understand your concern about the challenges some may face in accessing appointments online, and we apologise for any inconvenience this has caused. Our goal is to ensure our services are as accessible as possible. To support this, we offer several options for patients to access our services:

1. Complete the eConsult form digitally via our website.
2. Call the surgery, and a member of our team will complete the eConsult form for you
3. Fill out a paper form at our reception.

Please rest assured that before implementation, the system underwent rigorous safety checks to ensure the highest standards of care. For instance, it includes a red-flagging system to highlight potential emergencies, and all eConsult's are triaged by a GP Partner.

If you have an urgent problem, that needs to be seen by a clinician on the same day, please call the practice so we can put you on the Duty Doctor list.

We are continually reviewing our systems to ensure we meet the needs of all our patients. Thank you again for sharing your thoughts.
