

# Monthly Patient Newsletter



## Happy New Year from MVMG!

As we welcome 2026, we want to take a moment to express our gratitude for the trust and support you've shown us throughout the past year. We are excited to continue serving you in the year ahead and are committed to providing the best possible care.

The New Year is a time for new beginnings, and we encourage you to set health and wellness goals that inspire you. Whether it's taking small steps toward a healthier lifestyle or staying on top of your routine check-ups, we're here to guide you every step of the way. Wishing you a year filled with good health, happiness, and success in 2026.

## There's still time to grab your flu vaccination! **Grab a Jab at Your Local MVMG Surgery!**

Booking your flu vaccine at your GP surgery is quick and straightforward. If you're eligible, don't wait — schedule your appointment today to lower your risk of severe illness this winter.

By getting vaccinated, you can reduce the impact of flu

### This Issue includes:

**Healthy Choices Quiz**

**Supporting You Through Winter: Common Infections and Recovery**

**HPV Explained: Simple Steps That Help Prevent Cancer**

**Squeezy-peasy lemon pancakes recipe**

**Dry January Is Nearly Over – But the Conversation About Alcohol Shouldn't Be**

**And so much more!**

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## Patients Supporting Patients – Thank You for Your Voice

We want to extend our sincere thanks to all our fellow patients who took the time to respond to our Patients Supporting Patients survey. We received an incredible 3,005 individual responses, providing a rich picture of your experiences. Your feedback includes both positive and 'room for improvement' points, as well as thoughtful insights that will help us support change.

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) is committed to taking this seriously. Over the next six months, we will follow a structured protocol to ensure your views lead to meaningful improvements. This process will include:

- Phase A: Building consensus on what the data is telling us.
- Phase B: Analysing and interpreting what this means for the practice.
- Phase C: Working with MVMG to plan and support positive change.
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Thank you again for helping us shape the future of patient care.

**Your feedback matters—stay tuned for updates as we work together to make a difference!**



## Are You Making Healthy Choices? Try the NHS Quiz

We are supporting the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS on a new campaign encouraging all adults to take the Healthy Choices Quiz. This health and wellbeing quiz aims to empower adults to take control of their health by making small changes day to day.

Taking around 5 minutes to complete it asks questions about your lifestyle in the areas of eating, movement, alcohol consumption, smoking and vaping, mental health and sleep.



You'll receive an overall score based on your answers. This score indicates how your lifestyle could be affecting your health and wellbeing. You'll also be directed to guidance and advice for areas you could improve including a range of free NHS apps and tools. From a 9-week running programme for absolute beginners, to an anxiety reducing email programme, the NHS has a range of support on offer. Whether you want to eat better, move more or sleep deeper, the Healthy Choices Quiz can be your first step towards a healthier you.

**Take the free NHS Healthy Choices Quiz today: <https://www.nhs.uk/hcquiz>**

If you have any concerns about your lifestyle—whether it's smoking, alcohol consumption, or other habits—please don't hesitate to reach out to the surgery for support.

## Meet the New Members of the MVMG Team

We are pleased to introduce the new members of our team who have joined us over the last few months.

- Ejiro Tom-Ezewu, Clinical Pharmacist at Coniston Medical Practice
- Eugenia Leoniuk Pharmacy Tech at Coniston Medical Practice
- Isabella Rothwell Practice Nurse at Southmead Family Practice
- Helen Parkes HCA at Southmead Family Practice
- Sophie Evans Practice Nurse at Monks Park Surgery
- Summer Ashton HCA at Monks Park Surgery
- Tina Teagle, HCA at Yatton Surgery
- Daniele Fanelli GP at St Georges Surgery
- Nicola Beddows, GP at St Georges Surgery

# Supporting You Through Winter: Common Infections and Recovery

Our doctors would like to share some practical advice to help you look after your health during the winter months.

At this time of year, we see a rise in seasonal illnesses and infections. Many of these conditions are unpleasant but usually improve on their own with time, rest, and self-care. Understanding what's normal can help reassure you and reduce unnecessary worry.

Below is a guide to common infections and how long symptoms typically last.

## Common Infections – Expected Recovery Times:

- Middle ear infection: usually improves within 7–8 days
- Sore throat: often settles within 7–8 days
- Sinusitis: symptoms may last 14–21 days
- Common cold: typically lasts up to 14 days
- Cough or bronchitis: can take 3–4 weeks to fully resolve

In particular, it's common for coughs, to linger even after other symptoms have improved.

## Recovery Times for More Significant Chest Infections

### Acute Bronchitis

- Most people recover within 2–3 weeks
- Around 1 in 4 people may still have symptoms after 4 weeks



## Community-Acquired Pneumonia

- Recovery can take longer and happens in stages:
- 1 week: fever should have resolved
- 4 weeks: chest pain and sputum production should be much reduced
- 6 weeks: cough and breathlessness should have significantly improved
- 3 months: most symptoms resolved, though fatigue may persist
- 6 months: symptoms should be fully resolved

## When to Seek Medical Advice

You should contact the practice or seek urgent care if symptoms:

- Are getting worse rather than better
- Include severe breathlessness, chest pain, or coughing up blood
- Are accompanied by persistent high fever
- Are affecting vulnerable individuals, such as older adults or those with long-term conditions

Thank you for your patience during the winter period. By understanding normal recovery times, we can help ensure appointments are available for those who need them most.

# Squeezy-Peasy Lemon Pancakes Recipe

Pancake day is just round the corner and whether you like your pancakes with sugar and lemon, banana and Nutella or just as they are, here is an easy-to-follow recipe by NHS Better Health.

These zingy pancakes are a tasty option and fun to make. Just follow the 4 simple steps.

- Prep: 5 mins
- Cook: 15 mins
- Makes 8 pancakes
- Per portion (2 pancakes): 823kJ / 195kcals

Read the full recipe: [Easy sugar and lemon pancakes - Recipes - Healthier Families - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/recipes/easy-sugar-and-lemon-pancakes-recipes-healthier-families-nhs/)

## Ingredients

- 125g plain flour
- 1 large egg
- 300ml 1% fat milk
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 lemon (or orange), sliced into quarters
- 2 teaspoons caster sugar

## Method

1. Put the flour, egg and milk into a large mixing bowl with 2 tablespoons of cold water. Whisk together to make a smooth, thin batter.

Information: You can cover and chill the batter for up to 4 hours before making the pancakes. Just make sure to stir it well before cooking.



2. Heat a small, heavy-based non-stick frying pan and add a few drops of oil for each pancake you make. Spoon in about 3 tablespoons (or 1 ladle) of batter, tilting the pan as you add it to swirl it over the whole base.
3. When the underside of the pancake is cooked (about 90 seconds), flip it over to cook the other side. Carry on making 8 thin pancakes – either serving as soon as you cook them or keeping them warm in a low-heat oven until all 8 are ready.
4. Serve 2 pancakes per person, topped with half a teaspoon of sugar and a lemon quarter for squeezing.

Information: Orange juice makes a good alternative topping for variety, and children might prefer it to the sour-tasting lemon.



# UNITED BY UNIQUE

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## Yatton Wellbeing Lifestyle Club

We're delighted to invite you to our Wellbeing Lifestyle Group, a welcoming space to move, connect, and learn practical ways to support your wellbeing, **11am at Yatton**

**Methodist Church Hall.** Free to join and refreshments provided. The next dates are:



### **Wednesday 26th February – Seated Dancing**

Get moving in a fun and accessible way with Seated Dancing!

Enjoy full-body, chair-based exercises set to music, designed to boost mobility, mood, and confidence.

Led by Mel from Age UK, this session is suitable for all abilities—no dance experience needed, just come along and enjoy yourself.

### **Wednesday 26th March – Worry to Wellness**

Join Barbara, former counsellor at Vine Counselling, for an insightful and supportive session focused on mental wellbeing.

Barbara will share practical strategies to manage anxiety and build resilience when coping with the challenges of modern-day living.

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## Inclusive Cycling Skills Sessions

We are thrilled to be able to continue offering our Free Inclusive Cycling sessions, every Wednesday at our base at Yatton Railway Station (BS49 4AJ).

People with disabilities, neurodiversity, additional needs or enduring health conditions face many barriers to accessing opportunities to exercise and experience health inequalities, for example: indoor group exercise can be expensive or overwhelming. Our sessions provide a great way for people to achieve a regular exercise session, improving their physical health, cycle skills and allowing for greater feelings of wellbeing.

With our range of bikes, adaptive and regularly available, and the beautiful traffic free Strawberry Line Cycle path, these sessions hold a great many benefits for riders. If you could share this information with anyone you think may benefit from and enjoy these sessions, it would be much appreciated.

# Inclusive Cycling Skills Sessions



We host FREE drop-in Cycle sessions on Wednesday's between 10am-4.00pm for people with disabilities, additional needs or enduring health conditions.

We have a range of bikes, trikes, handcycles, co-riders and other adaptive bikes, so offer a variety of ways to get you pedalling.

[strawberrylineprojects@gmail.com](mailto:strawberrylineprojects@gmail.com)

## Join the Virtual PPG Group

We're inviting patients to join our Virtual Patient Participation Group (PPG) and help shape the future of our practice.

The PPG is a group of patients who work alongside the practice team to share ideas, feedback, and suggestions on how we can improve our services. Our virtual PPG allows you to get involved from home, at a time that suits you—there's no need to attend meetings in person. The Meetings are held once every other month, 7pm – 8pm via Microsoft Teams.

By joining, you can:

- Share your views and experiences as a patient
- Help influence how services are developed and improved

- Receive updates about practice news and planned changes
- Be involved as much or as little as you wish

Anyone registered with the practice is welcome to join, and we value input from patients of all ages and backgrounds.

If you're interested in joining or would like more information, please contact the practice or visit our website to sign up...

<https://ns.mendipvale.nhs.uk/surgery-information/patient-participation-group/patient-participation-group-form#>

# Mobile Library Timetable Feb-July 2026

We are delighted to share an exciting update regarding the new Mobile Library electric vehicle – it's here!

The new vehicle has been delivered, and the team has been working hard to get it stocked with books and ready to get out on the road.

We would like to say a massive heartfelt thank you for bearing with us and continuing to use the interim service. We know that it hasn't been the same as being able to climb onboard and browse the shelves for yourself, so we really do appreciate your continuing support by using our temporary vehicle. Your patience and understanding has meant a lot whilst we waited for the new electric vehicle to be built from scratch and delivered.

By switching to an electric vehicle, we will be dramatically reducing the mobile library's emissions and fuel costs, helping us in our mission to protect the environment and build a green North Somerset.

Our new Mobile Library van is officially out and about on the roads and in the villages of North Somerset from Monday 5th January (this is week one of the timetable) and we'd love to welcome you onboard and see what you think! We will be holding a big public launch of the vehicle soon to really promote the service so keep an eye out for details around this. We know this has been long awaited so, again, the whole team would like to say a huge THANK YOU for your patience .

The Mobile Library Team

You can reserve books and collect them at your nearest mobile library stop. You can do this using the online catalogue on the LibrariesWest website or email us at mobile.library@n-somerset.gov.uk or call 01275 888 864.

2026	Friday
February	6, 20
March	6, 20
April	H, 17
May	1, 15, 29
June	12, 26
July	10, 24

H – public holiday = vehicle off road

M – maintenance = vehicle off road

Stops at:		
Churchill	Doctor's Surgery car park (Pudding Pie Lane)	11:30am – 12:00pm

Please note that stops and timings may be subject to change during the currency of this timetable.



## Dry January Is Nearly Over – But the Conversation About Alcohol Shouldn’t Be

As January draws to a close, many people will be finishing Dry January — a month-long challenge to go alcohol-free. Whether you managed the whole month, cut back a little, or decided not to take part at all, Dry January isn’t about perfection. It’s about starting a conversation about our relationship with alcohol.

While the challenge may be almost over, the reasons behind it matter all year round.

### **Why Dry January Matters**

For many people, Dry January offers a chance to pause and reflect. Even a short break from alcohol can lead to noticeable benefits, including:

- Better sleep and energy levels
- Improved mood and concentration
- Weight loss and better digestion
- Lower blood pressure and improved liver health
- Saving money

Perhaps most importantly, it helps people become more aware of how often and why they drink.

### **Alcohol Awareness Is a Year-Round Issue**

Alcohol is part of everyday life for many of us, but drinking regularly or heavily can increase the risk of serious health problems, including:

- Liver disease
- Heart disease and stroke
- Several types of cancer
- Mental health difficulties

## Keeping the Momentum Going

You don't need to stay completely alcohol-free to benefit. Small, realistic changes can make a big difference, such as:

- Having several alcohol-free days each week
- Choosing lower-alcohol alternatives
- Reducing portion sizes
- Being mindful of drinking in response to stress, boredom or habit

Many people find that Dry January helps reset habits and makes it easier to drink less going forward.

## Support Is Available

If you're worried about your drinking, or if alcohol is affecting your health, relationships or mood, you're not alone — and support is available. Speaking to your GP or practice nurse can be a positive first step, and we can help signpost you to local services if needed.

## A Healthier Relationship With Alcohol

Dry January may be ending, but its message lasts far beyond the month. Taking time to reflect on your drinking, making informed choices, and seeking support when needed can all help protect your health — not just in January, but all year round.

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## HPV Explained: Simple Steps That Help Prevent Cancer

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the name of a common group of viruses that can cause various conditions such as genital warts or cancer. HPV has no symptoms, so you may not know if you have it. It's very common and most people will get some type of HPV in their life. Most types of HPV are harmless. But some types are linked to an increased risk of certain types of cancer, including cervical, mouth and penile cancers.

High-risk HPV DNA is found in over 99% of all cervical cancers. However, having HPV does not mean that you have or will develop cervical cancer. It's very common. Most people will get some type of HPV in their life. Even if you've had an HPV vaccination it's important that you attend your cervical screening appointment when invited because the HPV vaccine doesn't protect against all strains of HPV.

A circular inset image shows a group of young people, including a woman with blonde hair smiling and a woman with dark curly hair looking at a smartphone. The background is a colorful gradient. A yellow circle on the right side of the inset contains the text 'Let's stop cervical cancer together' in black, bold, sans-serif font.

The HPV vaccine protects against some cancers in young people

Let's stop cervical cancer together

## HPV vaccination

- The HPV vaccine protects against most types of HPV, which is a virus that causes most types of cervical cancer.
- HPV vaccine prevents 9 out of 10 cases of cervical cancer. It's quick, safe, and the best protection you can give your child against future cancer risk. Most side effects are mild and temporary - just like other routine vaccinations.
- The NHS offers the HPV vaccine to **boys and girls** from the **age of 12-13**. Girls under 25 and boys born after 1 September 2006 who missed their HPV vaccine at school, can also catch up at their GP.
- Protecting your child against future cancer is one of the most powerful things you can do as a parent. The HPV vaccine is safe, effective, and has already prevented thousands of cancers in the UK. Contact your school nurse, school vaccination team or GP surgery if you or your child were eligible for the HPV vaccine but did not get vaccinated.
- Since the introduction of the HPV vaccine, there has been a large drop in the number of young people getting conditions linked to HPV, such as cervical cancer and genital warts. Please sign your child's consent form when you receive it.

## Cervical screening

- Cervical screening saves approximately 5,000 lives a year in the UK.
- Cervical screening isn't just a test - it's your early warning system that can detect problems before they develop into cancer. Every year, thousands of women's lives are saved because they took this simple step to protect themselves.

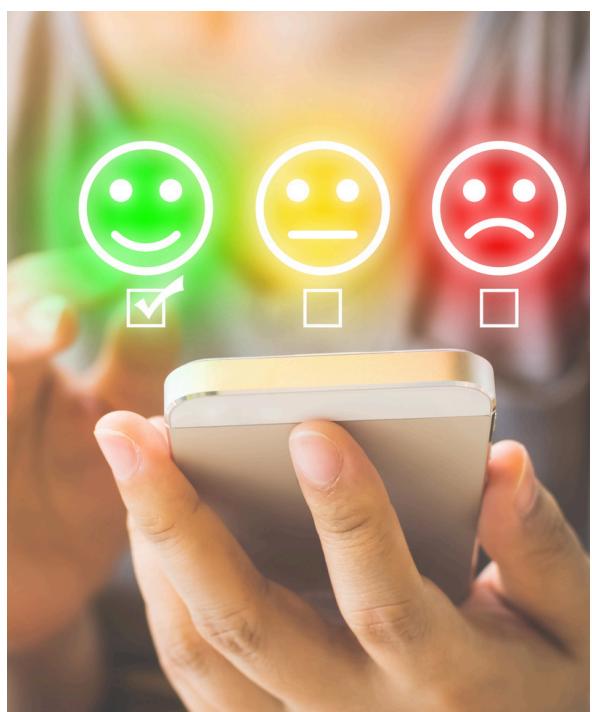
- High-risk HPV testing in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme is a more sensitive and accurate test than the one previously used (which solely looked for cervical cell changes).
- Cervical screening is the best way to find out who is at higher risk of developing the cervical cell changes that over time could potentially lead to cervical cancer.
- Worried about your cervical screening? You're not alone. You can ask for a female doctor or nurse, bring someone with you for support, or talk through your concerns with the screening team beforehand. Your comfort matters to us.
- Your cervical screening appointment typically takes around 10 minutes and could save your life. It might feel a bit awkward, but health professionals do thousands of these tests every day - they're quick, they're trained to make you comfortable, and you're always in control. Book your appointment today - evening and weekend slots are available.
- Don't put it off - book your cervical screening today. One quick appointment could save your life. It's not too late, even if you were invited weeks, months or years ago. Contact your GP surgery to book an appointment with them. In some parts of England, you may be able to go to a local sexual health clinic or walk-in centre instead.
- And it's always important you attend your cervical screening appointment, even if you have been vaccinated.



## **Tips for women and people with a cervix booking and/or attending their cervical screening**

- We will do everything we can to make you feel comfortable. If you're nervous, you can get in touch before or speak to us at the appointment to let us know you'd like support.
- If you're nervous and need more time for your screening, ask the receptionist for a longer appointment when booking. You can also bring someone you trust to the appointment, such as a friend or family member.
- We might be able to offer you an evening and weekend appointments to make it more convenient for you to attend. Ask when you book.
- The majority of cervical screenings are performed by a female nurse or doctor, but you can request this when you book.
- During the appointment you can ask for a private space to undress from the waist down, as well as a sheet to cover you. You can also wear a long top or dress during the screening.
- If you've found the procedure uncomfortable in the past, we can discuss using a smaller speculum or trying a different position like lying on your side. You are in control of your screening appointment and can ask to stop at any time.
- You can bring your favourite music or podcast to listen to during your appointment if this helps put you at ease.
- We will take you through the process and give you lots of tips to ease any anxiety.

If you have received your screening invitation, please don't wait and book your appointment now.



### **Newsletter Feedback**

We're always looking for ways to improve how we communicate with our patients — and that includes our newsletter. Whether you found it helpful, had suggestions for new topics, or felt something was missing, we'd love to know what you think.

Our newsletter is created with you in mind, aiming to keep you informed about health advice, local services, new treatments, and how to get the most from your NHS care. But we can only make it better with your input!

Share your thoughts:

[Click here for your feedback](#)