

# Homestead Medical Centre

## Newsletter

Spring 2021

### **Welcome to our Spring Newsletter 2021.**

Today, the Pandemic Lockdown is 1 year old. Not something we can celebrate, but it has certainly changed the way we work and how you have access to treatment, both here and at the hospital. This time last year we closed our reception doors but kept working throughout every bank holiday and some weekends. We worried about the patients and our own families and friends getting sick. We were constantly updated by the Government as to what was happening but it was still conflicting, scary and sometimes vague or confusing for us and the wider NHS. It was also pretty scary at times.

A year later we have new ways of working; some of us work from home, we have a vaccine programme and walk around with masks on whilst we work or walk past our colleagues. We selfishly don't make each other drinks anymore due to the infection risk, we don't 'borrow' pens and we take our temperatures each morning before we enter the building. A month+ ago we started testing ourselves for covid twice a week.

So as daft, hot or irritated some of us feel in masks or how changes in the NHS affects you all, we are still working hard.

### **The Oxford AstraZeneca Vaccine**

Worried the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine isn't safe and should you still have it? Some European countries paused the use

However, there is no evidence that the blood clots have been caused by the vaccine and the UK regulator, the Medicines Health Regulatory Authority, has said that they are confident the vaccine is safe. This is supported by both the European Medicines Agency (the European regulator for medicines and vaccines) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), who have said the vaccine should be safe and should continue to be given.

There were 30 reports of clots among almost five million people given the vaccine across Europe but this is actually less than the number that would be expected to happen naturally.

Following the concerns regarding blood clots, AstraZeneca has conducted a review of all safety data, which has shown no evidence of an increased risk of blood clots. This covered more than 17 million people vaccinated in the UK and European Union.

The UK is further ahead its vaccination programme than most other countries and so far over 20 million people in England have been vaccinated. It is very important that people still have their COVID-19 vaccine when asked to do so.

This is the only protection available against the serious illness caused by Covid-19, which has sadly led to the death of millions of people around the world, and people will continue to be at risk from the disease if they do not take up the offer of a vaccine.

## Smears

Smears check for abnormality in the cervix of women who appear healthy but may have the start of changes related to cancer. It's not very dignified, can be embarrassing and worrying but our doctors and nurses have expert knowledge and can talk you through any concerns you may have and show you what to expect.



Are you a Carer?

<http://www.carerswakefield.org.uk/>

Do you give support to a member/s of your family, a partner or friend who has an illness, disability, learning disability, is frail/elderly or has a mental health condition? For example, caring for your parent, son, daughter, partner or friend.

They offer free and confidential information & support service to adults and young adult carers from age 18 living in the Wakefield area

### They can:-

- Listen and talk things over to help you make decisions and choices.
- Give advice and information about services available for you and/or the person you care for
- Provide you with benefits guidance and support
- Support you at meetings that are relevant to your caring role

**You can** speak to a Support Worker over the phone or make an appointment to see a Support Worker at your home or other convenient place. Drop in at their office between 9 am-5 pm weekdays.

**Support Groups** - They run regular carer support groups throughout the Wakefield District

## Referrals to the Hospitals

You may remember that the hospitals stopped taking new referrals for non urgent or non cancer services early last year. When this reopened it has changed the way we refer you.

We used to send an electronic referral – think of this like an email - and tell you to wait up to 26 weeks. Sometimes the referral was rejected after you have waited all that time.

Now you don't have to wait that long to find out if they will see you.

Now the doctor sends an electronic consultation – think of this as a text message. The consultant then texts back saying 'yes' – telling the doctor where to refer and how long you have to wait. Or they say 'No' – but tell the doctor what to try first before sending a second text message to ask for their opinion again.

It's easier now for your doctor to speak to a hospital consultant than ever before.

### Online access

If you would like to register to book appointments, change your details, order medication and look at your medical record, you can do that online. You need to fill in forms that are available at reception and post it in the letterbox outside.



### Appointments

We have found new ways of working online and like us, you will have your preferred way of getting to talk to your doctor. Not everyone can get on the internet and we can help. If you have any suggestions, please email these to

[wakccg.homesteadmc@nhs.net](mailto:wakccg.homesteadmc@nhs.net).