

## Collingham Church View Surgery Coronavirus Newsletter March 2020

### **A message to all our patients:**

We wanted to update our website to tell you about some of the changes that have been put in place since the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We also want to share some advice and resources that you may find helpful. As we are sure you appreciate, this is a rapidly changing situation and whilst we endeavour to keep this site under review, we cannot guarantee that any web links will always be up to date. If new government announcements are made, please follow that advice as it emerges.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation during these unprecedented times.

### **Is the surgery open?**

Yes we are open but non urgent work has had to be postponed until further notice e.g travel, minor surgery, NHS health checks, chronic disease reviews, social prescribing and any other work identified by the management team. Please note that *childhood immunisations* will continue as normal .

We are not operating in the usual way, so PLEASE DO NOT WALK INTO THE SURGERY TO ASK FOR APPOINTMENTS AS WE ARE ONLY MAKING APPOINTMENTS OVER THE PHONE. Please see the information below that outlines the reasons why we have changed our systems and how they operate.

We would like to reassure you that in the unlikely event that the surgery would need to close at any point in the future (for example due to staff shortages), we work closely with a number of neighbouring practices and together we will continue to provide medical care for you and your families.

### **Thorner Branch Surgery**

Due to staff shortages we will be *temporarily closing Thorner Branch Surgery from Monday 30th March*. We apologise for this inconvenience and want to assure you that the decision to temporarily close was necessary. The phone lines at Thorner Surgery will be re-directed to Collingham Surgery. Please be reassured that we will continue to care for all of our patients in Thorner during this time from our main site in Collingham. Prescription requests can still be posted through the door of Thorner Surgery but the medications will need to be collected from Church View Surgery. We will re-open Thorner Surgery as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so.

### **How should I access healthcare?**

If you have a new continuous cough and/or high temperature (37.8 degrees or above) then you are advised to self-isolate at home. YOU SHOULD NOT GO TO YOUR GP, PHARMACY OR HOSPITAL. You should only call 999 if you are seriously unwell and feel it is a medical emergency.

The following NHS website is regularly updated with the latest advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

The website provides information about self-isolation, including practical advice and recommendations about how long this should last.

If you need to seek medical advice initially then please use 111 online:

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

If you have any other medical related problem that requires advice please consider approaching this in the usual way whilst remembering social distancing measures:

Seek advice online from 111 <https://111.nhs.uk>

Phone 111

Phone pharmacy if appropriate

Phone GP surgery if required

**Please use all services responsibly and appropriately**

### **Can I get a test for COVID-19 (coronavirus) at the surgery?**

No. Testing is not currently available in the community other than in very specific circumstances (and this service is not run by GP surgeries).

### **How do I contact the surgery and how will the surgery contact me?**

The surgery has temporarily suspended all pre-booked appointments and online bookings. We have moved to a fully telephoned triaged system. This means that if you wish to make an appointment you will need to telephone a member of staff first. Please **do not come into the surgery** to make an appointment.

If the surgery needs to contact you, it is likely that we will use our text messaging service more frequently over the coming weeks, as this is an instant way to keep in touch with you. If we telephone you from the surgery it may appear as an unknown number on your phone, so please ensure that if you are expecting a call back you answer.

### **Why has the surgery changed the appointment system and access?**

You will have heard of the need for everyone to be socially distancing themselves from others and this advice is especially important in doctors' surgeries. With COVID-19 now circulating in the community, patients coming to the surgery have the potential to spread the virus to staff who can then go on to infect others, some of whom will be very vulnerable to infections. In addition, we could very quickly see large numbers of staff self-isolating leading to real gaps in service provision. We hope you can, therefore, understand why we don't want you coming to the surgery unless it is absolutely necessary, however if you do need to visit us we will make it as safe as possible for you to do so.

### **What will happen if I do need to come to the surgery and why?**

If you do need to come to the surgery we have systems in place to prioritise your safety and the safety of our staff. We also want to ensure that we enable other patients to follow social distancing guidelines even within the surgery. For that reason we ask that you aim to keep 2 metres distance from others in the waiting room wherever practical.

As you might imagine, these processes are evolving all the time, so please listen carefully to the instructions you are given by a member of staff if you are given an appointment.

Our staff may need to wear **protective equipment** during the consultation, such as gloves, a gown and a face-mask. Please do not be alarmed by this. If bringing a child it may be helpful to warn them of this in advance.

**Please follow social distancing at all times including when approaching our reception and pharmacy staff. On arrival please use the hand gel available.**

### **Repeat Medication requests**

If you already order your prescriptions online then please continue to do so in the usual way. Alternatively, you can post requests through the surgery door at Collingham or Thorner sites. You can also order repeat prescriptions through the NHS app;

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app>

If none of the above options are possible then please contact the surgery by phone, after 10am, for further advice.

Please allow 3 working days for us to process your prescription requests at this time.

To minimise the number of patients through the surgery and to make social distancing easier we are dispensing medications through the ground floor window at the front of Church View Surgery. This is clearly marked as you enter the carpark.

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Please be aware that the current medical advice for those people with any long- term conditions is to continue taking your usual prescribed medication unless advised to stop by a health professional. In line with government guidelines, we respectfully ask that you DO NOT REQUEST EXTRA QUANTITIES OF YOUR MEDICATION at this time. We will continue to process prescriptions promptly.

### **Request for medical certificates**

There have been some recent changes to the medical certificate and benefits systems to ease pressures for both users and service providers during these busy times. Please see link to the latest government advice regarding current guidance for all claimants during COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>

Remember that you can always self-certify for up to 7 days for any reason.

*During the COVID-19 outbreak, 111 are providing an easy online service to obtain certificates for if you are isolating relating to either personal illness from coronavirus or following advice to protect others. The online certificates can be issued for longer than 7 days. This service has been created to avoid unnecessary administrative work for surgeries during this extremely busy period and therefore this will be the only way to obtain certification for isolation at the present time.*

<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

If you need a medical certificate for any other reason (beyond 7 days duration) then you will need to telephone the surgery, after 10am, to request it. It is likely that you will be emailed the certificate, so please have your email address to hand.

### **Request for non-NHS work for example insurance reports**

We will be very unlikely to be able to process these types of requests at this time due to volume of workload and prioritising patient care. This is the position we have been advised to take by local bodies.

### **Working together to provide high quality medical care**

We want you to know that we are here for you. We know that if we all work together as a team of patients and staff then we will be able to continue to look after you to the best of our ability.