

# Help your GP SURGERY to HELP YOU

## Doctors say keep backing your surgery

Senior GPs from across Gloucestershire have asked for the public's understanding and support as their practice teams strive to meet unprecedented challenges this winter and continue to put patients first.

### Current pressures

As well as the usual increase in demand for appointments and follow up care during the winter months, GP surgery teams are also pulling out all the stops to deliver the expanded flu immunisation campaign and gear up to play a leading role in the COVID-19 mass vaccination programme.

#### Dursley GP, Dr Simon Opher said:

"Our surgery teams are working incredibly hard to meet the health and care needs of patients and to protect the public by supporting essential public health programmes.

We are grateful for the support of our local communities and for recognising the pressures being experienced within local GP surgeries during these unprecedented times.

### Our teams

Despite the strict infection control procedures in place, on occasions surgeries will have staff who need to self-isolate or may be unwell and this

brings additional challenges for practice teams.

We do realise these are difficult times for all, but some practice staff across the county are experiencing unpleasant behaviour and comments and we're just asking people to think twice and be kind.

We really appreciate patience and understanding when making contact with practice staff. They are totally committed to patients and are doing their level best under significant pressure."

#### Stroud GP, Dr Sheena Yerburch said:

"Practices are really feeling the strain at this time. They are working flat out to meet the everyday medical needs of patients and also plan and give their full backing to these important public vaccination programmes that stand to protect individuals and communities.

Gloucestershire's GPs and their teams will be playing a central role in the COVID-19 vaccination roll out and this is a major effort for all concerned.



### Worried about your health?

We appreciate the kindness we are receiving from the majority of patients and it's important to stress that we do still want people to contact us if they are worried about their health and have symptoms that need to be checked out urgently.

We are all working extremely hard to keep waiting times down and have procedures in place to prioritise patients with urgent needs."

### Adapting working practices

GP practices across Gloucestershire were recognised nationally this year for the speed in which they adapted their working practices at the beginning of the pandemic and embraced new and innovative ways of working, such as rapid expansion of on-line and video consultations.

## How YOU can help

- Call your GP surgery or go online if you need urgent medical help or have an illness that won't go away
- The surgery will first assess your needs over the phone or online so you are cared for by the right person, in the right place for your illness
- You may be offered a telephone appointment or e-consultation, but practices continue to offer face to face appointments where there is a medical need
- Please DON'T turn up at the surgery unless asked to and please respect practice staff who are doing their very best in difficult circumstances
- Over ordering of repeat medication is not needed and GP surgeries will not be changing the usual length of medicine supplies to patients. This will ensure there are always stocks available
- Please be patient and await confirmation of remaining flu vaccination clinics and appointments – if you are eligible for the vaccine, your surgery will contact you
- Please consider your community pharmacy if you have a minor ailment. Pharmacists are highly qualified health professionals, experts on medicines and can advise if you need to see a GP or use another NHS service.