

**Northway Medical Centre
Bulletin
Number 2 (December 2023)**

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This is the second Bulletin from Northway Medical Centre PPG. It aims to bring readers useful information relating to the surgery, health care in Dudley and general health information.

1. Progress at the surgery regarding covid and flu vaccinations.

<i>As at 9 Nov when data provided</i>	Covid	Flu
Over 65s	77%	82%
Under 65s at risk	14.37%	43.6%
Total	1390 patients	1938 patients

There has been a slight increase in numbers vaccinated but also an increase in the number of patients declining: covid 217 and flu 449. This is still a very good outcome for the practice

2. Shingles vaccinations

The shingles vaccine helps protect against shingles, a common condition that causes a painful rash. It can sometimes lead to serious problems such as long-lasting pain, hearing loss or blindness. You are more likely to get shingles, and it's more likely to cause serious problems, as you get older. It is possible to have shingles more than once so if offered a shingles vaccination it is important to take it.

People eligible to have a shingles vaccination are

- People who turn 65 on or after 1 September 2023
- People ages 70 to 79
- People aged 50 and over with a severely weakened immune system

3. Missed appointments

Nationally, on average 5% of GP appointments are not kept. This means that staff time and resource is wasted. It also means that someone else could have had that appointment and consequently has to wait. Each missed appointment costs about £45 and overall cost to the NHS is about £216million annually.

The numbers of missed appointments at Northway is slightly less than national average, as follows:

	% missed	No of appointments missed	@£45 each
Q1 April to June	3.4%	370	£16,650
Q2 July to September	3.4%	385	£17,325
			Total cost £33,975

This is only for two quarters so the cost of missed appointments for a year would amount to close to £70,000. If you cannot attend an appointment please cancel with as much notice as possible rather than just miss it.

4. Vitamin D

Various sources, and the government according to the NHS website, recommend taking a Vitamin D supplement between October and March when there isn't so much sunlight or opportunity to be outside. See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>

Sunshine helps the body make vitamin D which is good for bones, muscles and teeth. Vitamin D supplements are available over the counter. The NHS website indicates that a sensible daily dosage is 10 micrograms per day (400 IUs) for adults and children over 4. Please note that people at high risk from a deficiency of vitamin D (eg people with darker skin or those who don't get outdoors) can benefit from taking a supplement throughout the year.

Also, please note that if you are already on medication for bone strength then take advice before taking a daily Vitamin D supplement.

5. Danger of broken bones from falls and the increased likelihood of falls with frailty

As we get older and more frail the negative impact on us from broken bones increases. It may affect mobility, ability to live independently, confidence and mental health. It may mean hospitalisation. Recovery takes longer and the prognosis may not be good. It is important that we do as much as possible to help ourselves to prevent falls and minimise the risk of bone fractures. This not only includes taking action to remove trip hazards at home (for example, taking up loose rugs) but doing what we can to improve our balance and muscle strength. The NHS has some suggestions for simple exercises to do at home to boost muscle strength and improve balance. Search "strength exercises" at www.nhs.uk to find some examples.

Dudley has a Falls Prevention Team who can give help and advice. For further information go to <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/care-and-health/adult-health-social-care/support-to-stay-independent/dudley-falls-prevention/>

The team can be contacted by telephone on 0300 555 0055 or by email fallsspa@dudley.gov.uk

6. Surgery opening times over Christmas and New Year

The practice will be closed from 6.30pm on Friday 22nd December reopening at 8am on Wednesday 27th December. It will also be closed from Friday 29th December to reopen on January 2nd at 8am. These closures will be notified in the practice reception area and on our website. Information will also be given as to where patients can access health services out of hours.