
AUGUST PATIENT NEWSLETTER



GREENSAND
Health Centre

*"We aim to improve our community's health
and wellbeing and exceed their expectations"*

www.greensandhealth.co.uk

Welcome to our patient newsletter, which we hope you will find useful and informative.

Also, please don't forget we regularly post all our current news on our website and Facebook page, so be sure to take a look every now and again to stay up-to-date.

SURGERY CLOSURE DATES



Staff Training Dates

Please note all our surgeries will be closed from 1pm on the below dates for Protected Learning Time. Normal surgery hours resume the following morning. The Acute Hub at Linton will also be closed to enable our clinicians some much needed training time.

- Wednesday 19th August 2026
- Tuesday 15th September 2026
- Thursday 15th October 2026
- Wednesday 11th November 2026

We do understand an afternoon closure can be an inconvenience for some patients, but please be mindful that this protected time is invaluable for busy GP surgeries. It gives all staff, clinical and non-clinical, time to undertake formal mandatory training which cannot be completed in normal surgery hours. Patients are still able to use the 24 hour automated services, check and cancel appointments, use the mental health service, and the repeat prescription service.

In this newsletter
you can expect:

National
Wellness Month

NHS Self Care

Measles
Awareness

July
Achievements

The Pharmacy
Team

Telephone Lines

NATIONAL WELLNESS MONTH

Every August, National Wellness Month serves as a timely reminder to pause, reflect, and focus on our overall wellbeing. In our busy day-to-day lives, it's easy to place work, family responsibilities, and other commitments ahead of our own health. National Wellness Month encourages us to change that mindset by making our physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing a priority - not just for one month, but as part of a healthy lifestyle all year round.

Wellness is much more than simply being free from illness. It is about feeling your best physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. It involves making positive choices that support your health, build resilience, and improve your quality of life. Even small, consistent changes can have a significant impact on your overall wellbeing.

National Wellness Month was created to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and to encourage people to establish habits that promote long-term health. It reminds us that prevention is just as important as treatment. Looking after ourselves today can reduce the risk of developing many long-term health conditions in the future.

The month also highlights that wellness looks different for everyone. For some, it may involve becoming more physically active, while for others it may mean improving sleep, managing stress, connecting with loved ones, or seeking support for their mental health. There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to wellness - what matters is finding healthy habits that work for you.

Mental health is just as important as physical health, yet it is often overlooked. Our mental wellbeing affects how we think, feel, cope with challenges, and interact with others. Looking after your mental health can improve concentration, boost your mood, strengthen relationships, and help you manage life's ups and downs more effectively.

Simple activities can make a real difference, including:

- Taking regular breaks from work or screens.
- Spending time outdoors and enjoying nature.
- Practising mindfulness or meditation.
- Speaking openly with friends or family.
- Making time for hobbies you enjoy.
- Ensuring you get enough restful sleep.



It's also important to remember that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you are struggling with your mental health, support is available through your GP, local mental health services, charities, and trusted organisations.

Healthy living isn't about perfection or following strict diets - it's about making sustainable choices that support your body and mind. Small improvements made consistently often lead to the greatest long-term benefits.

Some healthy habits to consider include:

- Eating a balanced diet rich in fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- Drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- Limiting highly processed foods and sugary drinks.
- Avoiding smoking and limiting alcohol consumption.
- Maintaining a regular sleep routine.
- Taking time to relax and manage stress.

These simple lifestyle choices can reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, obesity, and certain cancers, while also improving energy levels and overall wellbeing.

Physical activity is one of the most effective ways to improve both physical and mental health. Exercise doesn't have to mean spending hours in the gym—it can be anything that gets you moving. Walking, cycling, swimming, gardening, dancing, yoga, or even playing with children or grandchildren all count towards being active. Regular exercise helps to:

- Improve heart and lung health.
- Strengthen muscles and bones.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Increase energy levels.
- Improve sleep quality.
- Reduce stress and anxiety.
- Boost confidence and self-esteem.



Exercise also releases endorphins - often called the "feel-good" hormones - which can naturally improve mood and help reduce symptoms of stress, anxiety, and low mood.

One of the biggest misconceptions about wellness is that it requires major lifestyle changes. In reality, wellness is built through small, achievable habits repeated over time.

This August, why not challenge yourself to make one positive change? It could be:

- Taking a 20-minute walk each day.
- Drinking more water.
- Preparing healthier meals at home.
- Going to bed 30 minutes earlier.
- Spending less time on your phone.
- Trying a mindfulness exercise.
- Reconnecting with friends or family.
- Booking a health check if you've been putting it off.



Remember, progress is more important than perfection. Looking after yourself benefits everyone. When we take care of our own wellbeing, we're better equipped to care for those around us. Good health allows us to be more present with family and friends, more productive at work, and more resilient during difficult times.

National Wellness Month is a reminder that investing in your health is one of the most valuable things you can do. Whether you choose to become more active, eat more nutritiously, improve your mental wellbeing, or simply take a little more time for yourself, every positive step counts. This August, make your wellbeing a priority. Your future self will thank you.



NHS SELF CARE

When you or a member of your family becomes unwell, choosing the right NHS service can help you receive the care you need more quickly while ensuring emergency services remain available for those who need them most. Many common illnesses and minor injuries can be treated without visiting A&E, saving you time and helping reduce pressure on our healthcare services.

For minor illnesses such as coughs, colds, sore throats, grazes, small cuts, and minor burns, self-care is often the best option. Keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home with essentials such as paracetamol, ibuprofen, plasters, antiseptic cream, and cold and flu remedies can help you manage many everyday illnesses. Getting plenty of rest, staying hydrated, and following the advice on medicine packaging will often be enough to help you recover.

Your local community pharmacy is another excellent source of healthcare advice under the pharmacy 1st scheme. Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals who can assess and treat a wide range of common conditions, including diarrhoea, earache, hay fever, insect bites and stings, rashes, teething problems, sticky eyes, and minor skin infections. Many pharmacies now offer private consultation rooms, allowing you to discuss your symptoms confidentially without needing an appointment. Visiting a pharmacy can often save you a trip to your GP or urgent care service.

If your condition requires further medical assessment, your GP practice should usually be your next point of contact. GPs, nurses, and other members of the primary care team are experienced in diagnosing and treating a broad range of health concerns, including arthritis, asthma, back pain, stomach problems, and many other ongoing or more complex conditions. They can also arrange investigations, prescribe medication, refer you to specialists where appropriate, and help you manage long-term health conditions.

For illnesses or injuries that need prompt attention but are not life-threatening, Urgent Treatment Centres provide care for a variety of conditions. These include minor scalds and burns, sprains and strains, suspected broken bones, cuts requiring treatment, and certain skin rashes. Urgent Treatment Centres can assess, diagnose, and treat many conditions that are too urgent to wait for a routine GP appointment but do not require emergency hospital care.

Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments and 999 should only be used for serious or life-threatening emergencies. These include severe bleeding that cannot be controlled, difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, loss of consciousness, suspected stroke, or major injuries. Choosing A&E appropriately helps ensure that patients experiencing genuine emergencies receive urgent treatment without delay.

If you're unsure which service you need, NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can call 111 or use the NHS website for free advice, symptom guidance, and information about the most appropriate service for your needs, including your nearest pharmacy, GP service, or Urgent Treatment Centre.

By choosing the right NHS service for your condition, you're not only helping yourself receive the right care at the right time but also supporting the NHS to provide timely treatment for those who need it most.



MEASLES AWARENESS

Measles is one of the most contagious viral diseases known to affect humans. Although many people think of it as a childhood illness that causes a rash and fever, measles can be far more serious than many realise. Before widespread vaccination programmes were introduced, measles infected millions of children worldwide every year and was a leading cause of childhood illness, disability, and death.

Measles is caused by the measles virus, which spreads through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or even breathes. The virus can remain in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after an infected person has left the area. This means someone can become infected simply by entering a room where a person with measles has recently been.

An individual with measles is contagious from approximately four days before the rash appears until four days afterwards. This means people can unknowingly spread the virus before they realise they are ill.

Because it spreads so easily, if one person has measles, up to 90% of people nearby who are not immune are likely to become infected.

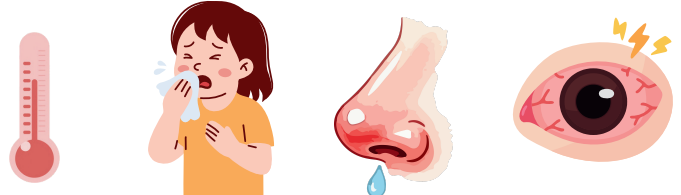
Thanks to routine immunisation programmes, measles became relatively uncommon in many countries. However, outbreaks continue to occur whenever vaccination rates fall, reminding us that this disease has not disappeared and can quickly return when communities are not adequately protected.

Schools, nurseries, healthcare settings, public transport, and busy indoor spaces are all environments where the virus can spread rapidly if someone is infectious.

Symptoms usually begin 7–14 days after exposure to the virus.

Early symptoms often resemble a severe cold or flu and may include:

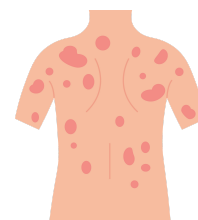
- A high fever
- Persistent cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)
- Feeling generally unwell and extremely tired
- Loss of appetite



One of the classic early signs is the appearance of Koplik spots—tiny white spots that develop inside the mouth before the rash appears.

A few days later, the characteristic measles rash develops. It usually:

- Starts on the face and behind the ears
- Spreads to the neck, chest, arms, and legs
- Forms flat red patches that may merge together
- Lasts around five to six days before gradually fading



Many people also experience sensitivity to light, swollen glands, muscle aches, and significant fatigue during the illness.

Although many people recover fully, measles should never be considered a harmless childhood illness. The virus weakens the immune system, leaving the body vulnerable to other infections for weeks or even months afterwards. Researchers sometimes describe this as "immune amnesia," because measles can reduce the immune system's memory of previous infections, making people more susceptible to illnesses they had previously developed immunity against.

Complications can include:

Ear infections

These are among the most common complications and may occasionally result in hearing loss.

Diarrhoea and dehydration

Young children can become dehydrated quickly, requiring hospital treatment.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is one of the leading causes of death associated with measles, particularly in young children. The infection can severely affect the lungs and make breathing difficult.

Encephalitis

In rare cases, measles causes inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). This can lead to seizures, permanent brain damage, developmental difficulties, or death.

Pregnancy complications

If a pregnant woman contracts measles, there is an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth, and babies being born with a low birth weight.

Rare long-term complications

A very rare but devastating condition called Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE) can develop several years after a measles infection. SSPE causes progressive brain damage and is almost always fatal.

Anyone who has not been vaccinated or has not previously had measles can become infected. Certain groups are at particularly high risk of severe illness:

- Babies who are too young to receive their first vaccine
- Young children
- Pregnant women
- People with weakened immune systems
- Individuals receiving chemotherapy or certain immune-suppressing medications
- Older adults with reduced immunity
- Anyone who is unvaccinated

Infants rely heavily on the immunity of those around them because they cannot receive their first routine measles vaccination until they reach the appropriate age. This is one reason why community vaccination is so important. Immunosuppressed people that can not have the vaccine also rely heavily on herd immunity.

The MMRV vaccine protects against four serious diseases:

Measles
Mumps
Rubella (German measles)
Varicella (chickenpox)



By combining protection against all four diseases into a single vaccine, children receive broad protection with fewer injections. The vaccine contains weakened forms of the viruses that cannot cause the diseases in healthy people. Instead, they safely stimulate the immune system to recognise the viruses and build long-lasting immunity. If a vaccinated person is later exposed to measles, their immune system can respond rapidly, often preventing infection altogether or significantly reducing the severity of illness.

If you're unsure whether you or your child are fully vaccinated, check your NHS app or contact the practice and request to speak to one of our Vaccine Champions!

Together, we can help protect our community and reduce the spread of measles. ❤️

For more information, please visit <https://vaccineknowledge.ox.ac.uk/home>

July Achievements

Welcome to the section in our newsletter dedicated to celebrating the achievements and successes of our team from the previous month. This segment highlights the outstanding contributions of individual staff members, departmental accomplishments, and positive milestones across the surgery.

Our aim is to give patients a greater insight into the hard work, dedication, and teamwork that takes place behind the scenes every day. From professional achievements and training successes to improvements in patient care and team accomplishments, we want to recognise the people who help make our surgery a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone.

By sharing these positive staff wins, we hope to keep our patients informed, connected, and engaged with the ongoing efforts being made to continually improve the care and service we provide.



Our Frailty & Advanced Care Team has continued to provide vital care to patients within the community, delivering a total of 226 appointments and services during the reporting period. This included 108 vaccinations, helping to protect patients against preventable illnesses, 37 same-day appointments for urgent clinical needs, 54 acute appointments to assess and treat immediate health concerns, and 27 proactive appointments, focused on preventative care, ongoing health management, and supporting patients to stay well at home. These figures highlight the team's commitment to delivering timely, accessible, and high-quality care directly to those who need it most.



We're delighted to share that 25% of our patients have installed and registered for the NHS App in the last three months! This is fantastic news and means that 77% of our patients are now using the NHS App and taking advantage of the many convenient services it has to offer. Thank you to everyone who has signed up and embraced the NHS App as another way to manage your healthcare. If you would like to start using the NHS app, please contact the practice for more information.



In July, we had the pleasure of welcoming a student to the practice for a 5-day work experience placement. During her time with us, she had the opportunity to learn more about the different roles within the practice and gain a valuable insight into what it is like to work in a healthcare environment.

Following her placement, we were delighted to receive a lovely letter from her, in which she shared her experiences and thanked the team for making her feel so welcome. She highlighted how friendly, supportive and welcoming all of our staff were, and how much she had been able to learn during her time with us in such a short space of time.

Most importantly, she told us that her experience with the practice had helped to ignite a real passion for pursuing a career in medicine and healthcare in the future. It is incredibly rewarding to hear that the time and support provided by our team has had such a positive impact on her and has helped inspire her future career ambitions.

We would like to wish her every success with her studies and future career, and we are so pleased that we could play a small part in inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals!

Pharmacy Team

The Pharmacy Team at Greensand Health Centre plays a vital role in supporting our patients and ensuring that medicines are prescribed, supplied and used safely and effectively. Our team currently consists of three Clinical Pharmacists, three Pharmacy Technicians and a dedicated team of Pharmacy Assistants, all working together to provide high-quality support to our patients and the wider practice team.

Our pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are an important part of our multidisciplinary healthcare team. Working alongside GPs, nurses and other healthcare professionals, they help ensure that patients receive the right medicines at the right time and that their treatment continues to be safe, effective and appropriate for their individual needs.

The team supports the practice with medicines optimisation, repeat prescribing, reducing medicines waste and improving patient outcomes. They can also provide additional support to patients living with long-term health conditions, help those who take multiple medicines and ensure that patients receive appropriate monitoring and health checks.

Their role is particularly important in helping to improve the quality and safety of patient care. By reviewing medicines regularly and working closely with patients and other healthcare professionals, the Pharmacy Team can identify potential problems, answer questions and make sure that patients understand how and when to take their medicines.

Our Clinical Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians can support patients in a variety of ways, including:

- Carrying out medication reviews to ensure medicines remain safe and appropriate.
- Answering questions and providing advice about medicines and how they should be taken.
- Carrying out telephone consultations and reviews where appropriate.
- Offering face-to-face medication reviews and appointments.
- Supporting patients with long-term health conditions and helping to manage their care holistically.
- Helping patients to get the most benefit from their medicines.
- Identifying potential side effects, interactions or other concerns relating to medicines.
- Reviewing medicines following hospital admissions or changes to treatment.
- Supporting joined-up care between the GP practice, hospitals, community pharmacies and other healthcare services.
- Monitoring patients who require regular blood tests or other health checks because of the medicines they take.
- Making appropriate changes to medication, including dose adjustments, where this is within their scope of practice and supported by monitoring results.
- Some of our Clinical Pharmacists are also qualified as independent prescribers and can prescribe medicines within their scope of practice.

You may already be familiar with your local community pharmacist, who is often your first point of contact for advice about minor illnesses, self-care and medicines. However, the role of a Clinical Pharmacist working within a GP practice is different.

Our Clinical Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians work as part of the practice's wider healthcare team and have access to the information needed to support the ongoing management of a patient's care. This means they can look at a patient's medicines alongside their medical history, existing health conditions, test results and other treatments, helping them to take a more holistic approach to their care.

For example, if a patient is diagnosed with a condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure, a Clinical Pharmacist may be involved in supporting the management of that condition. They can review the patient's treatment, provide advice about medicines and lifestyle changes, monitor how well the treatment is working and, where appropriate, prescribe or adjust medication within their scope of practice.

The aim is to ensure that patients receive the right treatment for their individual circumstances and that they understand how their medicines can help them manage their condition effectively.

Our Clinical Pharmacists can also provide advice about medicines, minor illnesses and self-care, as well as offering general guidance on maintaining good health and reducing the risk of developing or worsening long-term health conditions. They can help patients understand why they have been prescribed a particular medicine, how to take it correctly and what to do if they experience any problems.

If you take regular medication over a long period of time, it is important that your medicines are reviewed regularly. A medication review helps to ensure that your treatment is still appropriate, safe and working as intended.

During a medication review, a Clinical Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician can discuss your medicines with you and check that they are still suitable for your needs. They can also answer any questions or concerns you may have, discuss any side effects you are experiencing and check whether you are taking your medicines as prescribed.

Depending on the medication you take, you may also need regular monitoring, such as blood pressure checks, blood tests or other health checks. The Pharmacy Team can help to ensure that these checks are completed when required and that the results are considered as part of your ongoing medication review. This monitoring is an important part of safe prescribing and helps to make sure that your medication remains suitable for you.

If you have recently been admitted to hospital, you may find that your medicines have changed during your stay. You may have been started on a new medication, had the dose of an existing medicine changed, or been asked to stop taking a medication.

Our Pharmacy Team can help you understand these changes and ensure that your medication list is updated appropriately. They can review the information provided by the hospital, discuss any changes with you and help ensure that your medicines are safe and suitable following your discharge. If you are unsure about a change to your medication following a hospital admission, or you have questions about a new medicine, our Pharmacy Team may be able to help.

Our Pharmacy Assistants also play an essential role in keeping our medicines and prescribing processes running smoothly. They process requests for repeat medication and help deal with prescription-related queries. They also liaise with community pharmacies and other healthcare professionals where necessary to help resolve prescription issues and ensure that patients receive the medication they need. The team also helps to recall patients who require outstanding monitoring based on the medicines they take and their medical history. This may include reminding patients that they need to arrange a blood test, blood pressure check or another form of monitoring before their medication can be safely prescribed or continued.

This work is an important part of medicines safety and helps us to ensure that patients receive appropriate monitoring while taking their regular medication.

The Pharmacy Team at Greensand Health Centre is here to support you in getting the most from your medicines and to help ensure that your treatment is safe, effective and appropriate for you. Whether it is reviewing your medication, answering a question about a prescription, monitoring a long-term condition, supporting you after a hospital stay or helping you understand a change to your treatment, our team works closely with the wider practice team to provide joined-up care.

We would like to thank our Pharmacy Team for the important work they do every day to support our patients and help us deliver safe, effective and high-quality healthcare at Greensand Health Centre.



Telephone Lines

We're pleased to announce that our telephone lines are now open for longer!

Our general enquiries phone line is now available from 8:00am until 6:30pm, Monday to Friday, with no closure at 1:00pm.

We know that getting in touch with your GP practice can sometimes be challenging, particularly if you are working, have childcare or other commitments, or find it difficult to contact us during certain times of the day. By extending our telephone availability, we hope to make it easier and more convenient for our patients to get in touch with us when they need to.

By removing our 1:00pm lunchtime closure, our general enquiries telephone line is now available for an additional hour each weekday. This means that, rather than our phones closing for an hour in the middle of the day, you can now contact us continuously from 8:00am through to 6:30pm.

This change gives patients more flexibility and greater choice about when they contact the practice. If you are unable to call us in the morning, you no longer need to wait until our telephone lines reopen after lunch. Similarly, if you have work, school, childcare or other commitments during the day, you have more opportunities to contact us at a time that is convenient for you.

Please note that the prescriptions telephone line will continue to close for 1 hour, at 1pm Monday - Friday.

We hope that these changes will make contacting Greensand Health Centre more accessible, convenient and flexible for everyone, while helping to ensure that our patients have more opportunities to get in touch with us throughout the day.

Our general enquiries telephone line is now open:

 Monday – Friday
 8:00am – 6:30pm
 No lunchtime closure at 1:00pm

We hope these extended hours make it easier for you to access the support and services you need and provide greater flexibility when contacting the practice.



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Don't forget we regularly post all our current news on our website and Facebook page,
so be sure to take a look every now and again to stay up-to-date.



Finally, we would be interested to hear any constructive feedback on what you think of our newsletter, and if you have any ideas of articles or information you feel would be useful to share in the future, please email us at knicb.ghcfeedback@nhs.net
