



Grafton Medical Partners Trevelyan House

160 TOOTING HIGH STREET, LONDON SW17 0RT | 020 3883 5700

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Hayfever

Hayfever season is starting. Hayfever is an allergic reaction to pollens. It is very common and estimated to affect one in four people.



There is no cure and you cannot prevent it but there are things you can do to help and treatments for symptoms available from community pharmacists. Please see our website which links to information supplied by NHS Choices.

From 2018 our CCG guidance is that patients should seek advice from community pharmacists and purchase anti-histamine tablets, eye drops and nasal sprays. GPs will no longer be routinely prescribing these for any patients. If your symptoms are not settling with over-the-counter therapy, please see our in-house pharmacy team or see a GP.

Vaccinations

MMR

Sadly, measles is re-emerging as a serious childhood illness. Last year, the number of measles cases in England trebled as the uptake of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine fell for the fourth year running.

Many of us have not seen a case of measles but the 'measles is misery' line sums it up. Children with measles can be very unwell and can actually die or suffer life-changing, long-lasting sequelae.

Before the introduction of the vaccine in 1968, there were up to 800,000 cases per year and about 100 deaths. The disease was effectively eradicated in the UK after the introduction of the vaccine.

Measles, like the Ebola virus, affects every single organ in the body including the brain. Initial symptoms include red sore eyes, fever and small greyish-white spots in the mouth followed by a blotchy rash. Most children recover in 10 days (but are very ill for 10 days) but complications include pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and deafness. Experts believe that 95% of children

need to be vaccinated to protect the wider population through 'herd immunity'.

In 2016 and 2017, 95% of 5 year olds had had one dose of MMR but 10% of children do not develop immunity after one injection, so two doses are required for full protection. Last year only 88% nationally had had a second dose.

Our uptake figures show a similar trend. We are very concerned and note recent reports blaming scare stories on social media as the main cause, with some parents also saying that they have had difficulty getting an appointment for the vaccination. All the GPs and nurses at our surgeries have had their children vaccinated.

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR CHILD AT RISK.

As a result of this decline in vaccinations, we have decided to have a catch-up measles campaign over this summer. **We are proposing additional vaccination slots with our nurses from 10-11am on the first Saturday of every month.**

As a practice, we call, write to and text the parents of those who appear to have missed vaccinations. Please ensure we have your correct contact details.

Pneumococcal

Our second vaccine campaign is for the pneumococcal vaccine. Last month we were shocked to hear of the death of the husband of one of our patients from pneumococcal sepsis. He was fit and well but over 65. His wife, who had been vaccinated, was fine. Her husband had felt he was so well that he did not need the vaccine.

Babies are now routinely vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine. Adults over 65 are offered a one-off vaccine which protects against this unpleasant illness. Anyone from 2 to 64 at high risk should have the vaccine (this is generally the same group who are eligible for flu vaccination). People considered 'at risk' are in the following groups:

- spleen removed or not working properly (e.g. sickle cell)
- long term respiratory condition (e.g. COPD)
- heart disease
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease (e.g. cirrhosis)
- diabetes
- a suppressed immune system (e.g. HIV)
- a suppressed immune system caused by medicine such as chemotherapy or steroids
- those with a cochlear implant (a hearing device)

The pneumococcal vaccine comes to us in small batches. Over the summer months, we will also be running a campaign to maximise uptake. If you feel you qualify for this vaccine, please check with us and book a slot with one of our nurses. If you receive an invitation by phone, letter or text, PLEASE come for this vaccination which could save your life.

Men ACWY

Last but not least, the third vaccine we are actively promoting is the Men ACWY vaccine which protects against four strains of meningitis. See the article below taken from a daily newspaper on April 27, 2019:

Tragedy as 'bubbly and talented' estate agent, 23, goes to bed 'with a cold' but never wakes up due to undiagnosed meningitis infection: <https://daily.m.ai/2Lh9r6f>

This really sums up why this is so important. Sadly, there are similar articles every year. We are actively contacting those eligible for the vaccine (particularly school leavers heading to university) but anyone up to 25 is eligible. Please read this article and encourage your son, daughter or friend to have this vaccination. Meningitis kills or can leave horrible complications. We have reserved evening and Saturday slots for the vaccination and encourage you to attend.

New parents

We are hoping to start some group education sessions for our new parents run by our nurse practitioners and with community paediatric nurse input. The sessions will cover common problems in babies (e.g. feeding issues and common childhood illnesses) and aim to build up confidence in self-management and when to seek urgent advice. The dates for these will be available on our website shortly.

Vacancies

We are recruiting morning and evening reception staff at our three Tooting surgeries. We welcome applications from those with experience, but we value empathy, resourcefulness and a positive, can-do attitude, so training will be given to those who have not worked in this field before.

This is an ideal opportunity for anyone who has just finished university or is on a gap year.

To register your interest, please email your CV to our Operations Manager, Maisa Child (maisa.child@nhs.net).

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Address: 160 Tooting High Street, London SW17 0RT

Phone: 020 3883 5700 Fax: 020 8672 5049

Website: www.trevelyanhousesurgery.nhs.uk

Email: WACCG.trevelyanhousesurgery@nhs.net

Best Wishes

Dr Penelope Smith (Senior Partner)

Grafton Medical Partners

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