

HEATH LANE MEDICAL CENTRE Autumn 2025 NEWSLETTER



Hello and welcome to the latest
edition of Heath Lane Medical Centre's quarterly newsletter!
As always, we aim to keep you up to date with news and advice
from both within and outside of the practice.



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<https://www.facebook.com/HeathLaneMC>



<https://www.instagram.com/heathlanemc/>



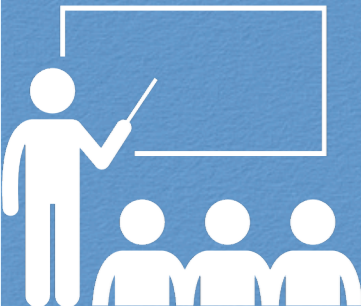
Patient Feedback

We always welcome feedback from our patients, here are a few comments we have received over the past few months:

- Great surgery, wonderful staff
- I have been very pleased with the service provided by Health Lane Medical Centre. The staff are always welcoming, friendly, and professional, which makes attending appointments a positive experience.

Staff Training Dates

- 9th September
- 8th October
- 4th November



The surgery will be closed for staff training on these days from 1pm, we will reopen at 8am the following day.

NHS 111 will be available to assist you while we are closed.

Did you know that we have a Facebook and Instagram page?

You can click on the icon to be taken through to our page!

We share lots of useful information and practice updates on our page as well as on our website.



Missed Appointments

Please remember if you cannot attend your appointment, to contact us to cancel it ASAP. Your appointment could be offered to another patient who urgently needs help.

Between 1st June and 31st August there were **113** missed appointments 19 hours of appointments lost across the whole clinical team.



Here is how our practice has been supporting patients

From 1st June till 31st August:

- Number of appointments booked - 8,345
- Number of new registrations - 135
- Number of prescriptions issued - 3,833
- Number of referrals done - 569
- Number of blood test requested - 1,700



Patient survey

The 2025 GP Patient Survey, run by NHS England, asked over 60 questions about patients' experiences from overall satisfaction, to how easy it is to speak to a receptionist, to the quality of treatment received.

When asked "Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP practice?" our Reception Team ranked in the Top 10!

This is an incredible achievement, and we're so proud of our team for their dedication, warmth, and commitment to providing the very best service to our patients. Thank you to everyone who shared their feedback





Go Sober for October

Around 10 million of us are regularly drinking alcohol in ways that can harm our health and wellbeing. From headaches, hangovers and sleepless nights to lower productivity and symptoms like anxiety and depression worsening over time.

Thought about going sober for October? Giving up alcohol for even a short period – just 31 days – can result in health benefits!

You may find you benefit from better-quality sleep, improved immunity and a sharper memory. Why not give it a try?

Tips to stay sober this October:

- Avoid triggers that make you want to drink
- Be prepared to say no
- Find alternatives to drinking
- Have a plan
- Reward yourself with something else you enjoy

<https://www.gosober.org.uk>



World Suicide Prevention Day.

This World Suicide Prevention Day, we're sharing one important message. If you think someone might be suicidal, take action, interrupt their thoughts and show them you care. It can be hard to find the right words to talk openly about how we're feeling. But when someone is dealing with difficult thoughts or worries, having someone there to listen can make all the difference.

How can you change the narrative on suicide?

Check in with loved ones, taking time to reach out to someone in your community, a family member, friend, colleague or even a stranger could change the course of another's life.

Look out for those who you think might be struggling and don't be afraid to ask someone if they are suicidal the offer of support, showing empathy and validating their feelings is more likely to reduce distress rather than exacerbate it.

Encourage them to seek help and further support.

Read more guidance on talking through suicidal thoughts and feelings in our resource here : <https://www.iasp.info/suicidalthoughts/>

NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/help-for-suicidal-thoughts/>



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON SUICIDE
World Suicide Prevention Day
10 September



Top tips to improve your mental wellbeing

There are little things we can all do to take care of our mental wellbeing.



Just like our physical health, it is important to look after our mental health. This can help us to learn new ways to cope with life's challenges and lead happier, healthier lives.

Simple changes can make a big difference – here are six areas that can help you look after your mental wellbeing:



1. Being aware of unhelpful thoughts

Learn to ask yourself whether your thoughts are helpful or not? Is there a different way to see the situation? What would you say to a friend?

2. Focus on now

Spend time focusing on the present instead of getting stuck on the past or worrying too much about the future. You could try relaxation techniques and mindfulness.

3. Getting enough rest

Make sure you have enough down time before bed and a good sleep routine with a regular bedtime and wake up time.

4. Connecting with others

Make time for socialising with friends and family or online communities where you are able to talk about the way you feel.

5. Living a healthy lifestyle

Eating well and getting enough exercise for your physical health can help to boost your mental wellbeing too.

6. Do something for yourself

Have some 'me time' by spending regular time on the things that make you happy, whether that's a hobby, trying something new or relaxing.



**Better
Health** every mind
matters

If you or someone you trust has a smart phone or computer and can access the internet, do visit www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/ for more tips and information on caring for your mental health, and find what works for you. You can also get access to the internet at most local libraries.

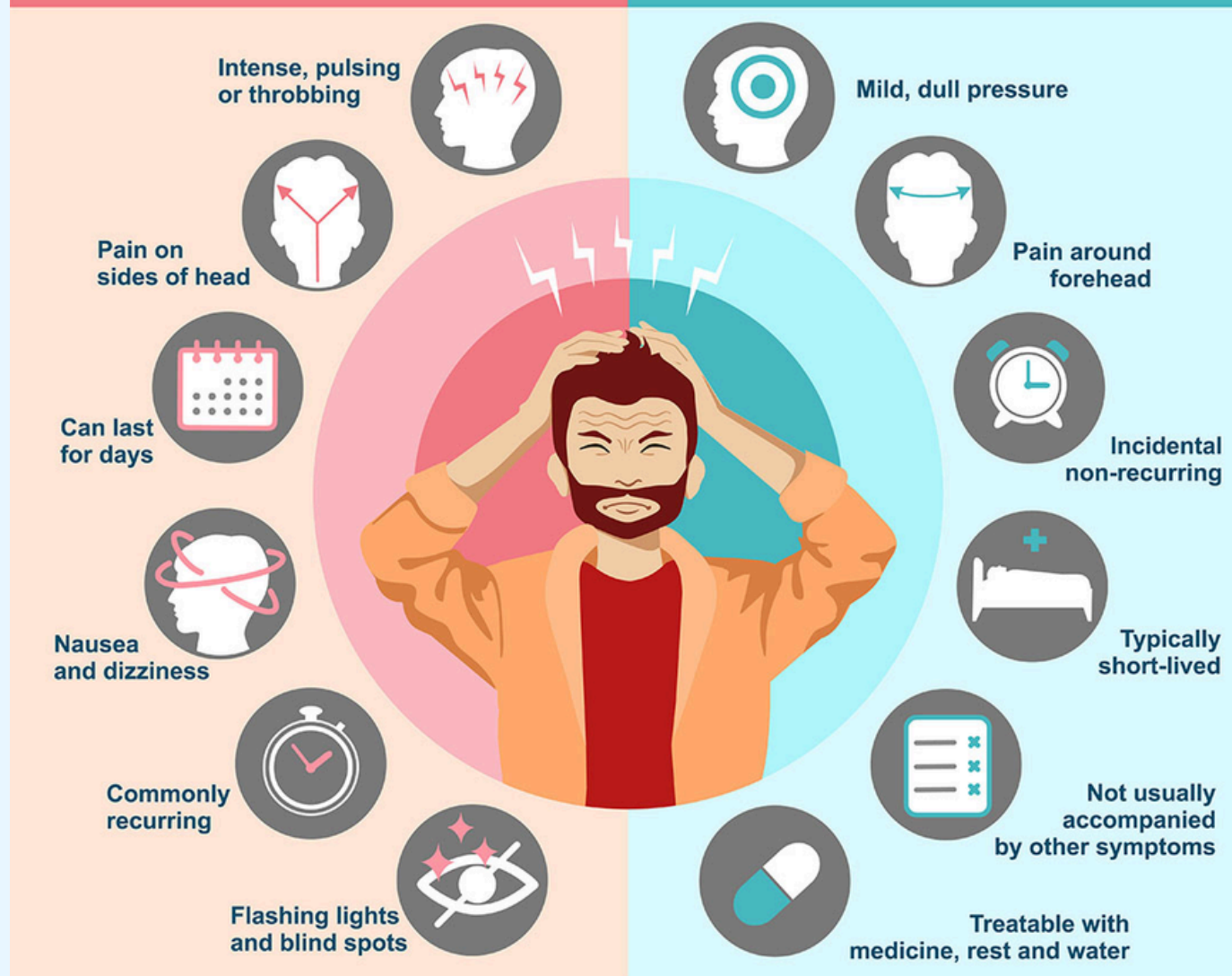
Migraine Awareness

1 in 7 people live with migraines consistently. Often being thought of as 'headaches', migraines are actually a neurological disorder. Migraines can affect not just your head but also your vision, awareness and ability to complete day-to-day tasks. Migraines can also affect your stomach, and cause vomiting and nausea. Migraines are painful and there isn't really a cure, but taking pain medication and over-the-counter painkillers can help.

For more information please visit:

<https://migrainetrust.org/understand-migraine/>

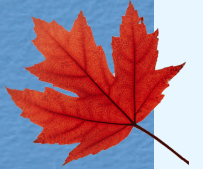
MIGRAINE or HEADACHE



Breast Cancer

Anyone can get breast cancer, and it's important to know what is normal for you. By knowing what to look for, and what is normal, you can spot any changes early.

Touch your breasts. **Look** for changes. **Check** anything new or unusual with a GP.



Symptoms of breast cancer in women may include:

- a lump, or swelling in your breast, chest or armpit
- a change in the skin of your breast, such as dimpling (may look like orange peel) or redness (may be harder to see on black or brown skin)
- a change in size or shape of 1 or both breasts
- nipple discharge (if you are not pregnant or breastfeeding), which may have blood in it
- a change in the shape or look of your nipple, such as it turning inwards (inverted nipple) or a rash on it (may look like eczema)
- pain in your breast or armpit which does not go away – breast pain that comes and goes is usually not a symptom of breast cancer



<https://breastcancernow.org/about-breast-cancer/touch-look-check/>



**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** The research & support charity



Menopause

Menopause is a natural process marked by diverse physical and emotional changes. With the right combination of lifestyle choices, medical care, and supportive services, individuals can navigate this life stage with confidence and resilience.

Before menopause fully begins, many experience a gradual transition known as perimenopause. This phase may involve increasingly irregular, lighter, or heavier periods, and a host of symptoms that can vary widely from person to person.

Common Symptoms to be aware of, can be both physical and emotional, affecting daily activities, relationships, and work life.

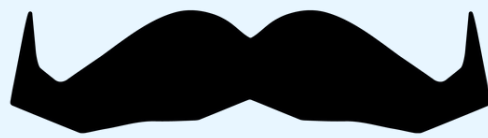
- Physical symptoms: Hot flushes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, palpitations, joint aches, weight changes, skin or mouth issues, vaginal dryness, UTIs, and reduced libido.
- Emotional and cognitive symptoms: Mood swings, anxiety, low mood, low self-esteem, memory lapses, and difficulty concentrating (“brain fog”)

Getting Help and Support.

- Speak with your GP, nurse, or pharmacist if you’re experiencing symptoms
- For complex cases, referrals to menopause specialists are available; the British Menopause Society provides listings for both NHS and private services

Please visit: nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/





Movember – Men's Health

Each November, people around the world take part in Movember, a movement dedicated to raising awareness about men's health. The campaign encourages open conversations about issues that too often go unspoken.



Why Movember Matters?

Men's health remains an important but sometimes overlooked area of wellbeing. Statistics show that men are less likely to seek help when it comes to both physical and mental health, often leading to late diagnoses and poorer outcomes. Movember aims to change that by focusing on three critical areas:

- Prostate Cancer – the most common cancer in men. Early detection saves lives, and regular check-ups are vital for those over 50 (or 45 if you have a family history).
- Testicular Cancer – the most common cancer in young men aged 15–49. Awareness of symptoms and self-checks can make a big difference.
- Mental Health & Suicide Prevention – globally, men account for around 3 out of 4 suicides. Encouraging open conversations and reducing stigma can help men seek the support they need.

Movember is a reminder for all men to:

- Schedule routine check-ups and screenings.
- Talk openly about health concerns with friends, family, or professionals.
- Prioritise mental wellbeing—reach out if you're struggling.

Please visit: <https://uk.movember.com/>



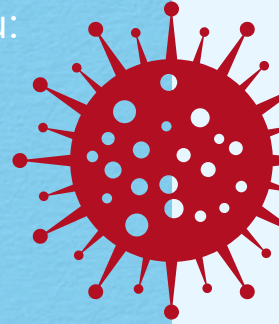
MOVEMBER®

Flu and Covid Vaccination

The vaccines help to protect us against Flu and Covid, which can be a serious or life-threatening illness. It is offered on the NHS every year in autumn or early winter to people at higher risk.

You can get the free NHS flu vaccine and Covid booster if you:

- are ages 65 or over
- have certain long-term health conditions
- are pregnant
- live in a care home
- are the main carer for an older or disabled person
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system



We will contact you about getting vaccinated. Please wait to be contacted.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine/>



HPV vaccination

HPV is the most common viral infection worldwide, and most people will come into contact with it at some point in their lives. While HPV often causes no symptoms and goes away on its own, certain types of HPV can lead to health problems. This makes awareness and prevention essential.

How is HPV Spread?

HPV is usually spread through close skin-to-skin contact, most commonly during sexual activity. Because it can be transmitted even when there are no visible signs or symptoms, regular check-ups and prevention are very important.

We are currently running a catch-up program for patients not vaccinated against HPV, if you have been contacted please call reception to book an appointment.

Please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/human-papilloma-virus-hpv/>

MEASLES

Information for health professionals

Measles is extremely infectious. One person with measles can infect 15 to 20 unimmunised people. 15 minutes in direct contact with someone infected with measles is sufficient to transmit virus.

Measles is spread through coughing and sneezing, close personal contact or direct contact with infected nasal or throat secretions.

Measles is infectious from **4 days before rash onset until 4 full days after the rash appears.**

Prevent transmission

In health care settings, suspected measles cases should be triaged and isolated immediately to protect other patients.

Ensure Infection Prevention and Control measures are in place.

Typical clinical symptoms

- Fever $> 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the absence of antipyretics
- Conjunctivitis
- Cough and/or coryza
- Generally very unwell
- Koplik spots (small red spots with bluish-white centres) inside the mouth
- Generalised maculopapular rash – appears after prodromal phase usually on the face and upper neck and spreads to the rest of the body

Risk factors for measles

To inform clinical diagnosis consider: -

- Age of the case
- Vaccination (two doses measles mumps rubella (MMR) vaccine = fully immunised)
- Travel within and outside the UK
- Member of an under-vaccinated population group
- Link with a confirmed case of measles

Diagnostic testing

Clinicians should take an urgent diagnostic PCR test*. This supports management of cases, and minimises impact on close contacts, the community and health care services.

(* unless confirmed measles is endemic - widely circulating within the region).



Diazepam for Flight Anxiety.

Many people approach their GP practice asking for diazepam to help with fear of flying, or to sleep during a flight. There are several good reasons why prescribing diazepam is not recommended, and as a result we will no longer prescribe diazepam for patients who wish to use this for a fear of flying.

Diazepam in the UK is a Class C/Schedule IV controlled drug.

If flying makes you anxious, you're not alone and help is available. Fear of Flying courses are designed to help nervous flyers overcome their anxiety and feel more confident in the air.

Courses are available at: Easy jet

<https://www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com/?easyjetstaff=true>

British Airways <https://flyingwithconfidence.com/>

Virgin Atlantic <https://flywith.virginatlantic.com/gb/en/wellbeing-andhealth/flying-without-fear.html>



Flying Anxiety Medications to Overcome a Fear of Flying



NHS App

The NHS App allows you to access a range of NHS services, you must be aged 13 or over and registered with a GP surgery in England to be able to register.

The NHS App enables people to:

- Order repeat prescriptions and set or change their nominated pharmacy
- Book and manage some appointments, including hospital appointments
- View your GP health record to see information like your allergies and medicines
- Register your organ donation decision
- Choose how the NHS uses your data
- View your NHS number
- Get health information and advice

For more information please visit: nhs.uk/nhs-app

Download the app here:



Members of our Patient Participation Group will be running some drop-in sessions over the coming months to help patients get set up with using the NHS App. Keep an eye out on social media for upcoming session information.





Are you a carer?

Do you have a carer or are you someone that cares for a spouse, family member or friend?

There are many unpaid carers in our community who have not been identified, usually because they do not see their role as 'a carer' and are therefore not aware of the services and support available to them.

If you have someone that cares for you, or you are a carer, please ask our reception team for a Carers' information leaflet.

"We need your feedback"

The NHS Friends and Family Test



Your feedback will help us learn more about what you think of your experience at our surgery what you like and what do you think we could improve on.

Ultimately, you are helping us make changes to ensure we can offer the best possible care.

You can find our 'Friends and Family Test' by clicking here



Military Veteran's (Ex- Armed Forces).

Heath Lane Medical Centre is an accredited Veteran Friendly GP practice. We are proud to support our Armed Forces community. If you are a veteran patient, please let us know that you have served so that we can make sure that we understand your health needs.

The Veteran Friendly Practices accreditation scheme is run by the Royal College of General Practitioners in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvements.



**Armed Forces veteran
friendly accredited
GP practice**



Staff changes

A Warm Welcome

We are delighted to welcome Esbea, who has recently joined us as our new Secretary. Esbea brings with her a wealth of skills and experience and will play an important role in supporting the smooth running of our practice. We are excited to have her on board.

Staff Development

Congratulations to Beth, who has recently begun her training to become a Pharmacy Technician. We wish her every success as she takes this next step in her career.

Extended Clinics

We're pleased to let you know that Dr Rachel Park is now offering an additional Thursday clinic, helping us to increase availability for our patients.

Goodbye

This month we say goodbye to three valued members of our team:

- Jenna, our Practice Nurse
- Nicola, our Deputy Practice Manager
- Kirsty, our Receptionists



We are truly grateful for their hard work, dedication, and the care they have shown to our patients and colleagues. They will be greatly missed, and we wish them every success for the future.