



HEATH LANE MEDICAL CENTRE SPRING 2026 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.



Heath Lane Medical Centre



Heath Lane, Boughton Heath, Chester, CH3 5UJ



heathlanemedicalcentre@nhs.net



01244 563105



www.heathlanemedicalcentre.co.uk



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



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

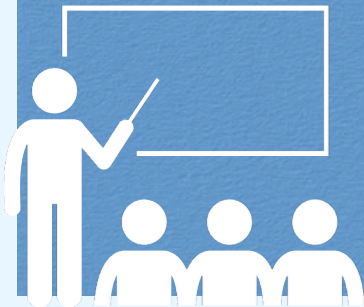
Patient Feedback

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

- “Great surgery, wonderful staff”
- “Dr Zoe Thompson-Shaw is a superb practitioner in all aspects of her work.”
- “I have been with this surgery since I moved to Chester. They have always been great to deal with. The ladies on the reception desk are lovely and are always able to get an appointment within just a few days!”
- “I’ve been a patient at this doctors practice for 10 years. It’s a great doctors practice and I’ve never had any problems getting a same day appointment.”

Staff Training Dates 2026

- **Wednesday 11th March**
- **Tuesday 21st April**
- **Tuesday 12th May**



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.

Easter 2026 Opening Hours

- Friday 3rd April - closed
- Monday 6th April - closed

For urgent medical advice when the surgery is closed, please call NHS 111. For life-threatening emergencies, call 999 immediately.

We wish all our patients a safe and healthy Easter.



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 December and 1st March there were **145** missed appointments 19 hours of appointments lost across the whole clinical team.

Here is how our practice has been supporting patients

From 1st December to 1st March :

- Number of appointments booked - 9,896
- Number of new registrations - 98
- Number of prescriptions issued - 3,978
- Number of referrals done - 539
- Number of blood test requested -1,823

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 pages as well as on our website.





Seasonal Allergies & Hay Fever

As flowers bloom, pollen levels rise. Hay fever (allergic rhinitis) affects many people each spring.

Common Symptoms

- Sneezing
- Runny or blocked nose
- Itchy eyes
- Watery eyes
- Cough

More information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/>

Managing Symptoms

- ✓ Keep windows closed during high pollen times
- ✓ Shower and change clothes after being outside
- ✓ Apply petroleum jelly around nostrils to trap pollen
- ✓ Use sunglasses outdoors

Treatments

- Antihistamines
- Steroid nasal sprays
- Eye drops

Pharmacies can provide advice without a GP appointment.

Find your nearest pharmacy:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

Contact your GP if:

- Symptoms are severe
- Treatments are not working
- You have asthma that worsens

Spring should be enjoyable — don't suffer in silence.



Insect Bites & Minor Injuries

As spring approaches, people begin spending more time outdoors enjoying warmer weather, parks, gardens, and outdoor activities. While this is a great time to be outside, it also means that insect bites and minor injuries become more common.

Understanding how to treat these safely can help prevent infection and support quick recovery.

Insect Bites and Stings

Insect bites and stings often come from insects such as mosquitoes, bees, wasps, fleas, or ticks. These insects bite or sting the skin which can cause a mild reaction. In most cases, these symptoms are mild and will improve within a few days.

How to treat insect bites:

- Wash the area with soap and water to keep it clean.
- Apply a cold compress or ice pack wrapped in a cloth to reduce swelling.
- Avoid scratching the bite as this can break the skin and cause infection.
- Antihistamine creams or tablets may help reduce itching.

If a bee sting remains in the skin, it should be gently scraped away with a fingernail or card.

Minor Injuries

Minor injuries such as cuts, grazes, and bruises can happen during everyday activities such as playing sports, walking, or gardening. These injuries are usually small and can be treated at home.

Treatment for minor cuts and grazes:

1. Clean the wound with running water to remove dirt or debris.
2. Gently dry the area with a clean cloth or tissue.
3. Apply a sterile plaster or dressing if needed.
4. Keep the wound clean until it heals.

Most minor wounds will heal within a few days.

When to Seek Medical Advice

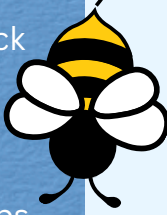
Although most bites and minor injuries are harmless, you should seek medical advice if:

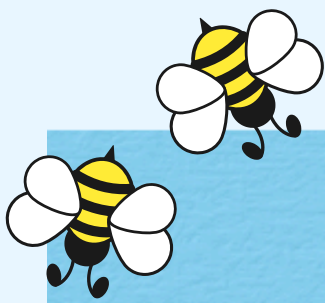
- The bite or wound becomes very swollen, red, or painful
- Pus or fluid appears from the wound
- You develop fever or feel unwell
- The swelling spreads or does not improve after a few days

Call 999 immediately if someone has difficulty breathing, swelling of the face or throat, or feels faint, as this may be a severe allergic reaction.

NHS Advice

For more information and guidance, visit the NHS website:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings/>





Healthy Eating & Hydration

Maintaining healthy eating habits and proper hydration is essential for overall health and wellbeing. The food and drinks we consume provide the body with the energy and nutrients needed to function properly, support growth and repair, and help maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating means having a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods from different food groups. This helps the body get the nutrients it needs to grow, repair itself, and function properly.

A healthy diet should include:

- Fruit and vegetables – aim for at least 5 portions a day
- Starchy foods such as bread, rice, pasta, or potatoes
- Protein sources such as meat, fish, eggs, beans, or lentils
- Dairy or dairy alternatives such as milk, yoghurt, or cheese
- Small amounts of healthy fats

Eating regular meals can help maintain energy levels throughout the day. It is also helpful to limit foods that are high in sugar, salt, and saturated fats, such as sweets, fizzy drinks, and processed snacks.

Hydration

Staying hydrated is just as important as eating well. Water helps regulate body temperature, supports digestion, and keeps the body functioning properly.

Most people should aim to drink 6–8 glasses of fluid a day, although this may increase with warmer weather or physical activity. Good choices for hydration include:

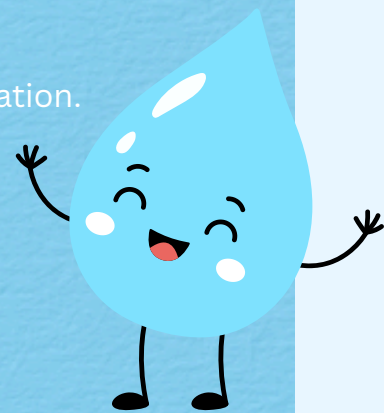
- Water
- Milk
- Sugar-free drinks
- Diluted fruit juice

Drinks that are high in sugar or caffeine should be consumed in moderation.

Tips for Maintaining Healthy Habits

Simple habits can help support healthy eating and hydration:

- Eat regular, balanced meals
- Include fruit or vegetables with each meal
- Keep a water bottle nearby throughout the day
- Choose healthy snacks such as fruit, yoghurt, or nuts



NHS Advice

For more information about healthy eating and hydration, visit the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>



**Better
Health**

Let's
do this

NHS

Little swaps, big changes

Healthier eating starts
with simple swaps.

Get help and support at
[nhs.uk/BetterHealth](https://www.nhs.uk/BetterHealth)



It's Time to Talk

Talking about how we feel is an important part of maintaining good mental health and wellbeing. Sometimes people may feel stressed, worried, anxious, or low, and speaking openly about these feelings can help reduce the pressure and allow others to provide support. Creating an environment where people feel comfortable to talk can make a positive difference.

Why Talking Helps

Keeping worries or problems to ourselves can sometimes make them feel bigger and harder to manage. Talking to someone we trust can help us:

- Feel heard and understood
- Gain support or advice
- Reduce feelings of stress or anxiety
- Find practical solutions to problems

Simply sharing how you feel can often help you feel less alone.

Who You Can Talk To

If you are struggling with your mental health, it can help to talk to someone you trust. This could include:

- A friend or family member
- A teacher, colleague, or manager
- A GP or healthcare professional
- A counsellor or mental health support service

Everyone experiences difficult emotions at times, and reaching out for support is a positive and healthy step.

Supporting Others

Listening to others is just as important as speaking up. If someone chooses to share their feelings with you:

- Listen without judgement
- Give them time to talk
- Show empathy and understanding
- Encourage them to seek further support if needed

Sometimes just knowing that someone cares can make a big difference.

NHS Advice and Support

If you need support with your mental health, you can find information and resources on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>



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.



Cervical and Bowel Screening

Screening programmes are preventive health measures designed to detect diseases early, often before symptoms appear, improving outcomes and saving lives. Two key programmes are cervical screening and bowel screening.

Cervical Screening

Cervical screening detects abnormal cells and high-risk HPV infections that could lead to cervical cancer.

- Target group: Women and people with a cervix aged 25–64.
- Procedure: A small sample of cervical cells is collected and tested. Abnormal results may lead to further tests like colposcopy.
- Benefits: Early treatment prevents cancer and reduces mortality.
- Challenges: Participation varies; false results can cause anxiety.

Bowel Screening

Bowel screening detects early colorectal cancer or precancerous polyps.

- Target group: Adults aged 50–74 (earlier for high-risk individuals).
- Methods: Stool tests (FOBT/FIT), colonoscopy, or flexible sigmoidoscopy.
- Benefits: Early detection improves survival; removing polyps prevents cancer.
- Challenges: Invasive procedures may reduce participation; false positives can occur.

Screening programmes:

- Detect diseases early, reducing mortality.
- Improve quality of life through early treatment.
- Reduce healthcare costs by avoiding treatment for advanced disease.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/nhs-screening/>



**Screening
saves
lives**

**Help us
help you**

NHS Screening



You might feel well, but screening can identify risks you can't see. It's offered at different ages to help keep you healthy throughout life.



Sun Awareness Week

Sun Awareness Week is an annual public health campaign aimed at educating people about the risks of excessive sun exposure and promoting sun-safe behaviours. The goal is to reduce the incidence of skin cancer, including melanoma, by encouraging protective measures.

Key Messages

1. Protect Your Skin

- Use broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30.
- Wear protective clothing, hats, and sunglasses.
- Seek shade, especially between 11 am and 3 pm, when the sun is strongest.

2. Avoid Tanning Beds

- Artificial UV light can increase the risk of skin cancer.

3. Check Your Skin Regularly

- Look for new moles, changes in existing moles, or unusual skin spots.
- Early detection greatly improves treatment outcomes.

Target Audience

Everyone, but particularly children and young adults, who are more susceptible to long-term sun damage.

Importance

- Skin cancer rates have been rising, making awareness and prevention vital.
- Educating the public about safe sun practices can reduce long-term health risks.

Further Information

For tips on sun safety and skin checks, visit the NHS website:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/skin-cancer



Enjoy the sun safely

- Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm
- Cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses
- Take extra care with children
- Use at least factor 30 sunscreen.



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.

A graphic advertisement for the NHS App. It features a hand holding a smartphone with the NHS logo on the screen. The background is dark blue with various medical icons like a stethoscope, a pill, and a person. The NHS logo is in the top right corner.

**Download the NHS App
and take control of your
healthcare**

Register now for quick, convenient
access to your health and care records.

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 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**