

## **Welcome to our updated newsletter on making the best use of our services**

Our aim is to ensure all our patients can access the services they need by providing information about all the sources of support and advice available to you. Why are we doing this now? Well, we're sure it won't have escaped your notice that the NHS is facing unprecedented demand for services at the moment - and so are we. We want to ensure our limited resources are directed where they are most needed.

## **What you can do to help**

- Keep yourself well (see more below)
- Consider whether you have a minor or self-limiting illness or health condition you can manage yourself, often referred to as Self Care (see more below)
- Consider whether another NHS service would better meet your needs - more information and advice can be found on the **Stay Well in Dorset website** at: [www.staywelldorset.nhs.uk](http://www.staywelldorset.nhs.uk)
- If your child is unwell, go to the **Healthier Together website** at: [www.what0-18.nhs.uk](http://www.what0-18.nhs.uk), where you will find advice on what serious 'red-flag' signs to look out for, where to seek help if required, what you should do to keep your child comfortable and how long symptoms are likely to last
- Consider whether it would be more appropriate to refer yourself to one of the local services that allows self-referral (see more below)
- Remember that most GP appointments are set up to deal with a single issue in a 10 minute appointment - you are likely to need to book another appointment if you have multiple separate issues to discuss
- Please respond to any invites and requests we send you by phone, letter or text. We may, for example, be offering you an appointment for a review of a long term condition, such as Diabetes or COPD, or we may be contacting you about making a follow up blood test or submitting a blood pressure reading. It's important you respond, as this helps our clinicians make clinical decisions about your medication and healthcare, thereby ensuring they can provide you with the best possible care
- Talk to others to help them understand the current issues facing General Practice
- Think about joining your practice's Patient Participation Group – for more information, see: [www.swanagemedical.org.uk/pages/Patient-Participation-Group](http://www.swanagemedical.org.uk/pages/Patient-Participation-Group).

## **Keeping well**

There's lots you can do to help keep yourself fit and healthy, including eating a balanced diet, being more active, quitting smoking and drinking less alcohol.

It's also important to make sure you are up to date with all the vaccinations you are eligible for.

**LiveWell Dorset** provides all the support and guidance you need to help you lead a healthier, happier life. They provide free coaching, support and advice to help you be more active, lose weight, quit smoking or drink less alcohol. Call **0800 840 1628** or go to their website at: [www.livewelldorset.co.uk](http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk).

## **Self Care**

There are many minor and self-limiting illnesses and health conditions you can treat yourself, without needing to see a doctor or nurse by using over-the-counter medicines from your local pharmacist or by resting at home.

Examples of illnesses and health conditions you can treat yourself include coughs, colds and sore throats, diarrhoea and vomiting, constipation, hay fever, conjunctivitis, indigestion and heartburn, mouth ulcers and nappy rash.

For more advice on specific conditions, visit the **Health A-Z on The NHS website** at: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

## Services you can refer yourself to

### Social Prescribing

The **Purbeck Social Prescribing and Wellbeing Service** includes a Social Prescribing Link Worker, who can signpost people to local community-based services, and a Self-Management Coach, who supports people with long term health conditions to feel more confident about managing their condition and its impact on their day-to-day life. You can refer yourself by phoning **0303 3030 153** or by going to the Help and Care website at: [www.helpandcare.org.uk/services/self-management/](http://www.helpandcare.org.uk/services/self-management/).

### Physiotherapy

Advice on how to manage aches and pains in your joints, muscles and bones can be found on the **Dorset Musculoskeletal Matters** website at: [www.mskdorset.nhs.uk](http://www.mskdorset.nhs.uk). You can also refer yourself to a physiotherapist by using the self-referral form on their website.

### Mental Health Services for Adults

**Steps2Wellbeing** offers therapy services for adults aged 18+ experiencing a range of common mental health problems. Information about the mental health conditions they cover and how they can help you can be found on their website at: [www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk](http://www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk). You can refer yourself to the service by following the self-referral link on their website or by phoning **0800 484 0500**.

**Access Mental Health** offers a range of services to help people who are struggling to cope or feel they are nearing a breakdown. You don't need to be referred by your GP - just reach out for help when you need it by phoning **Connection** on **0800 652 0190** or by visiting one of the Community Front Rooms for face-to-face help. More information can be found at: [www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/access-mental-health](http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/access-mental-health).

### Mental Health Services for Children and Young People

**Dorset Youth's Mental Health Hub** provides information about all the services available in Dorset to help children and young people aged under 18 experiencing problems with their mental health, including information about how to access help in an emergency. See: [www.dorsetyouth.com/mental-health](http://www.dorsetyouth.com/mental-health).

**The CAMHS Gateway** acts as the "Front Door" to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Dorset. Young people aged 16-18 years can refer themselves to the service. Information about CAMHS, including a link to the CAMHS Gateway, can be found on their website at: [www.camhsdorset.org](http://www.camhsdorset.org), which also includes information about what to do in an emergency and information about other services available in Dorset to help children and young people under 18.

### Sexual Health Services

**Sexual Health Dorset** provides a wide range of free and confidential contraception and sexual health service for people of all ages in Dorset. More information can be found at: [www.sexualhealthdorset.org](http://www.sexualhealthdorset.org). To make an appointment or for further advice, please phone: **0300 303 1948**

### Maternity Services

**Maternity Matters Dorset** provides information about maternity options and services in Dorset – see: [www.maternitymattersdorset.nhs.uk](http://www.maternitymattersdorset.nhs.uk). If you've recently found out you're pregnant, you can refer yourself to the service by following the links in their website.

### Support for Parents

**ParentLine** is a confidential text messaging service for parents and carers of children aged 0-5 in Dorset. Text **07312 277162** for confidential advice and support from a member of the Health Visiting Team about your child's health and development. The service runs 9am-5pm Monday to Friday (excl bank holidays).

**ParentLine 5-19** is a confidential text messaging service for parents and carers of children and young people aged 5-19 in Dorset. Text **07312 263131** for confidential advice and support from a member of the School Nursing Team about your child's health and development.