

## Message from Swanage Medical Practice, Dr Jason Clark, Senior Partner

### **To all patients, staff and friends of Swanage Medical Practice**

It is now 4 weeks since the UK had 50 Covid-19 deaths, sadly this has now risen to over 20,000. The virus is now well established in Swanage and Purbeck. Fortunately, despite this, Swanage surgery and town seem to have made a good transition to a new way of living and working.

We are still running our twice daily "Sit and wait" surgery and offering routine appointments, but these are all by phone or video in the first instance. We have had good uptake of our **E-Consult** system available via our website ([www.swanagemedical.org.uk](http://www.swanagemedical.org.uk)).

About 1/3 of patients have now had their repeat prescriptions converted to "electronic repeat dispensing" and this process is continuing. Once this is done, the prescriptions for all your regular items will appear at the chemist without you having to request them.

will still need to ask the chemist to ask us for prescriptions for irregular items such as creams and inhalers. It is important you try to keep the repeat request slip, as this should show which items are being repeat dispensed and until when. If in any doubt, please discuss with your chemist. Please contact the surgery if you would prefer to request your medication online.

For patients who need to be seen but there is a significant risk that they may have Covid19 infection, we are supporting and have access to GP appointments at Wareham hospital with enhanced infection control procedures.

### **THANK YOU!**

I greatly appreciate the significant support, both in actions and messages, we have received over the last 3 weeks. It is most appreciated and significantly helps our work.

I would also like to thank everyone's hard work at staying at home and **socially distancing**. I feel that without all the effort Swanage has put into this, we would be have been struggling to maintain our service at the Health Centre.

### **The high risk group**

This Social Distancing has helped all those that are over 70 or have significant health conditions to be safe during their isolation, as those supporting them have been less likely to have been infected.

It is vital that this group maintains their isolation, as each time they go out they are at risk of catching the virus, which in their case is much more likely to be fatal and uses very significant NHS resources. I am still seeing a significant number of over 70s out shopping and walking. I would ask we all try to explain to them why they should be staying at home and assist them to do this. The Practice and Social Services can also refer them on to the new NHS volunteer service set up exactly to provide this service.

### **The very high-risk group**

In addition, 400 patients in Swanage, the **very high-risk group**, previously called the extremely vulnerable group, have been asked to shield, meaning that, in addition to the above, they need to maintain Social Distancing within their own home and from family members.

Visiting professional care needs to be provided with the carer wearing gloves, apron and mask to stop the risk of passing Covid-19 on to their client, in case the carer has asymptomatic Covid-19 infection. This group have very specific medical conditions or treatments which will prevent them surviving a Covid19 infection, so it is vital to prevent any risk of exposure. Please help to keep these patients safe by helping them do this.

Follow the links from Swanage Health Centre web site for further advice on supporting High Risk and Very High Risk people. Those that think they have been missed off this list should let us know at the surgery (preferably using eConsult).

## Reset & Recovery

Staying at home has prevented the overwhelming of the NHS with the number of daily deaths from the virus now beginning to fall.

However there seems to be an increase in other deaths, suggesting the NHS is not being used when it should be. So long as Social Distancing is maintained it does seem the hospitals, the out of hours services, and us at Swanage Medical practice have capacity to deal with any normal medical emergencies and urgent cases.

Some form of Social Distancing is likely to be needed until an effective vaccine is available, so we must now start to make use of our new ways of working to resume the essential routine monitoring and screening work we do.

Since the epidemic we have reorganised our provision of care for the foreseeable future. Most days we have a paramedic Tammy and or our prescribing Advanced Nurse Practitioner Ali or our prescribing Nurse Jane, available to phone you or potentially see you in our “medically urgent sit and wait” surgery. They are always still supported by at least 2 of your Swanage GPs. All GPs are still doing routine surgeries. **90% of consultations are now being done by phone, video link or eConsult.** At times your doctors and staff will be working from home as we have now been provided with securely connected laptops.

With all the support you have given us and the success of Social Distancing, I feel we need to repeat the message Matt Hancock has been giving us: **The NHS is still open for business and this includes us in Swanage.** This is however in a new way, so please make use of it to prevent, manage and treat your medical conditions.

To keep you all informed, in addition to our website, we have now set up “The Swanage Medical Practice” Facebook page (recognisable with the blue NHS logo & a photo of Old Harry).

## Exercise

I am very glad our government, unlike Spain and Italy, has realised the importance of exercise and in addition to going out for medical care, has allowed going out from home to exercise.

We are lucky to have wonderful opportunities for walking, running and cycling from our doorsteps in Swanage. There is no medical condition that this will not help.

For those over 70 and at high risk who need to stay at home this is also important. My Mother at 90 asked for her old exercise bike back from our garage and is now using it at least twice a day. Others are joining in with locally organised online exercise classes. I use a free Lotus yoga app on my phone. Everyone should ensure they get up and walk around their home for 2 minutes every hour.

Please ensure all your older relatives are partaking in some way. Human muscles are only maintained if used and disappear rapidly if not used. For those with already poor balance or mobility this is very likely to result in the need for an increased care package.

## Summary

**Continue to stay at home and Socially Distance**

**Use NHS 111, eConsult, telephone and video consultations**

**Use Electronic Repeat Dispensing or Online Prescription requesting**

**Support the Very High Risk group to shield**

**Use our New NHS to keep you well**

**Help everyone to exercise**

**Keep up-to-date with our latest news & recommendations on Facebook or the website.**

With thanks for your continued efforts,

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Jason Clark**

Published April 2020