

COVID VACCINATION UPDATE

Most of you will already know that we are now holding walk-in COVID vaccination clinics here at the medical centre.

These clinics are for anyone who is yet to have their primary or booster COVID vaccine, who are aged 12 years and over.

We have clinics running throughout the rest of February and plan on continuing these throughout March.

You can find times and dates of our walk-in clinics here at the surgery, on our website and on our social media. You can also book through the NBS via 119 if you prefer.

We are also holding a few selected clinics for those aged 5-11 who are immunosuppressed and eligible for the vaccine. Our next clinic for this age group is the 16th February 4-6pm. If you would like to attend this clinic please call one of our Patient Service Advisors on 01837 52233 to book or just walk-in. Please remember to bring along proof of eligibility (GP/consultant note) to the appointment, for us to be able to give the vaccine.

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2022?

NEW WEBSITE

If you are a regular visitor to our website, in the next couple of weeks you will notice that it will start to look a little different to normal.

Updating our website has been in the pipelines for a while now but things are finally in progress and we should have a new fully functional website by the end of March.

With the increased need for our patients to use our website more often and with the feedback we have received over the last year we are aiming to make the new website a lot cleaner and easier to navigate.

We will also be adding a lot more elements to the website to help you with your queries as well as your wellbeing and self-care.

We would love to hear what you think of the new website when it goes live. So keep an eye out.

GETTING TO KNOW WHO'S WHO

With many new faces joining us here at the medical centre we thought that for both staff and patients it would be useful to start knowing who's who.

All staff will start wearing NHS lanyards with their new name badges stating their name and job role so that when you are visiting the medical centre you can clearly spot and identify our staff.

We have a new staff photo board up in the entrance of our Old Building where photos, names and job roles will be displayed of all our clinical staff working here at the medical centre.

We will also have a new section on our website which will have a list of more members of staff who work here at the medical centre whether that be doctors, clinicians, patient service advisors, dispensers or those who work behind the scenes.

We are always looking for ways in which we can improve things around the medical centre so please, if you have any suggestions or comments get in touch using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

LIFT SOMEONE OUT OF LONELINESS

Feeling lonely is something that all of us can experience at any point and it can have a huge impact on our wellbeing. It's important to remember that these feelings can pass and that there are lots of ways we can help each other too.

Fancy a cuppa? Fancy a walk? Sometimes reaching out to each other with as little as three words can make a big difference.

To find out how you can help to lift someone out of loneliness, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/life-challenges/loneliness/>



THE GATHERING - FINDING CONNECTION THROUGH LOSS

The idea of the Finding Connection Through Loss Project for the communities of Okehampton and Holsworthy is to invite people to press, dedicate and contribute a flower to the artwork and also maybe reach out and invite a family member to send one in too by posting an invitation in the way of a card.

Libraries Unlimited have set up this project to help address the stories of loneliness and disconnection and loss (in all senses of the word) they hear day to day. Stories of the loss of loved ones and jobs, of health reasons which stop people having the social interactions they might have enjoyed previously.

There will be packs and more information available at the medical centre for anyone who would be interested in contributing to this project.

Link to the project is below:

<https://www.honeyscribe.org/healthy-communities>



GOOD GRIEF CAFE



Good Grief Café

If you have lost someone you love, whether it is recently or a long time ago, and would like to be part of a group exploring this profound experience that happens to so many of us you would be most welcome.

Five Wednesday mornings 11.00-12.30
Starting Wednesday 2nd March
In the Church Hall, Market Street, Okehampton

PRIOR BOOKING ESSENTIAL
Contact
Marion Balsdon 07704 155989
Becky Beesley 07960 702623

"Good Grief" is run in conjunction with Okehampton Medical Centre, the Community Volunteer Service and the Chaplaincy Service of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. It is funded by the Okehampton United Charity.

"Good Grief" is a therapeutic group and it is therefore within government regulations to hold it inside. However they will do so in such way that social distancing is maintained.

The hall is large and well ventilated and there will be all the usual opportunities to wash and sanitize hands. Please wear a mask when arriving and leaving but you will not be required to do so once sat down.

It is recommended that only those who have been vaccinated attend.

Because of the need to maintain distancing this group may not be suitable for those who are hard of hearing. Please wait for another group later in the year.

If you are struggling with grief but do not wish to attend a group please contact them anyway and they will see if there are other ways in which they can be of help.

AUTISM - WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

AUTISM. IT'S A WORD WE HEAR A LOT, BUT DO WE TRULY UNDERSTAND IT?

BEING AUTISTIC IS NOT AN ILLNESS OR A DISEASE. IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE 'CURED' BUT SOME PEOPLE MAY FIND THAT THEY NEED HELP AND SUPPORT WITH CERTAIN THINGS. AUTISM IS A SPECTRUM, MEANING THAT EVERY AUTISTIC PERSON IS DIFFERENT. IT'S SOMETHING THAT MEANS THAT THE BRAIN WORKS IN A DIFFERENT WAY TO OTHERS. NO ONE KNOWS IF THERE IS A CAUSE TO AUTISM BUT IT'S SOMETHING THAT 1 IN 100 PEOPLE ARE BORN WITH.

AUTISTIC PEOPLE MAY:

- Have difficulty communicating with others
- Struggle to understand how people think or feel
- Like to have a structured routine
- Find stimuli, like bright lights or loud noises, overwhelming
- Have heightened anxiety in unfamiliar situations

KNOWING IS KEY IN SUPPORTING AUTISTIC PEOPLE

Getting to know their routine, favourite foods and interests will help you understand them more and help them feel understood and less alone.

If you can also learn their triggers, you might be able to help them avoid a meltdown. Triggers will vary from person to person, but some common ones include crowded spaces, loud overlapping noises or bright lights.

MELTDOWNS

When an autistic person is at their limit, they may have a meltdown. Meltdowns are described as "the loss of an emotional filter from the pain or exhaustion that overexposure to triggers cause, and the loss of temper in response to that". If someone is temporarily non-verbal, irritable, or slow to respond to interactions, these might be signs of a possible meltdown.

There are a few ways to help someone during a meltdown. You can calmly ask them if they want to remove themselves from the triggering situation. Or, if they have anything that helps reduce the sensory overload, such as noise cancelling headphones, sunglasses, or fidget devices, which could help take some of the stress away, you could suggest trying these.

BEING DIRECT

A lot of issues with autistic people begin with misunderstandings. They may take a polite suggestion or hint to do something as just a casual conversation. You need to be honest, transparent and clear when communicating with them, for them to understand exactly what you want and need.

BLUNTNESS

Autistic people tend to struggle to read a room. This sometimes leads to them possibly coming across as blunt or rude, and this can often be taken the wrong way by people who do not fully understand this trait of autism. Try to be understanding and assume they probably didn't mean to offend you but tell them if they have and why.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

You can visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/> or the National Autistic Society for more information and support.

HELPING IMPROVE CHILDREN'S HEALTH WITH A FEW SIMPLE SWAPS

A new campaign from Department of Health and Social Care's Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) has launched, the NHS Food Scanner App as part of its first 'Better Health' children's nutrition campaign.

The App is the ideal health hack for families, helping them to swap food and drink that are higher in sugar, saturated fat and salt to healthier alternatives.

With a simple scan of the barcodes, families can see how much sugar, saturated fat and salt is in everyday food and drinks. The App suggests healthier swaps, by encouraging users to choose "Good Choice" products - there are thousands of Good Choice food and drink products you can swap to.

The NHS Food Scanner App provides parents with an easy hack to improve their children's health in 2022.

Download the free App today from the App Store or Google Play or search 'Better Health Healthier Families'.



WHEN WILL MY PRESCRIPTION BE READY?

| DAY ORDER WAS PLACED | DAY IT WILL BE READY TO COLLECT |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| MONDAY | THURSDAY (PM) |
| TUESDAY | FRIDAY (PM) |
| WEDNESDAY | MONDAY (PM) |
| THURSDAY | TUESDAY (PM) |
| FRIDAY | WEDNESDAY (PM) |

PLEASE INSURE YOU LEAVE AT LEAST 72 HOURS FOR US TO PROCESS YOUR PRESCRIPTION

HOPE PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN AND/OR FATIGUE

WHEN

STARTING MONDAY 28TH
FEBRUARY FOR 6 WEEKS
EVERY MONDAY

WHERE

ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

STARTS

MONDAY 28TH
FEBRUARY

TIME

10:00AM-12:00PM

REGISTER NOW:

CONTACT THE HOPE TEAM DIRECTLY:
HOPE.DEVON@NHS.NET / 01803 320600.

COMING UP IN NEXT ISSUE

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- Hello, from the new Communications Officer
- Stress - How to manage it
- Sit Less, Move More

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR COMMENTS ON OUR NEWSLETTER AND ANY ARTICLE YOU COULD CONTRIBUTE, SO FEEL FREE TO WRITE IN AT ANY TIME TO

D-CCG.OMC-COMMS@NHS.NET

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE AN ONLINE VERSION OF OUR NEWSLETTER PLEASE EMAIL THE ABOVE ADDRESS