

PRACTICE HEALTH CHAMPIONS

We recently sent out text invites to patients asking for volunteers to become Practice Health Champions, working alongside us to make a difference to people's lives. We are delighted to say we received a great response. We will be holding a workshop for the initial group of potential Champions in early May and will keep you updated with their progress.


Who are 'Practice Health Champions'?

Champions are local people who gift their time to work alongside our practice teams to help develop 'Collaborative Practice'.

We hope they will bring their ideas, time and talents to help us meet the non-clinical needs of patients. As a result this will mean some patients need to see their GP less often because their needs are being met differently (and better) through a new range of social and supportive activities and opportunities in and around our practices.

Champions will not have access to any personal information or come into contact with medical records for any other patient. All volunteers at the practice will be asked to undertake a DBS check with us (there is no cost for this).

HELLO FROM THE NEW COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER!



Hello, my name is Heather and I am covering Jazzmine Squire as Communications Officer here at Okehampton Medical Centre.

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, do get in touch using the contact details at the end of this newsletter. I look forward to reading and passing on your suggestions.

Many of my interests and passions revolve around environmentalism and reducing human impact on the Earth so it is a great opportunity to introduce the Breathe Green Project.

THE BREATHE GREEN PROJECT

What is it?

They are a group of volunteer healthcare professionals committed to actions that drive change towards a green, carbon neutral NHS, focusing on switching high carbon footprint pressurised dose inhalers (MDIs) to low carbon emission dry powder inhalers (DPIs).

Why change them?

Because the main ingredient of MDIs is a hydrofluorocarbon gas, which helps deliver the medicine into your lungs. Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are powerful greenhouse gases - although they don't damage the ozone layer, they are far more powerful than carbon dioxide. A minority of patients and some young children are unable to use dry powder inhalers, but most patients actually prefer powder inhalers as they are easier to use as they require less coordination than a metered-dose (spray) inhaler.

Interested?

If this has interested you and you'd like to switch to a dry-powder inhaler, contact your GP practice (and speak to a long-term condition nurse or a pharmacist) about the possible options. For more info, please visit <https://greeninhaler.org/> or <https://www.breathegreenproject.com/>.

INFORMATION UPDATE: BLOOD TESTS



Information update - Blood Tests

- Please do not book blood tests (online or via patient partner) unless you have been specifically advised to do so by a GP or another clinician at the practice.
 - HCA's and phlebotomists cannot request any bloods without prior clinical assessment.
 - For Blood Tests requested by a RD&E hospital clinician, please call 01395 519922 as these will be taken by the community phlebotomy service.
- Thank you

MAY MEASURE MONTH

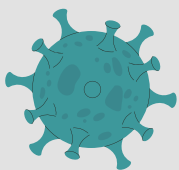
May Measurement Month is a global blood pressure screening awareness campaign, launched in 2017 by the International Society of Hypertension.

Their aim is to highlight the importance of measuring your blood pressure (BP) and to raise awareness of the dangers posed by elevated BP and hypertension. Their target is to increase the numbers of participants aged 18+ who are regularly getting their BP checked and to give you the tools to understand how this information can contribute to your knowledge about your individual health.

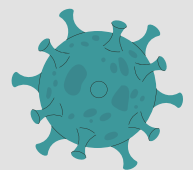
Elevated blood pressure can cause strokes, heart attacks and other cardiovascular complications. And most people don't even know they have it.

A simple, one minute arm squeeze could prevent this.

To join #TheBigSqueeze, we invite you to use the BP machine in the Old Building waiting room.



LONG COVID



What is Long Covid?

For some people, coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause symptoms that last weeks or months after the initial infection has gone. This is sometimes called post-COVID-19 syndrome or "long COVID".

How long it takes to recover from COVID-19 is different for everybody. Many people feel better in a few days or weeks and most will make a full recovery within 12 weeks. But for some people, symptoms can last longer.

Common long COVID symptoms include:

-extreme tiredness (fatigue) -shortness of breath -chest pain or tightness -problems with memory and concentration ("brain fog") -difficulty sleeping (insomnia) -heart palpitations -dizziness -joint pain -tinnitus -a high temperature, cough, headaches, sore throat, changes to sense of smell or taste

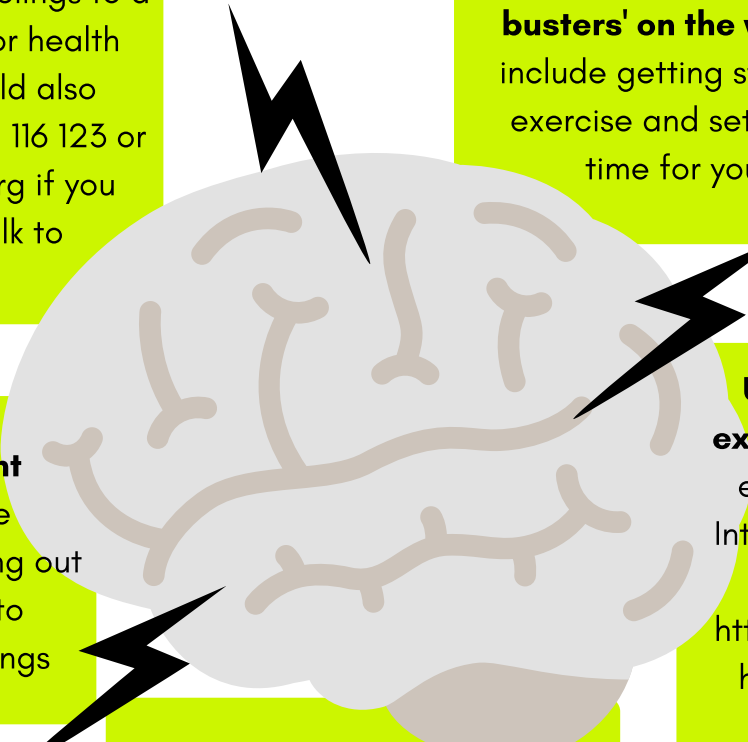
Contact your GP surgery if: you're worried about symptoms 4 weeks or more after having COVID-19

STRESS - HOW TO MANAGE IT

April is Stress Awareness Month

Stress can cause many different symptoms. It might affect how you feel physically, mentally and also how you behave.

It's not always easy to recognise when stress is the reason you're feeling or acting differently.



Try **talking** about your feelings to a friend, family member or health professional. You could also contact Samaritans, call: 116 123 or email: joesamaritans.org if you need someone to talk to

Search '**NHS 10 stress busters**' on the web - they include getting started with exercise and setting aside time for yourself

Use easy **time-management techniques** to help you take control - for example working out your goals and making lists to prioritise more important things

Use **calming breathing exercises** - there are lots of examples of these on the Internet, we recommend this one:
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/breathing-exercises-for-stress/>

Plan ahead for stressful days or events - planning long journeys or making a list of things to remember can really help

Further information and support

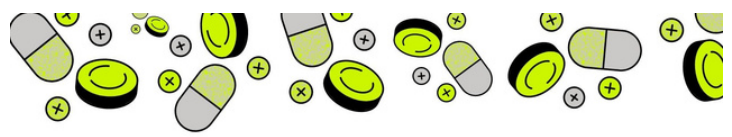
Search 'NHS Get help with Stress' online for more detailed info.

The mental health charity **Mind** offers more information on:

- dealing with pressure
- developing emotional resilience to help you adapt and bounce back during difficult times

'Your Mind Plan' on the Every Mind Matters website sends personalised tips and advice to your email inbox. You can access this using this link: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/your-mind-plan-quiz/>.

SIT LESS, MOVE MORE



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 note: this info is exclusive to Dispensary prescriptions
(Prescriptions for community pharmacy may take longer before being ready to collect)

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

Why we should sit less

There is increasing evidence that, unless you are a wheelchair user, sitting down too much can be a risk to your health.

To reduce our risk of ill health from inactivity, we are advised to exercise regularly, at least 150 minutes a week, and reduce sitting time.

Studies have linked being inactive with being overweight and obese, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and early death.

Sitting for long periods is thought to slow the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and break down body fat.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines report recommends breaking up long periods of sitting time with activity for just 1-2 minutes.

HOPE PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH ANXIETY AND/OR DEPRESSION

WHEN	STARTING TUESDAY 3RD MAY FOR 6 WEEKS EVERY TUESDAY
WHERE	AT THE OCKMONT CENTRE, NORTH ST, OKEHAMPTON, EX20 1AR
STARTS	TUESDAY 3RD MAY
TIME	10:00AM-12:30PM
REGISTER NOW:	
TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL 01803 320600 OR EMAIL HOPE.DEVON@NHS.NET	

For more info, please check out the NHS 'why we should sit less' webpage!

Tips to reduce sitting time:

Please remember, everyone is different so we will all have different goals and abilities.

- why not swap some TV time for more active tasks or hobbies
- set a reminder to get up every so often and do something a bit different



COMING UP IN NEXT ISSUE...

- Coming soon: KLINIK – our new and improved online triage system
- Mental Health Services Update
- Cervical Screening Awareness Week 20-26 June

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