

Salisbury House Surgery Patient Participation Group

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Welcome to the Summer 2026 issue of the Salisbury House Surgery Newsletter, produced by the Patient Participation Group (PPG) in collaboration with the Surgery Team.

The PPG is working with the Surgery on various projects we hope will benefit the Surgery's patients as well as the Surgery itself. One of these projects is a survey, which began in April. Members of the PPG are visiting the Surgery on 3 days each month to gather information from patients on their appointment experience. Results will be posted on the PPG noticeboard in reception.

A resource packed with information for patients and carers on the palliative care journey is also being developed by the PPG. The working group is led by Salisbury House PPG members but also includes representation from the other two GP practices in the town.

Another project is this newsletter, which we plan to issue quarterly, with updates from the Surgery team, alongside topical items on the theme of taking control of personal health and wellbeing.

NEWS from the PRACTICE MANAGER

We would like to wish Dr Osonowo all the very best as she begins her maternity leave. We are eagerly awaiting news of the newest addition to her family and send our congratulations and warm wishes during this special time.

We would also like to say goodbye to our receptionist, Chloe, who has recently left the team as she relocates to a new area. We thank Chloe for all her hard work and dedication to the practice and wish her every success in her new venture.

We are pleased to share that Nurse Sofia has now qualified in cervical smear taking, which will help increase appointment availability for patients requiring routine cervical screening.

Dr Kumar is also currently undertaking specialist training in coil and intrauterine device (IUD) fitting, which we hope will further expand the range of services available within the practice in the future.

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Blood Pressure Monitoring Service

Pharmacies offer blood pressure checks. These are free if you are aged 40 or over and live in England. You are not eligible if you:

- already have high blood pressure
- have had your blood pressure checked by a healthcare professional in the past six months.

A pharmacist or member of the pharmacy team will wrap a blood pressure cuff around your upper arm to measure your blood pressure. They will then share the result with you.

Depending on the result, they might:

- give you advice to support healthy living (see page 3)
- lend you a blood pressure monitor to take home
- advise you to see a GP.

More details at: [Community Pharmacy – Services your local Pharmacy offers](#)

The surgery is currently working on a project to further promote the use of online e-Consults. We are hopeful that increasing the use of this service will help patients access the most appropriate clinician more efficiently, while also helping to reduce telephone waiting times for our patients.

STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER: MEDICINES, SUNLIGHT & HAYFEVER ADVICE

As we move into the warmer months, it's important to remember that some medicines can make your skin much more sensitive to sunlight. At the same time, many people will also be managing hayfever symptoms caused by pollen levels rising across the UK.

Medicines and Sunlight – Why Following Instructions Matters

Medicines typically work safely and effectively when taken exactly as prescribed. However, some medications can react with direct sunlight and increase risk of:

- Sunburn occurring more quickly
- Skin rashes or irritation
- Blistering
- Increased sensitivity to UV light.

This is known as PHOTSENSITIVITY.

Medicines that may increase sensitivity to UV light include some:

- Antibiotics
- Anti-inflammatory painkillers
- Acne treatments
- Diuretics (water tablets)
- Antihistamines
- Blood pressure medications.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medication and follow the advice from your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

How to protect yourself from effects of sunlight

If you are taking a medicine that may interact with sunlight:

- Use a sunscreen with a high SPF
- Wear a hat and protective clothing
- Avoid prolonged sun exposure, especially between 11am and 3pm
- Stay hydrated
- Do not stop taking your medication without seeking medical advice.

If you develop a severe rash, blistering or unexpected skin reaction after sun exposure, please contact the surgery or seek advice from a pharmacist.

Hayfever Season is Here

Hayfever affects many people during spring and summer and can cause symptoms such as:

- Sneezing
- Itchy eyes, nose or throat
- Runny or blocked nose
- Watery eyes
- Tiredness and headaches.

Tips to Reduce Hayfever Symptoms

- Keep windows closed during high pollen days
- Shower and change clothes after being outdoors
- Wear wraparound sunglasses outside
- Avoid drying clothes outdoors when pollen counts are high
- Apply a small amount of petroleum jelly around the nostrils to help trap pollen.

Hayfever Treatments

Many effective treatments are available from pharmacies, including:

- Antihistamine tablets
- Nasal sprays
- Eye drops.

Some antihistamines may cause drowsiness, so always read the label carefully before driving or operating machinery.

If your symptoms are severe or difficult to control, please contact the surgery for advice.

BOOST THOSE VITAMIN D LEVELS – BUT IT’S A BALANCING ACT

Vitamin D helps regulate calcium and phosphate levels in the body. These nutrients are needed to keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy. A lack of vitamin D can lead to bone deformities such as rickets in children, and bone pain caused by a condition called osteomalacia in adults. It has also been linked to an increased risk of falls.

Our bodies need vitamin D all year round but we can only make it ourselves during late Spring through to Autumn. This is because synthesis, in skin, requires a certain wavelength of sunlight.

But too much sunshine can be damaging to skin. So it’s a balancing act. See the safe sun advice on Page 2.

Some foods provide vitamin D too. Examples include oily fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel, sardines), egg yolks, red meat, fortified foods (e.g. some breakfast cereals & reduced fat spreads) and some mushrooms. For fortified foods, information on vitamin D content can be found on the food label. But it’s difficult to get enough vitamin D from food alone.

So, Government advice is that everyone (including pregnant and breastfeeding women) should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement (10 micrograms) during the Autumn and Winter. See [Vitamin D - NHS](#) for more information.

And for some groups, the supplement is recommended all year round. These are:

- All children aged 1 to 4 years, and all babies (unless they're having more than 500ml of infant formula a day)
- All people considered to be at high risk of not getting enough vitamin D, such as those who are housebound, those with dark skin and those who cover their skin when outdoors. See [Vitamin D - NHS](#) and the *boxed text* for details.

LIFESTYLE APPROACH TO BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, can lead to serious health problems including heart attacks and strokes. But lifestyle changes and blood pressure medication can help you stay healthy.

Below are some tips to maintain a healthy blood pressure or reduce raised blood pressure, avoiding the need for medication:

- Exercise regularly – aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week such as brisk walking, jogging or cycling. Housework and gardening also count, provided they raise your heart rate and breathing rate.
- Eat a healthy diet – build meals around vegetables, pulses, wholegrains, lean proteins and fruits. Limit salt intake, aiming for no more than 6g per day. Look for green and amber salt levels on packaged foods and limit the salt added in cooking and at the table.
- Don’t smoke
- Limit alcohol and caffeine

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People at Risk of Vitamin D Deficiency

Some people will not make enough vitamin D from sunlight because they have very little or no sunshine exposure.

The Department of Health and Social Care recommends that adults and children over 4 years take a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D throughout the year if they:

- Are not often outdoors – for example, if they are frail or housebound
- Are in an institution such as a care home
- Usually wear clothes that cover up most of their skin when outdoors.

If you have dark skin – for example you have an African, African-Caribbean or South Asian background – you may also not make enough vitamin D from sunlight levels in the UK.

You too should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D, throughout the year.

- Maintain a healthy weight – losing excess weight can significantly lower blood pressure levels
- Manage stress – practice relaxation techniques like yoga, deep breathing exercises or meditation.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP FLUID INTAKE UP

To maintain adequate hydration, the NHS website advises drinking 1.6-2 litres each day (around 6-8 glasses). This is just a guide and you may need to drink more fluids if you are:

- Pregnant or breastfeeding
- In a hot environment
- Physically active for long periods
- Ill or recovering from illness.

All drinks count except those containing alcohol and it's a good idea to focus on those low in added sugars, particularly plain water. Try adding a slice of lemon or cucumber for a change. Foods with a high water content, such as fruits and soups, also contribute to fluid intake and hydration.

The best drinks to give children are water and milk. Children can have pasteurised whole or semi-skimmed cows' milk, or goats' or sheep's milk, as a main drink from the age of 1 year ([Water, drinks and hydration - NHS](#))

Signs that we are not drinking enough include:

- Dry mouth
- Thirst
- Headache
- Loose skin
- Dark or strong-smelling urine
- Constipation
- Tiredness.

Drinking regularly throughout the day is important for many aspects of health, including kidney function, digestive health and cognitive performance. This is especially the case during hot weather or after physical activity. As we get older, perception of thirst can be reduced. So, particularly in hot weather, encourage and prompt elderly friends and relatives to drink regularly to ensure adequate fluid intake.

Young children can also easily become dehydrated in hot weather and should be encouraged to drink water regularly.

Fun Fact

Did you know

Water is the largest single component of the human body. It serves as the medium for metabolic reactions that control the body's diverse systems, and is essential for nutrient transport throughout the body and temperature regulation.

The often-cited figure of 70% represents an average, not a fixed value. Actual water content ranges from 45% to 75% depending on individual factors such as age, sex and body composition.

Newborns have the highest water content, around 75–78%, which gradually decreases with age, reaching about 50% in older adults.