St Helens
Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group

NEWSLETTER

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Issue 18

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AUTUMN

As summer draws to a close and autumn arrives, we are looking ahead to the winter months and encouraging everyone to take simple steps to stay well.

This time of year brings cooler temperatures, shorter days and an increase in seasonal illnesses such as flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. We are already preparing for our autumn vaccination programme and will be inviting eligible patients for their flu and RSV vaccinations over the coming weeks.

We encourage everyone to keep an eye out for invitations from the practice and to book appointments promptly when invited. Protecting yourself through vaccination is one of the best ways to reduce the risk of serious illness during the winter months.

Our website with details about booking appointments, prescription information, econsult, and much more can be found at: www.sthelensmedicalcentre.nhs.uk

Opening times: Monday – Friday 8:00am to 6:30pm

Contact us: 01983 871828 | hiowicb-hsi.sthelensmc@nhs.net

Keep up to date with our latest health news on Facebook by scanning the QR code below on a smartphone:

Flu Vaccination Clinics

Every year, flu causes thousands of people to become seriously unwell. While many people recover within a week or two, flu can be much more severe for older adults, pregnant women, young children and people with certain long-term health conditions.

Getting your flu vaccination remains the best way to protect yourself and those around you during the winter months. The vaccine helps reduce your risk of becoming ill and can also reduce the likelihood of complications that may require hospital treatment.

If you are eligible for a free NHS flu vaccination, we encourage you to book as soon as possible. Please contact the practice to make an appointment or see the below details for our walk in clinic.



Remember: the flu vaccine cannot give you flu and helps your immune system prepare for the winter season.

FLU VACCINE WALK IN

22nd October 8:30am-12:30pm at St Helens

For registered patients over 65 or at risk only

RSV Vaccinations

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common virus that affects the breathing system. For most healthy adults it causes symptoms similar to a cold, but for older adults and very young babies it can sometimes lead to serious lung infections and hospital admission.

The NHS now offers RSV vaccination to eligible groups to help reduce the risk of severe illness. If you are invited by St Helens Medical Centre for an RSV vaccination, we strongly encourage you to book an appointment. The vaccine provides important protection during the months when respiratory viruses are most common.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible, please contact the practice and a member of the team will be happy to help.

Getting Ready for Winter

The arrival of autumn is a good opportunity to prepare for winter.
Simple things you can do include:

- Ordering repeat prescriptions in good time.
- Keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.
- Staying active, even when the weather becomes cooler.
- Eating a healthy, balanced diet.
- Keeping warm and checking on older relatives and neighbours.
- Attending any vaccination appointments you are invited to.

Taking these small steps now can help prevent health problems later in the season.

Seasonal Viruses and When to Seek Help



Colds, flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses tend to spread more easily during autumn and winter.

Most viral illnesses can be managed at home with rest, fluids and over-the-counter treatments. Your local pharmacist can offer advice and treatment for many common conditions.

If you are concerned about worsening symptoms, particularly breathing difficulties, chest pain, severe dehydration or prolonged illness, please seek medical advice promptly.

Pharmacy First

Did You Know? Your Pharmacy Can Help Without a GP Appointment

PHARMACY FIRST

Many common illnesses and minor health concerns can now be assessed and treated directly by your local pharmacy, often without the need to wait for a GP appointment.

Through the NHS Pharmacy First service, community pharmacists can provide advice and, where appropriate, treatment for a range of common conditions.

These include:

- Earache (children aged 1 to 17 years)
- Impetigo

- Infected insect bites
- Shingles
- Sinusitis
- Sore throat
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (women aged 16 to 64 years)

Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals and can also offer advice on coughs, colds, aches and pains, hay fever, stomach upsets and many other minor illnesses. Choosing Pharmacy First when appropriate means you can often receive help more quickly, while allowing GP appointments to be available for patients with more complex medical needs.

If the pharmacist feels you need further assessment, they will advise you accordingly.

The Daisy Ring Bus

Many of our patients will be aware of the challenges involved in travelling to mainland hospitals for cancer treatment and appointments.

The Daisy Ring Bus is a volunteer-run community transport service that helps Isle of Wight cancer patients travel to hospitals in Southampton and Portsmouth. The service was established to ensure patients can continue to access essential treatment while receiving support from a friendly and caring team.

Further information can be found at www.daisyringbus.org

Southampton Timetable



Portsmouth Timetable



St Helens Health Walks 2026

Walking is a type of cardiovascular physical activity, which increases your heart rate. This improves blood flow and can lower blood pressure. It helps to boost energy levels by releasing certain hormones like endorphins and delivering oxygen throughout the body.
Spring is a season of change and growth, so it's the perfect opportunity to make a positive change in your life.

• St Helens Health Walks take place every Wednesday from 10am and usually ends around 1pm
• Walkers meet by the sports pavilion on St Helens Green
• The varied walks take place around the St Helens, Seaview, Bembridge and Brading areas and the distance is normally between 4 and 8 miles
• A shorter walk for those requiring one is offered
• The aim of the friendly walks is to help provide opportunities for physical exercise as well as positive social opportunities
• The walks have a leader and a back marker to provide support for walkers
• If you need further information, please contact Maurice Dix Tel: 07854 368 419 or by email at maurice.dix@btinternet.com

Patient Participation Group Members

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