

Covid-19 Information Update for Patients

Dear Patients,

We hope that you are all keeping as well as possible and managing to keep your spirits up at this difficult time.

Clinical work continues at Balmore Park, at present much of this is by phone. 12 members of staff have had symptoms of Covid, all are now fully recovered and back at work again. A quarter of our workforce are home based, which enables us to follow social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

Immunisations

Despite the pandemic, it's important that we continue to immunise babies and children against the infectious diseases which can harm their health. We have tried to minimise the Covid risk to these children and their families whilst we administer the vaccines. Thus, on arrival in the car park, parents initially have a mobile phone consultation with the nurse. The nurse then goes to the car, checks she has the right family and child, and gives the immunisation to the child whilst they are still in their car seat. She wears appropriate PPE throughout. This reduces the physical contact time from 10 to 2 minutes. The family remains in the car park for a short while so the nurse can observe the child before they leave. For those without cars or in poor weather, the child is brought swiftly to a room adjacent to the fire escape door directly off the car park, so again contact is minimal.

These immunisations are important; do please keep bringing you children for their vaccines.

Parents and carers of young children please see the following link for more information:

<https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk/national/coronavirus>

Long term conditions

Patients with Diabetes, COPD or Asthma whose annual reviews are due, will be telephoned by our nurse specialists to have their reviews carried out by telephone. Patients whose diabetes is not well controlled or who are more unwell, may be brought to the surgery for blood testing and foot checks when due. Physical contact will be kept to the minimum. The annual review is an opportunity for us to help you to optimise the control of your long term condition. We know this is important in preventing more serious Covid infections in these patient groups.

Antenatal appointments

With GPs will continue as normal, antenatal patients may be offered an initial phone appointment, but in most cases will need to be seen in person.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital

Is coping well with the patients that have been admitted with Covid, they have not been overwhelmed and have better than average results for serious infections. They have developed systems for keeping patients with and without Covid symptoms apart. They are continuing to treat patients with serious non-Covid problems, and over the next few weeks are putting systems in place to expand this, with the goal of a relatively normal service in 6 weeks' time.

Contact us

With this in mind please can we encourage those of you who have problems or symptoms you are concerned about, to phone the surgery for initial telephone consultations? Don't wait for normal life to resume, that could be some way off and it may be appropriate to refer you immediately. Your GP can discuss this with you.

Bank Holiday 8th May

We will be open for on the day appointments only this coming Friday from 08:00 to 18:30; please call on the usual number.

Shielding Letters

There has been some confusion caused by shielding letters which have been sent out by Government agencies. We are currently trying to resolve this.

Please do look at the Covid Help Room on our web site for details of which conditions qualify for shielding – this is not the same as self isolating.

The criteria for shielding were laid down by the government and we have been asked to largely adhere to these.

Going forward

We are starting to consider how we can restart routine services, whilst maintaining social distancing requirements, for when the lockdown is relaxed.

More information on this will follow.

Please stay safe.

Balmore Park Surgery