



Patient Participation Group

Charlbury Patient Participation Group Newsletter Issue No.8 April 2020

CHARLBURY MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

This is the spring newsletter from Charlbury Patient Participation Group (CPPG). The impact of coronavirus in our lives continues to be significant, and while we do not wish to trouble the NHS unnecessarily at this time, there are many of us who are concerned about how and when to access healthcare for conditions other than coronavirus. We lay out some guidelines below.

We look at symptoms of heart attack and stroke. A&E departments report that there has been a significant reduction in the number of people coming to A&E with suspected heart attack, or stroke. This is causing concern. The worry is that people are overlooking symptoms in order to protect the NHS and also to avoid going into hospital.

We also look at reasons to consult your GP. Patients of Charlbury Medical Practice have responded to the request to contact the practice only if it is really necessary. There are times when it is necessary to talk to a GP or nurse. We list here a few symptoms which should not be ignored.

Children's health: reasons to dial 999 or to go to A&E, when to call 111, and when to contact the GP. The poster on page 6 from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health gives information.

The Oxfordshire University Hospitals Trust is also keen that expectant mothers know that medical help is still available for them during their pregnancy. Page 7 gives more details.

Sadly, the incidence of domestic abuse has increased during this time of enforced restriction of movement and pressure on family life. Oxfordshire County Council asked us to share the information on the poster on page 8 with as many people as possible.

Oxford University Hospitals Trust and Oxford Health Trust have set up help lines for people with diabetes and for people seeking support with mental health issues. We give details on page 9.

The last page is about the Blandford Fly, which has arrived in Charlbury. It features a photograph of a bite.

You will find some of this information on www.charlbury.info on the coronavirus pages or on CPPG page of the website. We post up to date information from the practice and from OUH hospitals and Oxford Health on the town website.

Heart Attack - Causes, Symptoms & Treatment



A **heart attack** is when one of the coronary arteries becomes blocked and there is a sudden loss of blood flow to a part of your heart muscle. The heart muscle is robbed of its vital blood supply and, if left untreated, will begin to die because it is not getting enough oxygen. If you are having a heart attack you will be conscious.

A heart attack is life-threatening. If you think you or anyone else is having a heart attack, call 999 for an ambulance immediately. Do not delay.

Symptoms of a heart attack

Heart attack symptoms vary from one person to another. The most common signs of a heart attack are:

- Pain or discomfort in your chest that suddenly occurs and doesn't go away.
- The pain may spread to your left or right arm or may spread to your neck, jaw, back or stomach. For some people the pain or tightness is severe, while other people just feel uncomfortable.
- You may also feel sick, sweaty, light-headed or short of breath.

It's possible to have a heart attack without experiencing 'classic' chest pain. This is more common in the elderly, women, or those with diabetes as the condition can cause nerve damage which can affect how you feel pain.

During a heart attack there is also the risk of having a cardiac arrest. This is when your heart stops pumping blood and normal breathing stops.

If you have a heart attack you need to have treatment as soon as possible.

Early treatment to get the blood flowing to the damaged part of your heart muscle again can save your life and limit the amount of permanent damage to your heart muscle.

Many people who have a heart attack need to have emergency treatment to unblock the coronary artery.

Preventing a heart attack, reducing the risks

There are 5 main steps you can take to reduce the risk of having a heart attack (or having another heart attack):

- ✓ smokers should [quit smoking](#)
- ✓ [lose weight](#) if you're overweight or obese
- ✓ do regular exercise – adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of [moderate-intensity aerobic activity](#) each week, unless advised otherwise by the doctor in charge of your care
- ✓ eat a low-fat, high-fibre diet, including wholegrains and at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- ✓ moderate alcohol consumption

Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-attack/>

Risks we can't change:

- Age: as we get older, the risk of heart attack increases
- Gender: men are at a higher risk of heart disease. Women's risk grows and may be equal to men after the menopause
- Family history: if someone in the family has had a heart attack, speak to the GP about the risk.

Source: www.heartfoundation.org.au

Stroke - Causes, Signs & Symptoms



A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of your brain is cut off, causing your brain cells to become damaged or die.

During a stroke, brain cells in an affected part of your brain are damaged because they don't get the oxygen and nutrients they need from your blood. This can affect your speech, as well as the way you think and move.

A stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. If you or anyone else is having a stroke, you should phone 999 for an ambulance immediately. Do not delay.

Act F.A.S. T.

- **Facial weakness** – can they smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
- **Arm weakness** – can they raise both arms?
- **Speech problems** – can they speak clearly and can they understand what you're saying?
- **Time** – it's time to call 999 immediately if you see any of these symptoms.

What increases the chance of having a stroke?

- A risk factor is something that increases your chance of developing a condition. You are at much greater risk if you have several contributing factors such as smoking, uncontrolled diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol.
- Risk factors for stroke are similar to those for heart diseases, such as angina or heart attacks. The good news is that most of these risk factors are modifiable – this means you can do something about them.
- If you have an untreated, irregular heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation (AF) your risk of stroke is increased by around four to five times. This is because AF increases the risk of a blood clot forming inside the top chambers of your heart. This clot can travel to your brain and block an artery.

This information is from the British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk

In addition, call 999 if you, a friend or relative experiences:

Major trauma such as a serious head injury

Severe allergic reaction especially if difficulty breathing

Severe burns or scalds

When should I consult the GP?

Call your Practice to seek advice on any of the following:

- Unexplained bleeding
- Significant and spontaneous bruising in different areas of the body
- Unexplained weight loss
- Unusual thirst, very frequent urination
- New and persistent headaches, not improving with painkillers, especially if accompanied by dizziness and or nausea
- Moles which grow, change shape, colour, start itching or bleeding
- Any new lumps anywhere on your body
- Breast cancer can have several symptoms, but the first noticeable symptom is usually a lump or area of thickened breast tissue. Most breast lumps are not cancerous, but it's always best to have them checked by a doctor

ADVICE FOR PARENTS:





During the coronavirus emergency we have all been trying to protect the NHS from unnecessary visits. However, it is sometimes essential to consult a GP, or go to A&E.

The poster on the next page gives more information including when to take your child to A&E, or dial 999; when to contact the GP urgently or call 111.

Advice for parents during coronavirus

Whilst coronavirus is infectious to children it is rarely serious. If your child is unwell it is likely to be a non-coronavirus illness, rather than coronavirus itself.

Whilst it is extremely important to follow Government advice to stay at home during this period, it can be confusing to know what to do when your child is unwell or injured. Remember that NHS 111, GPs and hospitals are still providing the same safe care that they have always done. Here is some advice to help:

 <p>RED</p>	<p>If your child has any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to the touch• Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas), has an irregular breathing pattern or starts grunting• Severe difficulty in breathing becoming agitated or unresponsive• Is going blue round the lips• Has a fit/seizure• Becomes extremely distressed (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused, very lethargic (difficult to wake) or unresponsive• Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass test')• Has testicular pain, especially in teenage boys	<p>You need urgent help:</p> <p>Go to the nearest A&E department or phone 999</p>
 <p>AMBER</p>	<p>If your child has any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is finding it hard to breathe including drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs (recession) or head bobbing• Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)• Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy) or irritable (unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or picking up) - especially if they remain drowsy or irritable despite their fever coming down• Has extreme shivering or complains of muscle pain• Babies under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F• Infants 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F• For all infants and children with a fever above 38°C for more than 5 days.• Is getting worse or if you are worried• Has persistent vomiting and/or persistent severe abdominal pain• Has blood in their poo or wee• Any limb injury causing reduced movement, persistent pain or head injury causing persistent crying or drowsiness	<p>You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.</p> <p>Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111</p> <p>The NHS is working for you. However, we recognise during the current coronavirus crisis at peak times, access to a health care professional may be delayed. If symptoms persist for 4 hours or more and you have not been able to speak to either a GP or 111, then take your child to the nearest A&E</p>
 <p>GREEN</p>	<p>If none of the above features are present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can continue to provide your child care at home. Information is also available on NHS Choices• Additional advice is available to families for coping with crying of well babies • Additional advice is available for children with complex health needs and disabilities.	<p>Self care</p> <p>Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 - dial 111</p>

Medical help is still available for pregnant women during the coronavirus pandemic.

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is reminding pregnant women in Oxfordshire that medical help is still at hand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many maternity units, the Trust has made a number of changes recently to how the Trust provides care to women during pregnancy, to keep both patients and staff members safe. This has included carrying out some appointments by telephone or video.

However, the maternity service is still open 24/7 for births, urgent care, and clinical advice. Some face-to-face appointments with a midwife or doctor are essential, and it is important to attend. The Trust reminds women that care is still available. It is really important that women stay in touch with their maternity team and attend their scheduled appointments.

If women are self-isolating, they will be offered new appointments when the period of isolation ends.

Midwives are still able to see women in Banbury and Chipping Norton as well as Oxford.

If you have an urgent problem, you can speak to a midwife or doctor day or night at the Maternity Assessment Unit.

Telephone: 01865 220 221

Source: ouh.nhs.uk

The current restrictions on our day to day living and additional stresses because of coronavirus will put pressure on lots of relationships and families.

We know that domestic abuse is likely to get worse with Covid-19, and in these circumstances some people might also experience abuse for the first time.

Are you at immediate risk?



Call 999. If it's not safe for you to speak use the **Silent Solution** by pressing **55** when prompted.

If you are d/Deaf or hard of hearing you can use the emergency SMS service by texting 999. First text 'Register' to 999.

If you hear an incident of domestic abuse in progress or are worried for someone's immediate safety call 999. Otherwise please share your concerns with Thames Valley Police via 101 or report the crime online. It really could save lives.

Are you safe at home?



If you are at risk of harm at home you can choose to leave and will be helped by police and support workers to get yourself and your family to somewhere safe. You can also get help to stay as safe as possible at home.

Call our **Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline** on **0800 731 0055** between 10am-7pm Mon - Fri, or email das@a2dominion.co.uk

Are you worried about hurting somebody?

If you are struggling to manage your behaviour and hurting your loved ones you can get help by contacting the **Respect Helpline** on **0808 802 4040**

Are you able to help protect others at risk from abuse?



People trapped at home with somebody causing them harm will find it even harder to get help and protect themselves. Now more than ever it's everyone's job to protect them. **Please look and listen out for friends, family, neighbours, and others in your community.**

For information about what abuse might look like, how to stay safe, and what to do if you're worried about somebody visit www.reducingtherisk.org.uk

Mental Health Helpline during Covid-19

The **Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Helpline** is being launched by [Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust](#), which runs local mental health services, with support from [Oxfordshire Mind](#).

The helpline will operate during the coronavirus pandemic to provide people with specialist mental health care as NHS 111 receives an increasing number of COVID-19-related calls.

It will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week for people who need mental health care when their situation it is not life-threatening.

People can call when they need to find out when and where to get help and to access support from mental health professionals.

The line will provide the right mental health advice for people of all ages, including children and older adults.

Adults: **01865 904 997**

Children and young people: **01865 904 998**

During office hours, people who already use mental health services should contact services directly using the numbers in their care plan.

New Helpline for Diabetes Patients during Covid-19

Teams at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and neighbouring Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust have worked together to create and man the hotline,

Designed for **adult patients** who need **urgent clinical advice**, it is hoped that the hotline will give reassurance to patients who are concerned about their diabetic health during COVID-19, and also ultimately help prevent admission to hospital.

Clinical advice is provided by experienced community diabetes specialist nurses with clinical input from OUH colleagues as needed. Working together gives greater access to diabetes expertise for both staff and patients regardless of organisation, so supporting the wider diabetes community.

The patient hotline number is **01865 857357**, and is available seven days a week from **8.00am until 4.00pm**.

Patients can also email dsnop.ocdem@nhs.net

If patients have a query out of hours, they can call OUH Switchboard on **0300 304 7777**.

[Families of children with diabetes should continue to seek support in their usual way.](#)

Source: www.ouh.nhs.uk

Blandford Fly - Local News

The Blandford fly has arrived early this year. This fly, which is about 2-3mm in size, lives near areas of water and gives a particularly nasty and painful bite, usually on the ankles and legs. It flies low to the ground and is most common during May and June.

Please see the information below as advised by Public Health England. If you get bitten:

1. Clean the bite area and dry gently
2. Don't scratch the bite, as this can lead to infection
3. Apply a cold compress or calamine lotion
4. Antihistamine creams are not recommended, as they can sometimes cause skin reactions
5. Cover large blisters with a dry dressing
6. If bites are on the lower limbs, there may be swelling of the ankles and feet for several days. Don't worry about this, simply rest with your feet supported on a stool

You should seek medical advice if you have:

- Discomfort, swelling or red lines in the groin or armpit
- A fever
- A spreading redness or hotness around the bite, which lasts longer than three days

Bites can often feel very uncomfortable with swelling, blistering, joint pain and sometimes a high temperature. There's normally no need to visit a GP or minor injuries unit but if you continue to feel unwell after a bite, call NHS 111 or visit your local pharmacy for advice on how to ease your discomfort. For most people, the symptoms will only last a few days before clearing up.

The Fly



The bite on day one.

