

Welcome to your Autumn Newsletter!

We hope you have enjoyed the summer and are enjoying the start of autumn.

In this newsletter we aim to update you on the following

- **Our upcoming Flu and Covid Vaccine clinics**
- **Our new mental health and well being coaches: what they do and how they can help you**
- **Current work our pharmacy are doing to reduce certain medication use and why**

Finally, we are aware of the extraordinary pressures that winter and the cost of living crisis will bring. We have included some resources on debt, finances, emergency food and shelter support which we hope you won't need, but may find useful.



Join our Patient Participation Group

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) has some fantastic new members and we always welcome more. Would you be interested in joining us? It would give you an opportunity to have a say on how our services can be improved and provide helpful feedback to our staff. The PPG meets 3 times per year for an hour. Members are involved in some of the practice campaigns, such as Flu Clinic and our annual Christmas Hamper campaign organised with the local school. If you are interested in joining, please contact our Deputy Practice Manager, Janet Pallace, who will be happy to give you more information.



Please make sure we have your up to date contact details including mobile number

Autumn Vaccine Programme

Autumn Vaccine Programme

Our Autumn vaccine programme is due to start in October, we will be delivering both Flu & Covid vaccines to our eligible patients. Patients will be offered both vaccines at the same time. If you do only wish to have one of the vaccines, please still attend your given clinic. For information on eligibility please visit our website.

We are receiving a limited number of vaccines each week, therefore we are prioritising our most vulnerable patients to be vaccinated first. The invites to our first clinics (Saturday 1st October & Saturday 15th October) have been sent to patients over the age of 65 & patients who have a compromised immune system. If you think you have been missed, please contact the surgery.



The remaining eligible patients will be invited after our clinic on 15th October, please be patient and wait to be contacted. You will be sent a text message with a personal link to book an appointment. We would be grateful if you could ensure your most recent mobile number is on your GP record. If you do not have a mobile number you will be sent a letter with a timeslot. If you cannot attend the date you are given, you will automatically be invited to another clinic, please do not ring reception as you will receive another invite.

In July 2022 the government announced that the Flu vaccine would once again be offered to healthy patients between the ages of 50-64. However, the most at-risk patients are to be prioritised and this cohort should not expect to be invited until later in the season.

Please visit our dedicated coronavirus page which may answer any further questions you may have.

www.monkseatonmedical.nhs.uk/coronavirus-information

www.bridgemedical.nhs.uk/coronavirus-information

Monkseaton Medical Centre

Phone

0191 252 1616

Website (eConsult)

www.monkseatonmedical.nhs.uk

Bridge Medical

Phone

0191 253 2578

Website (eConsult)

www.bridgemedical.nhs.uk

Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinators

We now have appointments available with our Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinators. Our coordinators are a first point of contact for patients at the surgery who may be suffering with their mental health or wellbeing.

They can help patients with problems such as low mood, anxiety, loneliness, getting back into the community, patients with learning disabilities and their family and carers, financial support information, other social issues. If our Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinators cannot help you with your issue directly, they will find resources or support for you elsewhere and make any appropriate referrals that may be needed.

If you feel you may need some advice and support in any of these areas, then please contact the surgery to arrange an appointment.

Susan Gent

Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinator

Monday & Thursdays-Monkseaton Medical Centre

Wednesday & Fridays-Bridge Medical

Susan has worked in Public Health for many years, coordinating and delivering Health & Wellbeing Programmes-GP Referral, Weight Management, Physical Activity & Health Assessments to reduce health inequalities & strengthen communities.

Susan also holds over 9 years knowledge and experience supporting vulnerable young people & their families helping with a wide range of issues; mental health, housing, money/debt issues, benefits, substance misuse, domestic abuse and worklessness.

In her free time, Susan is currently studying a Foundation Degree in Counselling. Susan also likes to keep fit by walking & runs for a local athletics club.

Beth Houghton

Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Coordinator

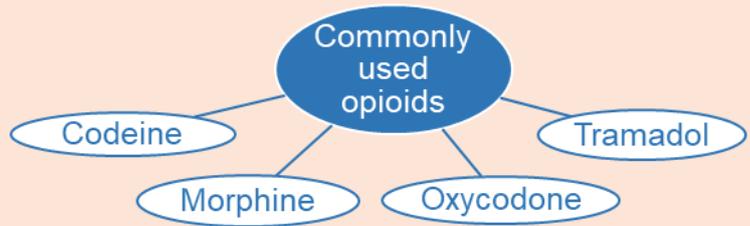
Currently on maternity leave and returning in January 2023.

Beth has worked at Monkseaton Medical Centre for 9 years starting as a receptionist then working as a secretary, she is now one of our Mental Health and Learning Disabilities coordinators. Beth studied a masters degree in Psychology and has also completed a counselling qualification.

Beth is enjoying being a new mum and taking her son on long walks. She is looking forward to returning to work in January.

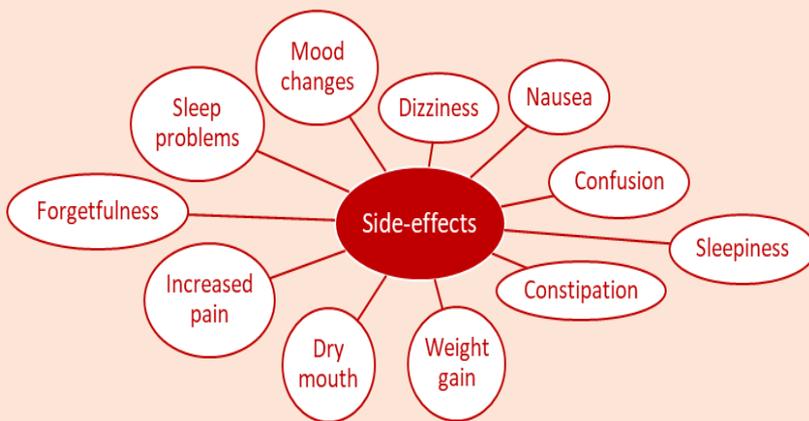
Reducing Opioid Use

Opioids are commonly used medicines to relieve pain. They can be very effective **short-term** to relieve **moderate to severe pain**.



There are a wide range of conditions that our GPs will prescribe opioids for, in the majority of cases this is only intended for short-term use, for example **after an injury or surgery**. Similarly, opioids bought over the counter such as **co-codamol** (codeine and paracetamol), should only be used short-term.

In the long-term, opioids only reduce pain for approximately **10% of people**, yet they can still produce a number of **side-effects**:



Opioids carry a **serious risk of addiction**, which increases the longer you use them. Your body can also build up a **tolerance**, or 'get used to' opioids, meaning the same dose can become less effective. Developing a **dependence** for opioids means you may suffer from withdrawal symptoms when they are stopped suddenly. Withdrawal symptoms can include: shivers, diarrhoea, difficulty sleeping, sweating, irritability, agitation, nausea and vomiting. If you experience any of these symptoms on stopping an opioid, please contact the surgery or your local pharmacist to discuss. **Do not stop taking an opioid suddenly** if you have taken this for a prolonged period.

Feelings of **cravings**, or that you need to take **more than prescribed** can be a sign that you are addicted to opioids. Opioids should not be taken for reasons other than pain relief – for example, to stay calm, or to help you sleep.

Taking opioids safely:

- Take the medicine as directed, do not increase the dose or take extra doses
- Take the **minimum effective dose for shortest required time**

The pharmacy team at the practice continue to work to encourage patients to reduce their opioid use where appropriate. You may receive letters, or phone calls from the pharmacy team to review your opioids. If you have any questions or require advice on any of your medicines, please contact us.

If you are interested in some further information, please take a look at the following links

www.my.livewellwithpain.co.uk/

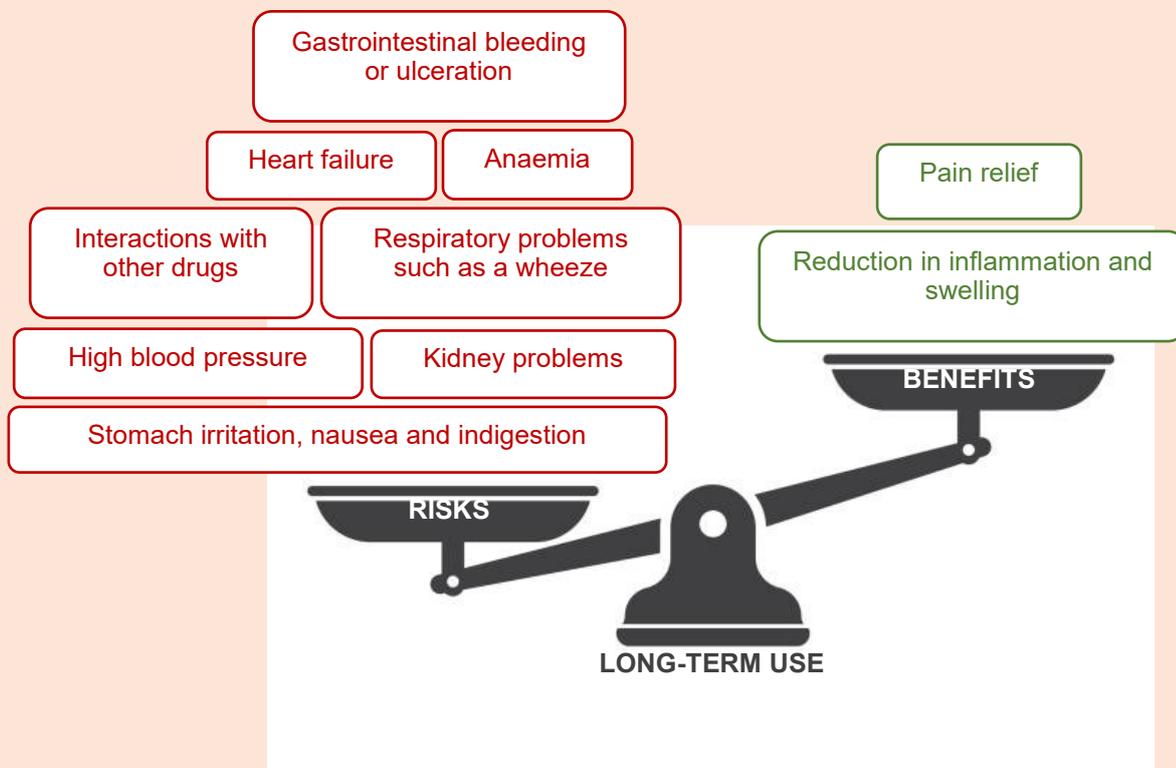
www.painkillersdontexist.com/

The Risks of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (AKA NSAIDs)

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are **commonly used** medicines for pain, inflammation, swelling and stiffness. Well known examples include **ibuprofen**, **naproxen** and **diclofenac**.

You may be using NSAIDs for soft-tissue injuries (sprains and strains etc.), gout, arthritis, migraines, period pain and dental pain.

Taken orally, NSAIDs are **effective** for the **short-term** relief of pain. However, when used long-term (longer than 3 weeks), the **risks can often outweigh the benefits**.



NSAIDs are **not** routinely recommended for **chronic** pain. Certain factors, such as having long-term conditions (e.g. asthma and high blood pressure), being elderly, or being acutely unwell, will increase your likelihood of suffering from these risks.

The **safest** way to use an NSAID is to use the lowest effective dose, **short-term**, for flare-ups of pain. Using 'lower strength' NSAIDs where possible, such as ibuprofen bought over the counter, is also safer. Topical NSAIDs, such as **ibuprofen gel**, and **diclofenac gel** (Voltarol), are seen as significantly safer.

Our pharmacy team is currently contacting patients aged over 65, who have been taking NSAIDs for **longer than 3 months**. Patients will be offered the opportunity to discuss their NSAID use with a member of the pharmacy team, or can request that their NSAID is removed from their repeat medication list.

Where to find help for Debt & Financial Advice, Emergency Food & Shelter Support

Emergency Food Support

BAY Food Bank

Your local BAY foodbank provides emergency food parcels to adults, couples, or families

Tel **0191 257 3820**

* Food parcel contact times 10am-2pm (Mon-Fri)

* Donation drop off times 9am-4pm (Mon-Fri)

Welfare Assistance - Crisis Support

If you are experiencing exceptional hardship and need help with a food parcel or utility bill you may be entitled to Crisis Support

Contact the Gateway Team on **0191 643 2777**
Option 2 9am-2pm (Mon-Fri)

The Nourish Store North Shields

Community membership store Members pay £4 to get at least £15 worth of fresh fruit & veg, chilled & frozen foods, toiletries & cleaning goods

www.cedarwoodtrust.com

Freephone **0330 094 8454**

The Big Local Whitley Bay

"Pay As You Can Pantry" pop in every Tues, Thurs, Fri & Sat from 10am. For range of fresh fruit, veg, milk, bakery items & dried goods

Bread & Butter Hubs North Tyneside

Range of food available fresh fruit & veg, chilled food & cupboard goods

£7.50 to access roughly £35 worth of food each week

* Longbenton Community Centre Tues from 2pm

* Shiremoor Adventure Play Park Weds from 1.30pm

* Fordley Primary School Thurs from 1.45pm

* Howden Family Gateway Fri from 1.30pm

No subscription required. To sign up, text **07860063304** with your full name, postcode and the name of the hub you will be collecting from

Debt & Financial Support

Citizens Advice North Tyneside

Access face to face in the local community please see www.ntcab.org.uk for information

Advice line **0300 330 9047** open 9am-5pm

Step Change

Online debt advice service is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, at a time that suits you.

To speak to someone you can call the debt advice helpline **0800 138 1111** Mon-Fri 8am-8pm and Sat 8am-4pm

Age UK

Support with benefits & entitlement, debts & savings, legal advice, pension advice, scams, fraud & consumer issues

Advice Line **0800 678 1602** 8am-7pm 365 days a year

National Energy Action (NEA)

Provides financial support to help struggling households, support with heating & insulation of their home

Visit www.nea.org.uk

Energy Advice **0800 304 7159**

Benefits Advice **0800 138 8218**

Homeless Support

Housing Advice Team NT Council

Contact **0800 011 6511**

Face to Face advice: Mon-Thurs 9am-4.30pm

Friday 9am-4pm

Out of Hours Mon-Fri 6pm – 8am

8am – 8am (24/7) Sat Sun & Bank Holidays

Shelter North East Newcastle

Contact **03301 755 121**

North East Homeless Fish Quay

Food & emergency equipment

Contact **0800 254 5434**