

3 September 2020

Dear Patient,

Flu Vaccination

We are writing to you to invite you for your annual **free flu vaccination** as you will be aged 65 years, or older, by 31 March 2021.

We strongly advise you to have your flu vaccination to protect you against the Influenza Virus and reduce your risk of bronchitis and pneumonia. The flu vaccine will not weaken your immune system, in fact it should strengthen it.

If you suffer with Influenza because you have not had the flu vaccine, your body's immune defence will be weakened for some weeks, so you will be more likely to die of either Influenza or Coronavirus.

Clinics

There will not be any drop-in flu clinics but we will be arranging lots of pre-bookable clinics throughout each week, to get you vaccinated before the flu virus is at its peak, usually in November and December. We would strongly advise that you have your vaccination before the end of October.

Our first vaccination clinics are now available to book:

- **Monday 14 September, 6:15pm – 7:45pm**
- **Tuesday 15 September, 3pm – 4pm**
- **Friday 18 September, 10am – 11am**

These clinics must be booked in advance; you will not be able to attend the Practice without an appointment. Please see below how to book an appointment and our new flu clinic process to help maintain social distancing during our flu vaccination clinics. Any patients attending for pre-booked appointments such as Nurse appointments will receive their vaccination at that appointment.

Booking your appointment

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the practice is receiving an unprecedented amount of telephone queries. Therefore, where possible, **we would strongly advise you to book online** by registering for the [NHS App](#)¹

This is a quick and easy way to register to book appointments, request repeat prescriptions and view your medical records. Simply download the app on iOS and Android devices, such as Smartphones and Tablets, and once you have registered for the NHS App **you will be granted access usually within 2 hours.**

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please cancel it via the NHS App or by emailing STOCCG.MarpleCottageReception@nhs.net.

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>

Social distancing

We have been working hard to devise a new way of working to help keep you safe, whilst attending our flu vaccination clinics; adhering to current infection control guidance and implementing a one-way system (please see new process and one-way system diagram below)

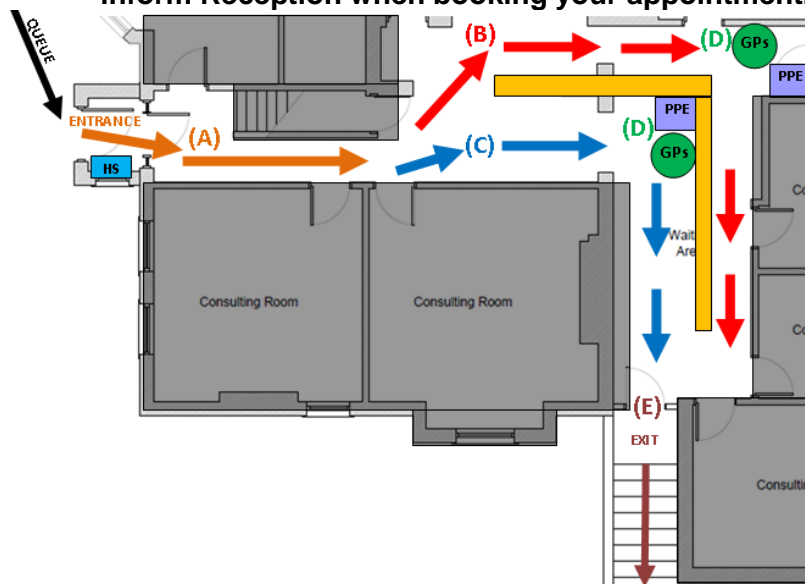
If you are unable to use the practice stepped entrance / exit by the car park, please inform Reception so we can make alternative arrangements for you.

We would be grateful if you continued to have your vaccination at the Practice, to ensure that we are updating your medical records appropriately, which we cannot guarantee when vaccinated by an alternative provider.

Patient Guide to Flu clinic process

1. When attending the practice for your vaccination, please queue at the Front Entrance on the path closest to the canal.
2. You will be greeted or collected by a member of the team, who will confirm your details.
3. To reduce the amount of time you spend at the practice, we would ask that you have your arm ready to be vaccinated, wearing a loosely fitted shirt, where possible.
4. Once the Clinician is ready, you will enter the practice, via Orange queue (A), and will be directed into two dividing queues as depicted below, Red (B) and Blue (C).
5. Once you have received your vaccination (D), you will be asked to exit the Practice via the steps* into the Car Park (E).

***If you are unable to leave the Practice, via the steps into the Car Park, please inform Reception when booking your appointment.**



To keep up-to-date with the latest information and our flu vaccination programme, please visit the Practice Website, Facebook² or Twitter³ [@MarpleSurgery](https://www.facebook.com/MarpleSurgery)

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Dr Andrew Johnson

Dr Maher Al-Ausi

² <https://www.facebook.com/MarpleSurgery>

³ <https://www.twitter.com/MarpleSurgery>

Frequently Asked Questions

When are the appointments available to book?

Our first clinics commence from Monday 14 September 2020.

This year we have to ensure that social distancing is maintained and so we have introduced a new system to keep everyone safe. There will not be any walk-in flu clinics this year but lots of other safe options and all patients must pre-book an appointment slot in advance.

How do I Book my flu vaccination?

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the practice is receiving an unprecedented amount of telephone queries; therefore, we would strongly advise you to book online.

Please register for the [NHS App](#)⁴, which can be downloaded on iOS and Android devices, such as Smartphones and Tablets. Once you have registered for the NHS App, you will usually be granted access within 2 hours.

Who is eligible for a flu vaccine?

This year the flu vaccine is being offered free by the NHS to:

- **Adults aged 65 and over** (including anyone who will be 65 by the 31 March 2021)
- **Carers** - including people living with someone who's at high risk from Coronavirus (on the NHS shielded patient list)
- **Children aged 2 and 3** on 31 August 2020
- **Children in primary school*** (These vaccines are available via the *school ONLY)
- **Children in Year 7*** (these vaccines are available via the *school ONLY)
- **Frontline Health or Social Care Workers**

People "at-risk" with certain medical conditions (incl children "at-risk" from 6 months of age)

- **Pregnant Women**
- **Chronic (long-term) Respiratory Disease, such as Severe Asthma**
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or Bronchitis**
- **Chronic Heart Disease**
- **Chronic Kidney Disease, at stage three, four or five**
- **Chronic Liver Disease**
- **Chronic Neurological Disease, such as Parkinson's or Motor Neurone Disease**
- **Learning Disability**
- **Diabetes**
- **Splenic Dysfunction or Asplenia**
- **A weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)**
- **BMI of 40 and above**

⁴ <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>

I am aged 50 - 64, am I eligible for the flu vaccination?

Later in the year, the flu vaccination programme is expected to be extended to people aged 50 to 64, subject to availability of vaccines. More information will be available later in the autumn, and until then our appointments will be offered firstly to patients who are deemed to be the most vulnerable:

- If you're aged 50 to 64, but also in an 'at-risk' group, you should not wait and book for your flu vaccination from September 2020.
- If you are aged 50 to 64, and do not have an medical condition that deems you to be "at-risk", please ensure we have your up-to-date contact information, so that we can keep you up-to-date by email and text about the availability of vaccines later in the season.

I am almost 65, am I eligible now?

Yes, if you were born on or before 31 March 1956.

As with previous years, anyone becoming 65 years old by the 31 March 2021 will be entitled to receive a flu vaccine from the 65+ flu vaccine supply before turning 65.

Can I have my flu vaccine when I attend the surgery for another medical reason?

Yes, but only if you have a prebooked appointment and if the time allows on the day.

Home Visits are available for medically housebound patients only

We shall continue to offer essential home visits for very frail patients, who are unable to attend the surgery, to have their flu vaccinations at home and for those living in care homes.

Home visit slots are very limited and are strictly reserved for those who are physically unable to get into a car to attend an appointment with help from a friend, family or a taxi.

I do not want the flu vaccination

If you already know that you don't want the flu vaccination, please email the practice at STOCCG.MarpleCottageReception@nhs.net or call the practice so that your vaccine can be offered to someone else who needs it. This year more than ever, this is very important as vaccines supplies are expected to be in extremely high demand.

Attending flu vaccination clinics

Where possible, please can you walk to the practice to minimise congestion on the road and in the car park.

There will not be any walk-in flu clinics this year, so please pre-book an appointment slot in advance. Please do not attend the practice without an appointment.