

**Northway Medical Centre
Bulletin
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This is the first Bulletin from Northway Medical Centre PPG. It aims to bring readers useful information relating to the surgery, health care in Dudley and general health information.

New system for hospital appointments via text

A new system has been developed which enables patients to get their hospital appointment letters straight to their smartphone via text without having to wait for the appointment letter to arrive in the post. The system, which went live in March, will send a text with a link to the appointment letter and a PIN code. All the recipient needs to do to view their letter is to click the link in the text, enter the PIN (which comes via text) then enter their date of birth. The system enables the recipient to confirm the appointment, rebook if it isn't convenient, or to cancel the appointment if no longer needed, by clicking on the appropriate option. Please ensure your GP practice has your correct mobile number.

Don't worry if you don't have a smart mobile phone, have not given your GP your mobile number or prefer to get an appointment letter through the post. If you don't open the digital letter within 24 hours a hard copy letter will automatically be generated and sent to you in the post.

To see details of how the system works in Dudley Group of hospitals go to <https://www.dgft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/appointment-letters/>

Northway Medical Centre is a training centre for future GPs

Dr Pritchard and Dr Moran provide mentoring and training to newly qualified doctors (GP Registrars) as well as training First Year and Second Year Medical Students. If you are offered an appointment with one of the students, a longer appointment time is allocated (20 minutes instead of 10). The students will discuss their diagnoses and proposed treatment plan with either Dr Pritchard or Dr Moran. So if your appointment is with a student doctor you are not being 'short-changed' – you'll have a thorough consultation and two sets of expertise applied to your case.

Blood tests in Dudley

An additional Blood Test Centre is open at the Merry Hill Shopping Centre. As with other blood test venues an appointment is necessary. The new centre at Merry Hill means free parking, more appointment slots and good transport links.

Dudley has an online booking system for blood tests, including the Blood Test Centre at Merry Hill. If you have been referred for a blood test, visit <https://bit.ly/3AjlK1m> to book your appointment.

If you wish to make an appointment by telephone the appointments telephone lines are 01384 244330 or 01384 365155 and are open from 08:00 – 20:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 – 15:00 on Saturdays.

When attending for a blood test please ensure that you bring your blood request form with you. The phlebotomist needs this so that they know what blood to take for which test. Without this form it will not be possible to take your blood sample.

Bowel cancer screening is offered every 2 years to men and women aged 60-74. This is a quick and simple home test that may save your life. Patients who are over 74 can ask for a screening kit every 2 years by calling the free helpline on 0800 707 6060.

Breast cancer screening - Russells Hall Hospital is the headquarters of the Dudley, Wolverhampton and South West Staffordshire Breast Screening Service. The service comprises three mobile screening units based at different community locations throughout the region. Images taken on the mobile units are sent to assessment centres for reporting. If necessary, women are asked to return to the nearest assessment centre for further review and potential treatment. Women aged between 50 and 70 who have a GP within the area are invited to attend for screening every 3 years at a mobile unit or static site. Women aged 71 and over requiring a breast screening can contact Dudley Hospitals on 01384 244177.

An apple a day ...

A recent study shows that eating fruit which contain flavonols such as apples could reduce the chances of becoming frail. Age UK characterises frailty as problems such as reduced muscle strength and fatigue. It is estimated that around 10% of people over 65 live with frailty. This rises to 25-50% for people over 85. The research showed that by increasing intake of flavonol by 10mg a day, which equates to around one medium apple a day, reduced the chance of developing frailty by 20%. Other foods high in flavonols include berries, tomatoes, grapes, kale, lettuce and onions.

Source: The Times 24.5.2023

Exercising after lunchtime is best time to reduce blood sugar

Research has shown that whilst exercise at any time of day helped all research participants to lower their blood sugar, the greatest benefits were in those participants who exercise between 1.45pm and 5pm. The study's 2416 participants were all Type 2 diabetics and were monitored over 4 years. Blood sugar usually spikes an hour or two after eating as the body digests carbohydrates. The glucose this creates is burned by muscle cells during exercise and helps to keep blood glucose levels stable. Keeping physically active can help Type 2 diabetics manage their blood sugar levels. The NHS suggests people with Type 2 diabetes to exercise for at least two and a half hours per week. Remember, exercise does not have to be in the gym. It can include gardening, housework, walking, running or swimming.

Source: The Times 26.5.2023

Cost of obesity to NHS

NHS spending on patients varies according to a patient's weight. A recent study found that the NHS spent double on obese patients compared to those with a healthy weight. This is because they "collect" obesity related conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. A million patients in the study were a healthy weight and cost the NHS an average of £638 each in 2019. Overweight but not obese patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 25-30 cost an average of £756. Those with a BMI of 30-35 cost £979, and those with a BMI of 35-40 cost £1178. Those with a BMI over 40 cost an average of £1375. Theoretically the NHS could save around £13.7 billion a year – about 10% of its budget – if everyone was a healthy weight.

Source: The Times 18.5.2023

You can check your own BMI using a calculator on the NHS website

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>