

Newsletter for our patients

Covid News, January 2021

Riverside Surgery

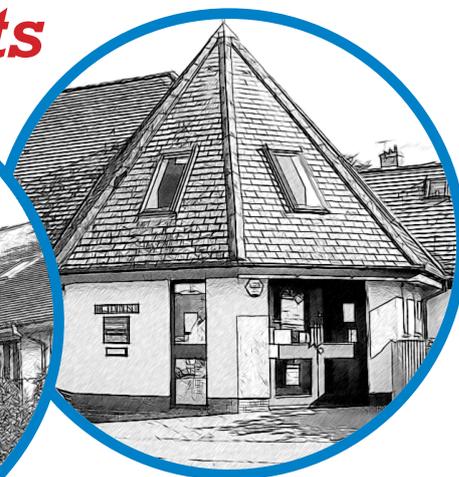
Bovey Tracey

01626 832666

Tower House Surgery

Chudleigh

01626 852379



Thanks for your help

We are very grateful to all our patients and volunteers who have supported us through 2020. Our patients have been particularly helpful by adapting to the new ways of working which have been forced on all of us because of Covid 19, so thank you.

Our Practice team has worked tirelessly through the whole pandemic, sacrificing bank holidays, evenings and weekends as well as cancelling time off, so a huge thank you to everyone.

Covid vaccination programme

Now, we want to update you on the progress of the Covid

vaccination programme. It is very fast moving and very difficult to plan.

There are a lot of constraints in getting the vaccines into the arms of our patients. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine will arrive in batches of 975 doses, which need to be kept at -70°C all the way from manufacturer to local delivery. The doses may then be stored at the temperatures normally found in a typical refrigerator but their shelf life is then only about 3½ days.

Things are further complicated by needing to give each patient two doses of the vaccine, some weeks apart.

Working speedily to get a batch of doses into patients'

arms within that time scale is very challenging and the only way we can avoid waste and get maximum uptake of the vaccine is to collaborate with other local GP practices.

Local co-operation

In the Newton Abbot area, there are seven GP practices which have always worked well together. All seven have now agreed and organised a centralised programme to create a local Covid vaccination centre in a venue which will be local to all, with good access, parking, and links to public transport.

Dates and times

The start date for our vaccination service is very dependent on delivery of the vaccine and at the time of writing that is still unknown. However, we will be ready to start vaccinating as soon as our vaccines arrive.

Completely new

The Covid vaccination programme is like nothing we have previously experienced. To put this into context, each year at Bovey Tracey and Chudleigh, our flu programme delivers just over 2000 jabs to our patients (this year the number has already risen to closer to 3500 as a result of the age limit being lowered to 50) and flu vaccination requires only one jab, not two. Our current patient

Everyone is in the vaccine queue

Most of our patients do understand that the question of who gets a vaccine jab and when they get it is decided by the Government's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and **NOT** by GPs. That's why there's a very detailed timetable for rolling out the vaccines, to ensure that the most vulnerable are first in the queue, followed by other groups.

Prepared to wait

Most of our patients are content to wait until it's their turn to be vaccinated, though they

still hope they don't have to wait too long.

Seeking priority

However, a few patients have approached their GP asking for priority for vaccination. **Please don't do that**, because the detailed order of vaccination is decided by the JCVI and is completely outside the control of our GPs.

Every vaccine jab which is administered has to be reported and recorded and it is not possible for anyone to deviate from the rules laid down by the JCVI.

population is some 14500 and many will eventually be eligible for the two Covid vaccinations.

The nature of the vaccine and extent of the Covid vaccination programme will mean that it will take many months to complete the national programme.

A brighter horizon

Much of this Newsletter was written before the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's approval of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine which was announced on 30th December.

It's very good news that two vaccines are now going to be available.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine should be much easier to distribute because it may be stored for up to some six months in a standard refrigerator operating at around 5°C.

Data is available for you to look at

The Government's regulatory bodies have published an enormous amount of vaccine data, available for anyone to download and read in depth.

The levels of transparency about the approvals process is intended to confirm to everyone that the approved vaccines are safe and effective and will provide an eventual route out of the pandemic resulting in more normal lives for all of us.

The approvals process

If you're interested in reading in detail about the approvals process, it's easy to make a start by looking at the MHRA's website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/medicines-and-healthcare-products-regulatory-agency>

Lots to do, but we'll cope!

Inevitably, along with the ongoing impact of staff self-isolation, management of Covid in the community and the additional workload, there might be occasional effects on our usual day-to-day services, both

Links for further Covid information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-what-to-expect-after-vaccination>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/944430/PHE_11843_Covid-19_guide_for_adults_leaflet.pdf

Link to Riverside/Tower house website

<https://towerhousesurgery.co.uk>

clinical and administrative. We ask that you bear with us over the coming weeks and months.

We will let you know

We will be contacting patients as soon as we are able to offer the vaccine.

Please don't phone about vaccination

Please do not contact the Practice to request a vaccination or to ask when you will become eligible.

If you want to check what's happening with the Covid vaccination programme, please keep up to date with news on radio, TV and the web, and have a look at the websites listed at the top of this page.

Short notice

We will contact you to book your vaccination just as soon

as we can. Remember that your appointment could be at very short notice because we ourselves will receive very short notice that a batch of vaccine is on the way to us.

We are looking forward to delivering the vaccination programme locally, and we hope, as everyone does, that this will help to get some sense of normality back into our lives.

We will keep you up to date with further progress.

Our best wishes to you all

All of our Practice team — doctors, nurses and admin — hope that everyone had some enjoyment over the Christmas and New Year period in spite of all the restrictions.

We would like to wish you all the best for 2021 and we look forward to better times.

Government priority list for Covid vaccinations

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. All those aged 80 and over, as well as frontline health and social care workers
3. All those aged 75 and over
4. All those aged 70 and over, as well as clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. All those aged 65 and over
6. All individuals aged 16-64 with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. All those aged 60 and over
8. All those aged 55 and over
9. All those aged 50 and over