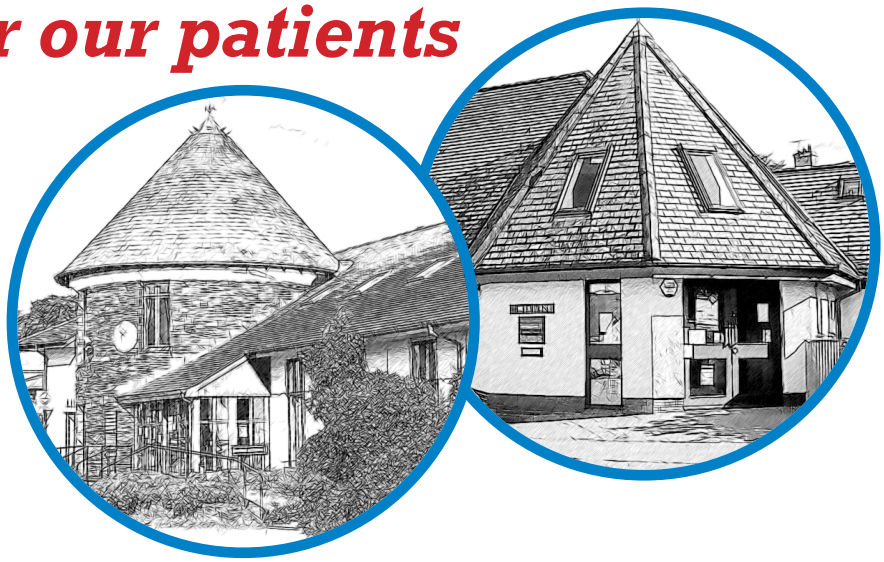
# Newsletter for our patients

## May 2021

**Riverside Surgery**
**Bovey Tracey**
**01626 832666**

**Tower House Surgery**
**Chudleigh**
**01626 852379**



## Home blood pressure (BP) monitoring

We are very keen that more of our patients who need to have their blood pressure regularly monitored set themselves up to do their own monitoring at home.

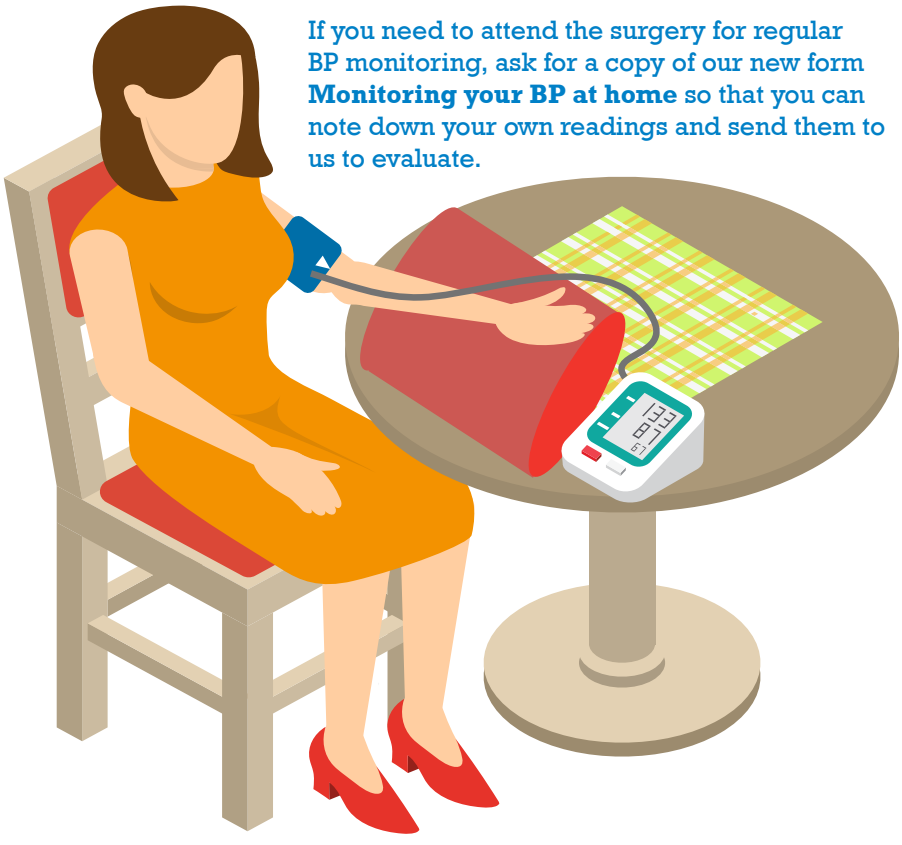
Home BP monitoring provides reliable indication of a patient's average blood pressure readings. This enables the health of patients with long-term conditions to be looked after more effectively and patients on medication to be prescribed optimal doses.

We've tried to make home BP monitoring easy and have prepared a combined leaflet and report form for patients to use.

You can fill in the form and return it to your Surgery so that we can have a look at your readings.

### Your readings

Blood pressure readings need to be interpreted in the light of your age and your state of health, especially if you have ongoing health problems. We will look at your readings to see if they are 'normal' for you. What is 'normal' for someone else might not be 'normal' for you so we will take many factors into account when assessing your readings



**If you need to attend the surgery for regular BP monitoring, ask for a copy of our new form Monitoring your BP at home so that you can note down your own readings and send them to us to evaluate.**

### Machines to monitor your BP

There are many devices on the market, with a wide range of prices, and it may be difficult to know which to purchase. The best way of buying one is probably to visit a local pharmacy and see what they have in stock or available, or recommend.

The machines we suggest our patients should use consist of a unit with an air pump and a digital display powered by internal batteries. The air pump is connected by a flexible rubber tube to an inflatable arm cuff.

There are other monitoring devices which have a wrist cuff or a finger cuff, but these devices are not considered suitable for reliable clinical monitoring. The same applies to digital wrist watches or fitness monitors.

## Vaccines

If you have queries about any of the Covid vaccines, please look on https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus for all the latest information, including any safety concerns. We too have to rely on the same .gov information

sources that you yourself can access on-line very quickly.

There have been some concerns about the Astra Zeneca vaccine and, if you'd like to know more, details are available from **https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mhra-issues-new-advice-concluding-a-possible-link-between-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca-and-extremely-rare-unlikely-to-occur-blood-clots**

Please, if you're offered a Covid vaccine first dose or second dose, do take up the offer. The vaccine will not only protect you but it will also protect those around you, including those people whom you love and who are so close and important to you.

If you know someone who is reluctant to have a vaccine, possibly having picked up misformation on the web or on social media, please do your best to show them everything they need in order to be persuaded that it really is in their interests to take up all offers of vaccination.

## Social Prescribing

Our social prescribing team continues to be kept busy during Covid-19. We have been assisting at the Newton Abbot vaccination hub since January which has given us some much needed patient interaction as we've been relying solely on telephone contact for the past year.

However, there is some light at the end of the tunnel as restrictions continue to be lifted and this has meant that in some circumstances we've been able to offer face-to-face visits in outside spaces.

The team is currently part of a High Intensity User project which has been commissioned by our local Clinical Commissioning Group to look at social prescribers and voluntary sector organisations working with patients who are frequent attenders at A&E.

We hope that by talking to patients about 'what matters to them', and offering some enhanced one-to-one support, will improve their health and wellbeing over time and give us a greater understanding of what can really benefit people in their local communities.

We are also about to undertake a trial scheme with our local libraries as we prepare to open our doors to referrals from the wider community and patients themselves. The trial will enable libraries to refer people directly to us without the need to involve their GP.

The Riverside Community Centre has approached us to ask if we would attend a 'hub' coffee morning once they are operational, and be available for consultation by members of the public.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to further spread the word about the benefits of social prescribing within our local communities.

We look forward to seeing some of you later in the year once dates are confirmed.

### Wellbeing Coach

Ashleigh, our Health and Wellbeing Coach has now successfully completed her accredited coaching qualification and has a small caseload of patients.

Some really positive feedback has already been received about the impact coaching is helping people.

We will continue to slowly build her referrals which, at the moment, can only be made via the Social Prescribing Link Workers.

We continue to share good practice with our neighbouring Social Prescribing teams and are definitely looking forward to being able to put faces to names for all of our current patients.

## Patient Participation Group: AGM

Our PPG has been meeting (virtually) during the pandemic.

It's now time for the Annual General Meeting and this will take place (virtually, of course) on Wednesday, 12th May at 6:30pm.

Particulars on how to join the on-line meeting are set out at the foot of the page:

The officers of the PPG need to be elected at the meeting. The present Chair and Vice Chair would be willing to serve for another year, but any patient can nominate themselves or others for those roles. Nominations for Secretary would be welcomed.

The next regular PPG meeting (open to any Riverside or Tower House patient) will take place on Monday, 26th July at 10:30am.

At the moment, we don't know whether that meeting will have to be on-line or whether the group will meet at Riverside or Tower House.

If you'd like to attend, please enquire nearer the date.

### Annual General Meeting of our Patient Participation Group

**Ben Bishop invites all patients to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Time: May 12, 2021 06:30 PM London**

**Join Zoom Meeting: https://zoom.us/j/93150874352?pwd=SnRVd0pNMFIscE1LTXlWcFRHTU9DUT09**

**Meeting ID: 931 5087 4352**

**Passcode: Z9P1Us**

## Vaccination centre in Newton Abbot

Free parking is now available in Cricketfield Car Park for patients attending for their vaccine jab at Sherborne House. Previously, the free parking was in Halcyon Car Park.

We need to offer a massive thank you to the Newton Abbot Rotary club for their assistance with marshalling at the vaccination hub. They have done a sterling job directing and assisting our patients and we would encourage anybody who felt inclined to support them to do so in any way they can.

## Rachael Minty, the Nurse Lead for our Covid vaccination service, writes here

The setting up of Sherbourne House vaccination centre and launching the COVID vaccination service has been a huge task involving many hours of planning and preparation in an incredibly challenging time. However, it has also given us the opportunity to work alongside our colleagues from the other practices involved in the seven local surgeries in the Newton Abbot locality that have come together to deliver the service. This in turn has led to the forging of working relationships between the practices that have proved to be robust, cooperative and above all, adaptable, and we look forward to continuing to work collaboratively.

The staff who run the clinics at Sherbourne House not only include our regular practice people, but also external staff including volunteer marshalls, administrators, social prescribers and former clinical staff who have returned to practice to help support this effort, come rain or shine, and where necessary, weekends.

We should not forget the considerable amount of time and effort that goes into the work from practice staff to make it all happen!

### A great team

Everyone's enthusiasm, dedication and above all cheerfulness has never wavered, despite the considerable challenges that have cropped up along the way, making for a very formidable team!

From a personal point of view, I have found the process very rewarding. I enjoy working alongside so many staff from our neighbouring practices and integrating with other members of the wider healthcare team whilst seeing so many patients receive their vaccination.

The way everyone has come together for this essential service never ceases to amaze me and I am proud to be part of it.

## The Dartmoor Way and *'This Girl Can'*

The project manager for the Dartmoor Way long-distance footpath, Michael Owen, has been in touch to remind people about the footpath and to publicise a new venture.

Details of the Dartmoor Way can be viewed at **https://www.dartmoorway.co.uk**

Recently, the Dartmoor Way Community Interest Company, which is responsible for managing the trail, received funding from Sport England through the 'This Girl Can' initiative. This supports projects that help get women into sports and outdoor activities, especially those who would otherwise not get out and about much.

The aim is to increase their physical fitness, outdoor skills, confidence and wellbeing.

The company put forward a proposal to Sport England, which was successful, to use section of the recently created Dartmoor Way that circles the Moor as an incentive to get women out into the countryside,.

The aim is to recruit women who perhaps are lacking confidence in outdoor skills but who would nonetheless like to be able to take themselves out into the countryside on walks.

The scheme will give the participants basic outdoor and navigation skills, an appreciation of the countryside code, where walkers can and cannot walk, what to wear, safety procedures, and so on. The scheme is not aimed at women who already have those skills.

Two female instructors, known as '*The Two Blondes Walking*', will be running these courses.

These two instructors, Lucy and Fi, have been writing their daily outdoor blog *'Two Blondes Walking'* since 2012, and their tales about fresh air adventures, camping mishaps and humorous outdoor incidents have led to a loyal following.

Lucy and Fi are experienced Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Ten Tors Challenge expedition leaders.

They also run navigation and wild camping workshops for adults on Dartmoor and further afield.



Lucy and Fi

They are Ordnance Survey Get Outside Champions and love nothing better than helping other people step out of their comfort zones and explore the great outdoors

Each course will consist of a day's training followed by a morning or afternoon refresher session. There will be a group of six women on each of the courses.

Between the training day and refresher morning or afternoon, participants will be encouraged to take themselves out on walks to reinforce their training before coming back for the follow up refresher.

Many of the Dartmoor Way's sections start or finish in towns, and for the first training days of this new venture, they have chosen Bovey Tracey as their meeting point.

The hope is that women of all ages will see the health benefits from taking part in this free scheme.

If you have any queries, send them to: **thisgirlcan@dartmoorway.co.uk**

### Training dates and times:

If you'd like to take part on the days listed below, you'll need to make a successful application via a form which you can download from **https://www.dartmoorway.co.uk/ww/thisgirlcan.php**.

You need to apply by 17th May. If you're successful, you will be informed by June 11th. Remember that you can only take part in the walks if you have received confirmation of your place.

*Sunday 11th, July*
*Saturday 17th July*
*Meet at 09:45 to start at 10:00.*
*Back no later than 16:00.*

**Refresher half-day dates and times**

*Monday 19th, Tuesday 20th July, and Friday 23rd, Saturday 24th July*
*10:00–12:30 or 13:30–16:00*

The meeting point will be the Riverside Car Park in Bovey Tracey where plentiful parking and toilets are available.

Please don't let concerns about having the right equipment or clothing put you off applying. They will send a kit list to successful participants but will also have some spare kit available for loan. They will have maps and compasses.

## Keep an eye on your sight

It's important to have your eyes regularly examined, once a year if possible, particularly as you get older. Your optometrist (optician) is highly trained not only to prescribe glasses or contact lenses if you need them, but will also be able to do some vital checking of your health by looking in detail at the back of your eyes.

Most optometrists now have access to cameras and specialist scanners which can record and save pictures of the structures in your eyes and this makes it easy to spot any changes which might be occurring year on year.

### Macular degeneration

One of the risks as we get older is that we might develop macular degeneration. The macula is a part of the retina, the light-sensitive area at the back of your eye, and is responsible for your central, detailed vision. One of the first signs of macular degeneration is distortions in sight.

There's an easy way for you to monitor your vision and detect changes. All you need is an Amsler Grid—this is nothing more than a series of lines on a chart like the one shown at the foot of this page.

Hold the Amsler grid at eye level about 30cm or 1ft from your eyes. Wear your usual reading glasses if needed, but **NOT** varifocals. Cover one eye and look at the central dot in the grid. If any of the lines appear wavy, distorted, fuzzy, or have gaps, it would be a good idea to talk to your optometrist or GP immediately. Check both eyes.

More information is available from the Macular Society (the trading name of the Macular Disease Society, a registered charity). For help and information, phone **0300 3030 111** or visit their website **https://www.macularsociety.org**

## Losing weight

Many people have reported that if they write down in a daily food diary brief details of their meals and snacks during the day, they lose weight more easily.

