



THE BUCKLEBURY PRACTICE

Chapel Row Surgery

PRACTICE POLICY – SURGERY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EVENT OF AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

The Partners and Staff of The Bucklebury Practice have agreed the following arrangements to be put in place in the event of a Flu Pandemic affecting our locality.

It is generally accepted that the effects of an Influenza Pandemic on the local population and thus the operation of our surgery, could be very serious and far reaching.

With this in mind, the Doctors and Staff have created this advice and action document, which aims to:

- Inform patients about the effects of Flu and how to deal with them
- Inform patients about the best course of action if they are affected by the flu pandemic
- Advise and inform patients and surgery staff about how the surgery will adapt to the flu pandemic and the inevitable changes to our usual operation which we will have to take to seek to contain the virus, minimise the risk of further infection and treat affected patients.
- Provide other sources of information and advice available from Department of Health and other parties, regarding the Flu Pandemic.

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GENERAL FLU INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS:

- Use the table below to help you find the right remedy for cold and flu symptoms

SYMPTOM	REMEDY
High temperature, headache, aches and pains	The three most common remedies for pain, fever and headaches are paracetamol , aspirin* or ibuprofen** . Aspirin* and ibuprofen** also have anti-inflammatory properties which is good news for sprains, aches and pains.
Cough	There are many cough medicines available, Ensure you get the right variant for your type of cough (for example dry or chesty)
Sore Throat	Sore throat relief comes in the form of lozenges , pastilles and sprays as well as traditional pain relief remedies such as paracetamol and aspirin*
Runny Nose	The most common remedies for a runny nose can be taken orally as a tablet or as a liquid.
Blocked Nose	Oral decongestants can help a blocked nose
Colds and Flu are caused by viruses, Antibiotics do NOT WORK on viruses and so will NOT cure a cold or flu.	
If you have either a stomach ulcer or bleeding stomach ulcer then you should speak to your pharmacist or GP before taking ibuprofen or aspirin .	
* Children under 16 years old and people with asthma should NOT take aspirin.	
** If you are asthmatic speak to your pharmacist before taking ibuprofen .	

Where to get advice:

- Ask your **Pharmacist**, or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk, or look at **NHS Direct Interactive** on digital satellite TV, or call **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** (England and Wales only).
- Ask your pharmacist which medicine would be best for you. For example, if you have high blood pressure then many decongestants may not be suitable as they can make some symptoms worse.
- If your cough persists for more than a fortnight, you have a lot of yellow or green phlegm, you have pain in your chest or shortness of breath, ask your pharmacist or your GP for advice or call **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** (England and Wales only).

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What is a flu pandemic?

- Pandemic Flu happens when a new, highly infectious strain of the flu virus appears. As it is so different from other strains of flu that have previously circulated, it means that very few people, if any, are immune to it.
- This causes the new flu strain to spread rapidly to affect most countries and regions around the world.
- Everyone is at risk of Pandemic Flu. Ordinary annual winter flu has killed approximately 12,000 people per year in the past and Pandemic Flu is considered to be much worse.
- One way a new pandemic virus may emerge is through the mixing of a human flu virus with an animal flu virus (usually a bird (avian) flu virus).
- Unlike ordinary flu which comes around each winter, pandemic flu is less frequent. There were only 3 pandemics in the last century - in 1918, 1957 and 1968.
- It is anticipated that the Government will inform the public via the media about developments regarding the spread of a flu pandemic.

What's the difference between an epidemic and pandemic?

- A pandemic is usually world wide and affects a high proportion of the population, whereas an epidemic usually happens in one country or region.

Can I get vaccinated against pandemic flu?

- Because the flu virus strain is completely new and unpredictable a vaccine won't have been developed to protect people against it. This means at the start of the flu pandemic no one will have protection.
- Once the flu virus is identified, a vaccine will be developed as quickly as possible and the aim will be to immunise everyone.
- The ordinary flu vaccine will not protect against pandemic flu and it is likely that Tamiflu (antiviral medication) will have very limited effects on a new strain, if at all.

Where can I get more information?

- Visit www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu or www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- Go to **NHS Direct Interactive** on digital satellite TV by pressing the interactive button on the TV remote control or
- Call **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** (England and Wales only).

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CHANGES TO OUR SURGERY OPERATION:

- In the event of a Flu Pandemic, the surgery will change the way in which we treat patients, in order to seek to contain the flu virus, seek to treat those patients affected by the flu virus and to seek to minimise the risk of further spreading the flu virus.
- **ENTERING THE SURGERY** - The Surgery's Main Entrance door and Main Waiting Room will ONLY be available for patients who are **NOT** experiencing flu symptoms, but who wish to be seen by the Practice Nurse or a Doctor
- The Surgery will adapt an alternative part of the building to treat patients affected by the flu - expected to be the West Corridor
- We will **clearly signpost** patients to the correct area of the building - **PLEASE observe the directions** as this will help us to minimise the spread of the virus to other patients and to the surgery staff, without whom we may have to close the surgery.
- **CONTACTING THE SURGERY** - If patients telephone the surgery for advice, we will aim to have our Practice Nurses available to answer queries and offer advice, to minimise the need for patients to come to the surgery.
- Wherever possible, we would encourage patients to contact us by telephone and avoid bringing the flu virus to the surgery.
- If necessary our Doctors can visit patients at home, but we would wish to keep this to a minimum wherever possible, to avoid the risk of cross infection and spreading the virus further.
- **ROUTINE CLINICS** - In the event of a flu pandemic occurring, it is likely that we will reduce and in some cases suspend our usual routine clinics.
- The typical clinics affected may be Diabetic, Hypertensive, Cardio-Vascular, Asthma clinics etc.
- Patients are advised to ask at reception to find out which specific clinics may be affected.
- The reduction and/or suspension of these clinics is necessary to minimise the risk of spreading the virus to other patients and surgery staff.
- Where a patient's condition requires regular checks, we will seek to continue these as usual.

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- **SURGERY HYGIENE** - Wherever possible, we would encourage patients to stay at home if they are affected by the flu virus.
- **Information** - Information is available regarding the symptoms of Flu and the best remedies for Flu as above.
- More information is available at:
 - www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu
 - www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
 - Go to **NHS Direct Interactive** on digital satellite TV
 - Telephone **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47**
- **Hand Sanitising Gel** - Hand Sanitising Gel dispensers will be available throughout the surgery; by the main entrance door, by, Reception and in all consultation rooms and toilets.
- Please would all patients ensure they use the Hand Sanitising Gel which will help reduce the spread of the flu virus.
- **Face Masks, Aprons and Gloves** - Face Masks, Aprons and Gloves will be worn routinely by surgery staff. This is for the protection of patients as much as protection for the surgery staff.
- **Please do not be alarmed by this precaution.** The disposable masks and aprons are changed between patients to minimise the risk of spreading the flu virus.
- **Waste Bins** - Where patients do need to come to the surgery, additional waste bins will be available in waiting rooms for tissues.
- Please dispose of tissues in the bins provided to help minimise the risk of spreading the flu virus.
- **Waiting Rooms** - The Surgery will adopt a separate waiting and treatment area for patients affected by the flu.
- A "Flu-Only" area will be created and will be clearly signposted. The aim will be to seek to contain the virus in one part of our surgery building and thus minimise the risk of spreading the virus to other patients and staff.
- We will consider the need to allocate specific medical staff to the treatment of Flu affected patients, to seek to minimise the possibility of spreading the virus.
- Therefore, it may not be possible for patient's to see a specific doctor or nurse during a flu pandemic period.
- The Appendix A to this document provides up to date detail of other factors which will be considered and enacted by the practice in the event that an intensive influenza pandemic commences.
 - **See Appendix A**

SUMMARY INFORMATION - PLEASE NOTE:

- In the event of a flu pandemic affecting our locality, the measures our surgery will initiate will have an impact on our ability to treat all patients.
- We would ask that patients who are suffering with the flu to stay at home and use the contact information above to obtain advice as to the best way to treat your condition.
- Please do contact the surgery by telephone for advice if necessary
- If you do attend the surgery, please abide by the Flu Pandemic segregation system in operation, as this will minimise the risk of spreading the virus to other patients and our staff.
- Finally, we may allocate specific staff to the treatment of flu patients ONLY, again to aim to minimise the risk of spreading the virus to other patients and the staff.
- This may mean patients will not be able to see the specific GP or Nurse that they usually see or would like to see - please bear with us!
- In addition, if our staff become affected by the flu virus, there may be a reduction in staff numbers and thus it may take more time to deal with patients at the surgery.
- If you have any queries about our Practice Policy regarding the Flu Pandemic, please talk to your GP or contact our Practice Manager, Paul Gomm at the surgery - Tel: 0118 971 3252
- The Bucklebury Practice, Chapel Row Surgery, The Avenue, Bucklebury, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 6NS
- Telephone: 0118 971 3252
- Fax: 0118 971 4161
- E-Mail: crsurgery@hotmail.com
- Web Site: www.crsurgery.co.uk

APPENDIX A

This appendix to the main Pandemic Flu document details the practice's plans with regard to the following detailed areas:

1. Prioritisation of Workload & Staff Training

- As the Influenza Pandemic develops, it is anticipated that some staff will be off work ill with the flu.
- When this situation occurs, the Partners, Nurses and senior staff who are available will meet and discuss the re-organisation of staff roles, so that our usual service can be maintained as far as is practical.
- It is the intention of the Partners to hold ad-hoc staff meetings as soon and as frequently as is required to keep staff fully informed and advise them of changes where appropriate.
- Some work routines will be suspended and priority will be given to dealing with patient enquiries via telephone, email, fax and in person. Some staff will have to adopt new roles and on-the-job training will be provided where possible.
- Details of any changes to surgery operating times will be displayed on the surgery main entrance door and on the surgery website where possible.

2. Communication Arrangements

- The centrally provided Pandemic Flu patient leaflets will be maintained and provided via the practice wherever possible.
- The practice will endeavour to keep patients informed of developments or changes to our usual service via information leaflets and displayed posters in and around the surgery premises.
- The Berkshire West Primary Care Trust (PCT) has advised that an internet based reporting system will be introduced during July 2009, into which daily reporting is required. The practice will endeavour to ensure that we report the situation at our practice to this system wherever and whenever possible.

3. Infection Control Arrangements

- There will be changes made to the usual operation of the surgery and these are detailed fully on pages 4 and 5 in the above section entitled "Changes to Our Surgery Operation".
- These changes to our usual surgery operation will include the wearing by staff of equipment designed to protect them and minimise the risk of spreading the disease - called Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- The surgery will adopt an isolation area at the end of our west corridor which will include a room for waiting patients and a treatment room.
- Hand sanitising gel is available throughout the building and our cleaning staff have been fully briefed about the necessity for more careful and thorough cleaning during this infectious period.

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4. Cluster Arrangements

- Our practice staff have initiated arrangements with our nearest local practices to work together during the pandemic flu period.
- In the event that any practice is unable to operate due to staff shortages for example, arrangements have been discussed to assist other practices where possible.
- It is our intention to initiate close communication links with our nearest practices to keep each practice informed of developments, if and when this situation arises.
- It may be necessary to close our practice if our staffing levels are so low we are unable to provide a service. In the event of this occurring, the staff available will discuss closing the practice and moving the remaining staff to an alternative practice until the situation improves.
- If this were to happen, we would place notices on the main entrance door and the surgery website where possible, to advise patients of the action taken.
- It is not considered likely that alternative staff from other areas will be available as it is anticipated that this situation will be occurring nationwide.
- As above, some work routines will be suspended and priority will be given to dealing with patient enquiries via telephone, email, fax and in person. Some staff will have to adopt new roles and on-the-job training will be provided where possible.

5. Home Visiting Arrangements

- The Doctors and Nursing staff will meet daily during the pandemic flu period and discuss and co-ordinate any visits to patients as requested.
- Initially staff will telephone patients who have requested a home visit to see if the their enquiry can be dealt with via a telephone conversation and if not arrangements will be made with the patient for a home visit.
- In the event that there are insufficient staff to action all home visit requests, the requests will be prioritised and patients advised accordingly. Where possible we will seek the assistance of staff at our nearest neighbour practices if required.

6. Repeat Prescription Requests

- Every effort will be made to ensure that patients who require repeat medication will be provided with their medication from our dispensary or a prescription form to allow the patient or their representative to collect repeat medication from an alternative provider. The practice may be unable to provide medication, due to staff shortages or a failure of delivery of medication supplies, but we will seek to ensure that continuity of supply is maintained through alternative sources where possible.

7. Community Care Arrangements

- During a pandemic flu period, the practice senior staff, doctors and nurses will maintain regular contact with the District Nursing Team, the Midwife team and the Health Visitor team to ensure that these services are maintained wherever possible.
- The practice staff will also be mindful and considerate of patient's ethnic and cultural requirements during a pandemic flu period.

8. Gaps in Service

- Where shortfalls in the available service are identified at any stage, it is the practice staff's intention to:
 - Firstly meet as a team and discuss the potential shortfall and how we can best overcome this
 - Secondly to discuss any shortfalls with our colleagues in our nearest neighbouring practices where appropriate
 - Thirdly, to discuss the situation with the Berkshire West Primary Care Trust (PCT) to see if there is any available resources that the PCT can provide to assist us.

9. Recovery Phase in Practice

- As the pandemic flu period begins to reduce and staff recover and return to work, the practice doctors, nurses and senior staff will continue to meet to discuss and organise the resumption of usual workload activity at the practice.
- In addition, any arrangements made with appropriate cluster practices will be reviewed and support provided for neighbouring practices as appropriate will be reduced or maintained as required.
- The Practice staff will endeavour to maintain appropriate communication links with our patients to advise them of developments and any subsequent changes to working practices.

END OF PRACTICE POLICY DOCUMENT

**** IMPORTANT ** PLEASE ALSO SEE
SEPARATE INTERNAL DOCUMENT -
"Practice Policy - Flu Pandemic - STAFF ACTION"**

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