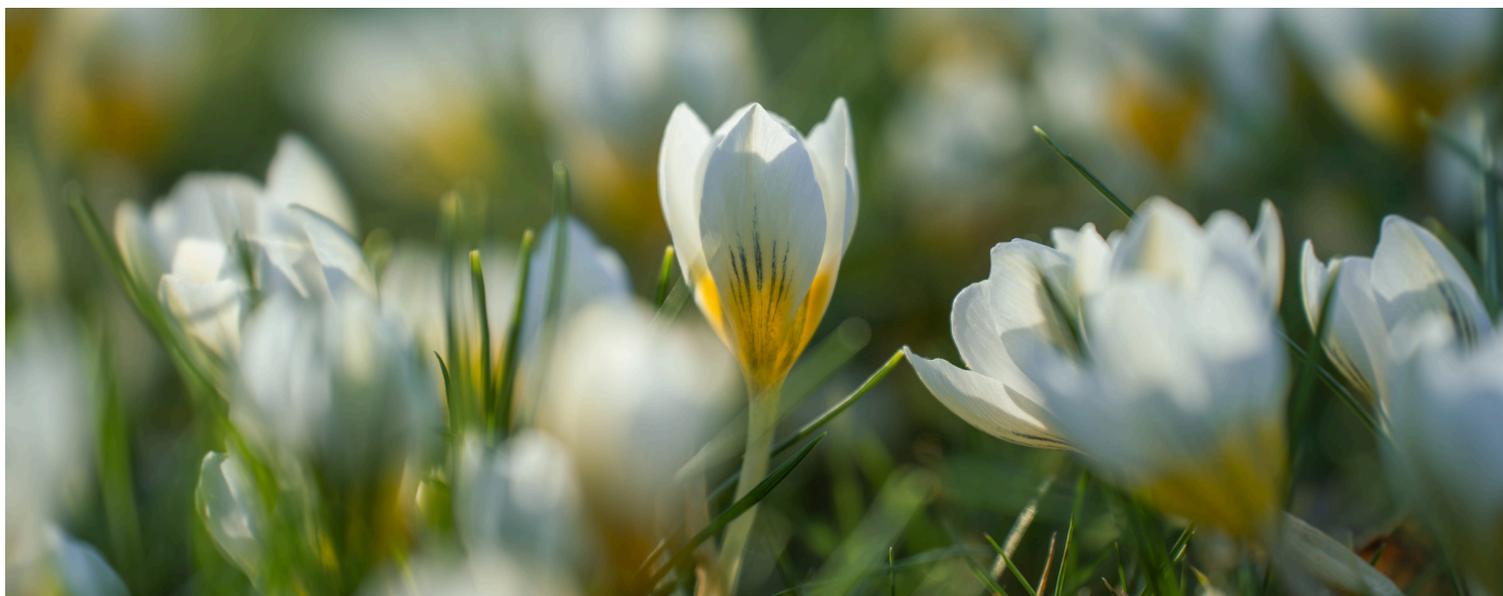


# Monthly Patient Newsletter



## Spring Covid Booster and RSV Vaccination Clinics

We are now in the process of inviting patient who are 75 years and over to their spring Covid Booster. Those who are eligible will also be invited to have their RSV vaccine at the same time.

It does not matter which Covid vaccine you have had previously. Please be reassured you will be contacted when it is your turn for the vaccines.

This year, some patients will be able to book a clinic appointment at a time and date that suits them using the online booking link. This link will be sent to all eligible patients who have consented to receive text messages from the practice. Please be reassured that this is not spam or a scam.

Patients who have not consented to receive text messages will receive a letter instead. Please bring this letter with you to the clinic.

### This Issue includes:

**Meningitis outbreak in Canterbury and East Kent**

**Access Contraception Through Your Local Pharmacy**

**Bowel Cancer Awareness**

**Support for Parents of Children with Complex Medical Needs**

**Message from Avon and Somerset Police: Safe Account Fraud**

## Vaccination Clinic Days and Times

### **The North Somerset**

All clinic will be held at Langford Surgery, Pudding Pie Lane, Langford, BS40 5EL

#### Sunday 19th April

- o 8AM - 9:45AM: Covid vaccines only
- o 10:30AM - 12:15PM: Covid vaccines only
- o 1PM- 2:45PM: Covid and RSV vaccines
- o 3:30PM -3:45PM: Covid and RSV vaccines

#### Sunday 10th May

- o 8AM - 9:45AM: Covid vaccines only
- o 10:30AM - 12:15PM: Covid and RSV vaccines

Please note that at each clinic, there will be scheduled breaks for vaccine preparation and decontamination. No vaccinations will be administered during these times.

### **Bristol and South Gloucestershire**

Clinic dates will be held on:

#### Saturday 18th April

- o Coniston Medical Practice:
  - 8AM - 8:30AM: Covid vaccines only
  - 8am - 8:45am: Covid and RSV vaccines
- o Sea Mills Surgery:
  - 10AM- 10:45AM: Covid vaccines only
  - 10:45 - 11:15AM: Covid and RSV vaccines
- o Southmead Family Practice:
  - 12:30PM - 1:15PM: Covid vaccines only
  - 1:15PM - 1:30PM: Covid and RSV vaccines
- o Monks Park Patients at Orchard School:
  - 3PM - 3:15PM: Covid and RSV Vaccines

#### Saturday 9th May

- o Coniston Medical Practice:
  - 8AM - 8:45AM: Covid and RSV Vaccines
- o Sea Mills Surgery:
  - 9:30AM-10:15AM: Covid and RSV Vaccines
- o Southmead Family Practice:
  - 11:30AM- 12:15PM: Covid and RSV Vaccines
- o Monks Park Patients at Orchard School:
  - 1PM - 1:15PM: Covid and RSV Vaccines

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **1. I cannot make the time given to me in my invitation letter.**

We strongly encourage patients to make every effort to attend for these important vaccinations on the date and time given to you or the time/date you've booked. Appointments are spread across the day to avoid overcrowding and queues to keep people safe. If you are unable to attend the appointment date and time, an alternative date has been given to you in your letter. You do not need to contact the surgery to say you are coming at another day/time.

### **2. Do I need to bring my invitation letter to the vaccination clinic?**

Yes, it is *essential* that you bring your letter as it includes your personal details which are needed to record your vaccination status. Should you forget to bring your letter, you will be asked for these details so we can add the vaccination to your health record.

If you have been invited via text message, please just turn up on the slot time you have booked. If you are having problems booking onto a clinic time using the link, please contact the practice after 11am and we can do this for you.

### **3. I am not over 75 or at risk, can I have the Spring booster?**

No, unless you have received an invitation letter or text message from us you cannot have a vaccination at these clinics.

### **4. I don't want the vaccines.**

Not a problem, please let us know by ringing the surgery, and we can mark your record as 'declined'.

### **5. I don't want the vaccinations; I have told my surgery, but I have still received a letter.**

If you have previously told the surgery that you don't want the Covid or Flu vaccination, but you have received a letter, we apologise and understand that this could be frustrating for you. Your decision to refuse the vaccinations is only valid per vaccine. You may have changed your mind since we last got in touch and we want to ensure every eligible patient has access to the choice of having a vaccine. This means you will need to inform the surgery so we can mark your record as declined.

### **6. What is RSV?**

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of coughs and colds. It usually gets better by itself, but it can be serious for some babies and older adults as it can cause pneumonia and flare-ups of existing lung disease and other long-term conditions.

For more information regarding our Spring Covid Vaccination and RSV clinic, go to our website: [Vaccination Service](#)

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## Meningitis outbreak in Canterbury and East Kent

We understand that recent news about meningitis cases in Kent may be causing some concern. As these cases are not within our local area, there is currently no immediate risk to our community.

Should there be any developments that directly affect our area, we will provide further updates and guidance.

In the meantime, for the latest information on meningitis—including symptoms, risks, and how to protect yourself—please visit [UK Health Security Agency - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

### **How can I or my child be vaccinated?**

- Looking in your child's Red Book (Personal Child Health Record)
- Check your GP record via the NHS App
- Contacting your surgery, who can confirm your or your child's vaccination history

If you're unsure or think any vaccines may have been missed, your surgery can advise and arrange catch-up vaccinations if needed.

### **Who is eligible for free NHS Meningitis vaccinations?**

Several vaccines offered free of charge by the NHS can help protect against certain causes of meningitis and septicaemia:

- MenB vaccine: For babies given at 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and 1 year
- 6-in-1 vaccine: For babies given at 8, 12 and 16 weeks
- Pneumococcal vaccine: Two doses for babies given at 16 weeks and 1 year; single dose for adults aged 65+
- Hib/MenC vaccine: For babies given at 1 year (if born on or before 30 June 2024)
- MMR vaccine: For babies given at 1 year, with a second dose at 18 months
- MenACWY vaccine: For teenagers aged 13 to 14



The Men B vaccine does not protect against all MenB bacterium types. This is why we always raise awareness of signs and symptoms alongside the available vaccines.

### **Am I protected from MenB by childhood vaccines (MenACWY)?**

The MenB vaccine was added to the NHS immunisation schedule for infants in 2015, providing protection for babies and young children in the UK. It is separate from the MenACWY.

If you are a teenager or young adult born before 1 May 2015, you will not have received the MenB vaccine as part of the NHS schedule.

What should I do if I've missed my meningitis vaccine?

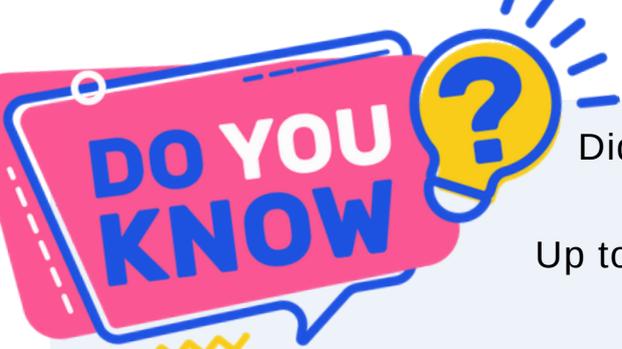
To get the most benefit, it is important for you or your child to have your vaccines when they are offered or as close to that time as possible. Young children who have missed one or more dose of the MenB vaccine can have this free of charge before their second birthday and missed MMR or MMRV vaccine doses can be given at any age.

Teenagers can arrange to have vaccines they have missed. This is especially important before starting university or college. If that's not possible, they should make arrangements with their new GP as soon as they can after term begins. All GP practices should be able to offer free missed MenACWY to students who are under 25 years as well as MMR vaccines to eligible students. International students in the same age group are also eligible for these routine vaccines.

If you were born before 1 May 2015, there is no NHS catch up programme for the MenB vaccine.

For more information go to [What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself – UK Health Security Agency](#)

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Did you know you can order your prescription in advance?

Up to **10 days** for **controlled drugs** and **14 days** for **repeat prescriptions**.

Working days are **Monday to Friday** only. Please note, **Bank Holidays** are **non-working days** and should be considered when ordering your medication.

If you have any concerns regarding a patients prescription, please contact our Prescriptions Team at - [bnssg.mvmg.brs.prescriptions@nhs.net](mailto:bnssg.mvmg.brs.prescriptions@nhs.net)

## Accessing Contraception Through Your Local Pharmacy



Many community pharmacies now give you the option of being able to have a confidential consultation with a community pharmacist to request a supply of the oral contraceptive pill, rather than going to your GP or sexual health clinic. You do not need a prescription.

To access this service, you can self-refer to a participating pharmacy or we can refer you.

To be eligible, you must be between 16 and 49 years of age if you are requesting the Combined Oral Contraceptive (COC) and between 16 and 54 years of age if you are requesting the progestogen Only Pill (POP).

The pharmacist will conduct a confidential consultation with you and, as part of that, will reach a shared decision with you regarding issuing you with a supply of oral contraception, ensuring it is clinically appropriate for you. They will also offer to discuss alternative contraceptive methods and share information about how to change to a new method should you wish to.

This is an NHS service and so the supply of oral contraception from the community pharmacy will be free-of-charge.

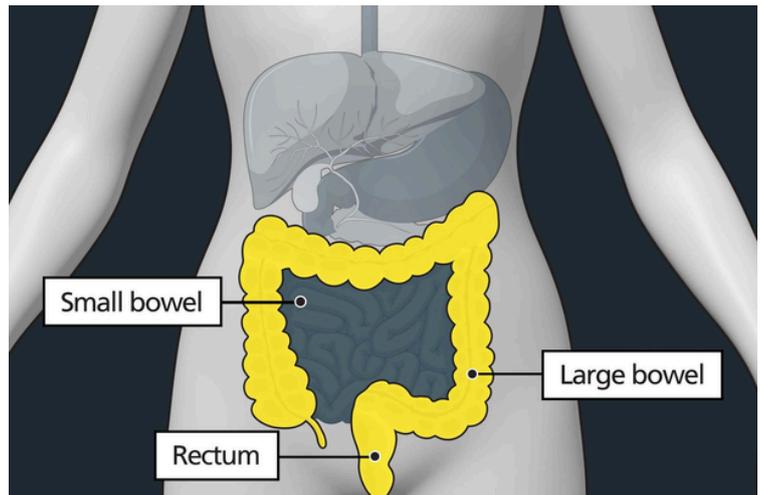
If the pharmacist gives you the contraceptive pill, they will only share this information with your GP if you give permission for them to do so.

For more information go to: [Find a pharmacy that offers the contraceptive pill without a prescription - NH](#)

Contraception advice for under 16s: [Where to get the combined pill - NHS](#)

## April - Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

April is bowel cancer awareness month – but what is bowel cancer and what are the signs and symptoms?



- Bowel cancer is cancer that's found anywhere in the large bowel, which includes the colon and rectum.
- The large bowel is part of your digestive system. It helps absorb water from your food and removes food waste from your body.
- How serious bowel cancer is depends on how big the cancer is, if the cancer has spread, and your general health.
- Bowel cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the UK.
- Bowel cancer screening can pick up bowel cancer early, which may mean it's easier to treat

### **Symptoms of bowel cancer may include:**

- changes in your poo, such as having softer poo, diarrhoea or constipation that is not usual for you
- needing to poo more or less often than usual for you
- blood in your poo, which may look red or black
- bleeding from your bottom
- often feeling like you need to poo, even if you've just been to the toilet
- tummy pain
- a lump in your tummy
- bloating
- losing weight without trying
- feeling very tired or short of breath – these are signs of anaemia, which can be caused by bowel cancer

### **When to see a GP?**

If you have had any symptoms of bowel cancer for 3 weeks or more, go and see your GP. Try not to be embarrassed. The doctor or nurse will be used to talking about these symptoms.

### **Who is more likely to get bowel cancer?**

It's not always known what causes bowel cancer, but it can be caused by genetic changes, lifestyle, and environmental factors. Having certain health conditions can also make you more likely to get bowel cancer.

You may be more likely to get bowel cancer if:

- you're over 50
- you smoke
- you're overweight
- a close relative has had bowel cancer
- you have [inflammatory bowel disease](#), which includes [Crohn's disease](#) and [ulcerative colitis](#)
- you have small growths in your bowel called [bowel polyps](#)
- you have Lynch Syndrome or familial adenomatous polyposis

### How to lower your risk of bowel cancer

You cannot always prevent bowel cancer, but there are things you can do to lower your chance of getting it.

- eat a healthy diet including at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- stay active and exercise regularly
- lose weight if you're overweight
- quit smoking
- drink less alcohol
- eat less red and processed meat

### Main tests for bowel cancer

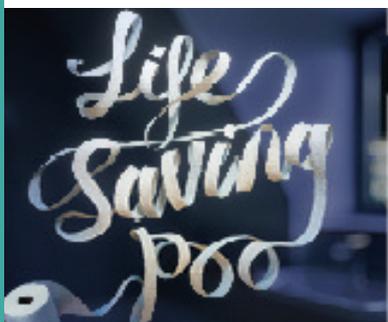
If a GP refers you to a specialist because they think you could have bowel cancer, you'll have tests to check for cancer. The main test for bowel cancer is a [colonoscopy](#). This is where a thin, flexible, tube with a camera is used to look inside your bowel.

It may be uncomfortable, but it should not be painful. You'll be offered a sedative and painkillers to help make you feel more comfortable. During the colonoscopy, a small sample of the lining of your bowel may be taken for testing (called a [biopsy](#))

For more information on tests, treatment, help and support go to [Bowel cancer - NHS](#).

Other incredibly useful resources for support and information:

- [Bowel cancer awareness month: Common questions answered - Cancer Research UK - Cancer News](#) '
- [Bowel screening - Learning Disability Service](#)
- [Bowel Cancer Awareness Month - Guts UK - Guts UK](#) - Includes a fun 'pootorial'



**The bowel cancer screening kit  
can save your life**

**Put it by the loo. Don't put it off.**

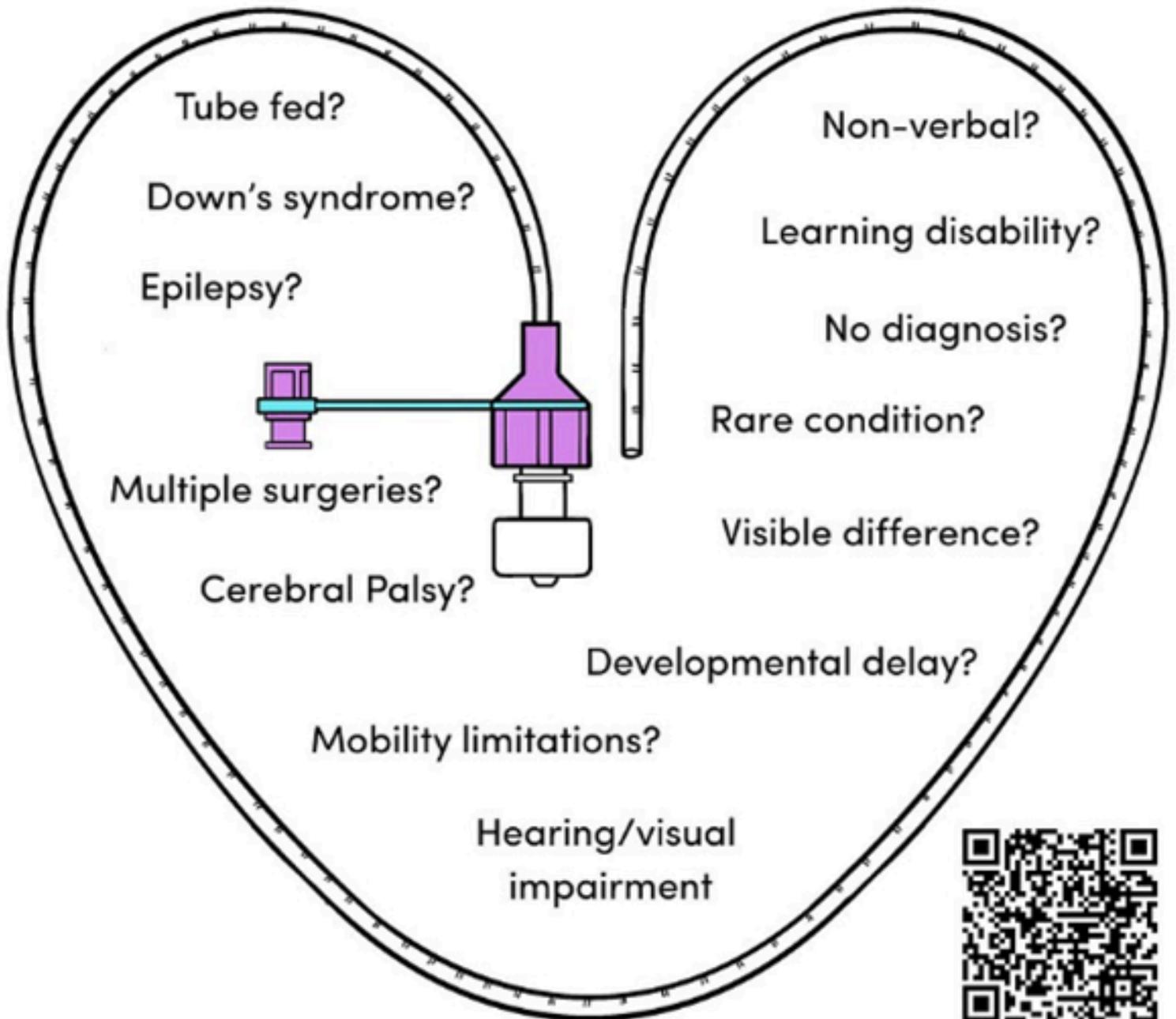
**NHS**

Screening  
saves  
lives

Help us  
help you

# Navigation & Nurture

“Having a child with additional needs has been the hardest thing I've ever had to do and this group is my safe space.”



Come to a monthly group offering practical and emotional support for parents of young medically complex and disabled children.

Info and booking at <http://www.bit.ly/navandnurch>



## Monthly Message from Avon and Somerset Police: Safe Account Fraud

'Safe account' frauds occur when a criminal convinces you to move your money to a new bank account. This typically starts with a call out of the blue, where they pretend to be a trustworthy organisation like your bank or the police. They will advise you that there is a problem or suspicious activity on your account and instruct you to move it to a 'safe account'.

Fraudsters may have access to more personal information than you might think. They may be able to identify which bank you are with and even have access to your sort code and account number. You may also hear sounds of a call centre in the background to further convince you that this is a legitimate call.

Courier fraud is a related fraud type where the person on the phone asks you to withdraw your funds and then collect them.

### **Number Spoofing**

Fraudsters can disguise their number to appear as if they are calling from anywhere in the world. Even if the number that displays on your phone matches that of the genuine organisation, it does not mean it is and this is not a verification check.

Complete all verification checks in your own time on a number that you know is genuine, not one that has been provided to you.

- Challenge of a call out of the blue claiming to be from your bank or from a position of authority, like the police.
- A genuine official from your bank will NEVER call you to ask you to verify your bank details over the phone.
- The police, your bank and any other reputable organisation would never set up a 'safe account' and ask you to transfer money. They will never put you under time pressure to move your money. They will never ask you to withdraw funds.



# See your GP health record on the NHS App



-  you can see all new entries
-  includes consultation notes, medicines and immunisations
-  need help? Get support in the app or visit [nhs.uk/helpmeapp](https://nhs.uk/helpmeapp)



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## Newsletter Feedback

We're always looking for ways to improve how we communicate with our patients — and that includes our newsletter. Whether you found it helpful, had suggestions for new topics, or felt something was missing, or have something you would like to share, we'd love to hear from you.

Our newsletter is created with you in mind, aiming to keep you informed about health advice, local services, new treatments, and how to get the most from your NHS care. But we can only make it better with your input! Share your thoughts:

[Click here for your feedback](#)