



Dear all,

We hope you are able to enjoy the summer, despite restrictions and an influx of tourists, who are hopefully helping to compensate for the loss of earnings that a lot of businesses have had earlier this year. At least we can say that our beautiful area is appreciated by lots of people...

Holiday makers

Please continue to encourage holidaymakers to contact 111 or their own GP surgery for their medical needs. Only if this fails and an assessment is still needed, they may be directed to us. Please reinforce this message if you, as a 'local', are asked for medical help.

Stay Alert to Stay Safe

As evident from news from other areas and other countries, coronavirus is still circulating and can rear its head again quickly and unexpectedly, so it remains vitally important to stay alert to stay safe. Most restrictions have been lifted apart from large indoor gatherings, but this may change at short notice. All guidance is on the government website, and the key messages are:

- Self-isolate for 10 days when you have symptoms of a persistent cough, fever or loss of smell or taste and get tested as soon as possible. Family members have to self-isolate as well, for 14 days from the start of symptoms, if your test is positive.
- Keep your distance from people outside of your support bubble, preferably more than 2m and avoid being face-to-face with them.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or a sanitiser when you have had contact with materials or surfaces outside your home. Avoid touching your face.
- Keep indoor spaces well ventilated and avoid crowded places. Work from home if you can.
- Consider how you travel, try to avoid busy times on public transport.
- Wear a face covering in indoor public spaces, which includes our surgery. Face coverings are mainly intended to protect others from transmitting the coronavirus from the nose and mouth of the wearer. You could be unaware that you have it because you haven't developed obvious symptoms (yet). Full guidance can be found here (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>) There is no requirement to ask a doctor for an exemption letter or card, but you could make your own if you fall into one of the categories set out in the guidance.

Ongoing restricted Access to the Surgery

We continue to control the numbers of people in the surgery in order to allow for the appropriate distancing and we encourage everyone to use our website www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk to explore ways to access support, including 111, E-consult and LIVI, without the need to contact the surgery directly. If you need to phone the surgery, you will usually be given a telephone appointment, in which a doctor or nurse can discuss your health needs. To help our clinical staff, a receptionist will ask you or the reason for your call and if appropriate will send you a link to upload a photo. This could be for a lump, rash or other skin lesion, but also for a sore throat. Only if a phone call or video call hasn't resolved the issue, will you

be invited to the surgery. You can only attend the surgery if you have a pre-booked appointment, and please do not arrive more than 5 minutes early, as it is important to manage the number of patients sat within the surgery waiting rooms. When you arrive at the surgery you will be asked again to ensure that you do not have a new persistent cough, sore throat or loss of taste or smell, as well as having your temperature taken and being asked to sanitise your hands before coming into the surgery building.

Hot Hub

We continue to collaborate with other local surgeries and will be inviting patients with possible COVID-19 symptoms who cannot be managed over the telephone to visit the Hot Hub situated in Liskeard Hospital. Luckily COVID-19 numbers are still low locally, however, we do envisage increases in common cold and flu-like symptoms when schools restart and people start to spend more time indoors during Autumn and Winter. These can be difficult to distinguish from low level COVID-19 symptoms, so it is likely that we will then need to use the Hot Hub for more assessments as we head into the winter months.

Secondary care and community services

The hospitals and community services are slowly re-opening but are dealing with a large backlog. Physio services have started seeing patients, but they always do an initial telephone consultation to assess needs. Our receptionist can book you directly with one of the physios attached to the surgery, you don't need to speak to a doctor first. Lots of new technologies are being tested by hospital departments, some of which could be of benefit because they will limit the amount of travel and parking fees! Inevitably some will not work so well, so please don't hesitate to contact the hospital if you think your condition should not wait any longer. Robust infection control measures are in place everywhere, so the fear of COVID-19 exposure should not stop anyone seeking urgent care for a severe condition.

LIVI (GP video consultations)- now available All Day: 7am-10pm Monday-Friday and 8am-4pm Saturday & Sunday

As an additional resource, along with other local practices, we offer the services of LIVI. The GP- video appointments can be scheduled up to 7 days in advance or you can simply drop-in for the earliest appointment. LIVI GPs are all GMC-registered NHS-GPs, who (with your consent) are able to access your medical records and give a considered, in-depth diagnosis based on your medical history. Free of charge, nearly 900 of our patients have already signed up for LIVI and the feedback has been very positive. You can download the LIVI app via the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android), or [click here https://bit.ly/32S8HCz](https://bit.ly/32S8HCz) to visit their website.

Flu-clinics

Planning is well underway for socially distanced flu-clinics. The coronavirus pandemic (worldwide epidemic) is showing all of us our vulnerability to infectious diseases and how fortunate we are that we have vaccinations available for children and adults for many conditions. The annual flu vaccination greatly reduces the risk of an influenza ('flu') pandemic and helps save many lives every year. This year we will be vaccinating patients aged 65 years and over from week commencing 21st September, with vulnerable patients aged under 65 years vaccinated from week commencing 5th October. The government has announced they are aiming to include everyone from 50-65 years, but this will be later in the year (November/December) and subject to vaccine availability.

For those patients who regularly attend to have their flu vaccination, we will not be holding a large-scale walk through clinic at Looe surgery. Instead, we will be holding two large drive-thru clinics being held at Looe Community Academy, with the first drive-thru clinic taking place on Saturday 26th September. Smaller walk-thru clinics will take place across our surgeries, as well as the marquee in Looe patient car park and Pelynt village hall. We'd like to thank all patients and volunteers in advance for their support at this time, especially as we trial this new approach in anticipation of a COVID-19 vaccination, which is likely to be given using the same approach.

Full details of our flu clinics will be available on our website from Friday 28th August, and you can call daily (after 10:30am) to book an appointment from Tuesday 1st September 2020.

We hope that even people who have historically declined a flu-jab can be persuaded to protect themselves and others, especially as we try to minimise the number of patients who get flu this year, especially with the added complications of the presenting symptoms being similar to COVID-19.

THANK YOU

We would like to give special thanks to ACHE who kindly funded new equipment for the surgery, to help us to monitor patients during these COVID-19 times. These include new 24 hour blood pressure and ECG machines, two medical chain cool boxes to support our remote flu clinics, and a new spirometry machine ready for when we can start to recall patients requiring spirometry testing.

For this generous donation, together with Sara Perry for her ongoing help with home deliveries out at Pelynt, and everyone who has supported the surgery with masks, scrubs, cards and kindness, we thank you all for your continued support, understanding and appreciation. Stay Alert & Stay Safe - let's get protected this winter, and we look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming flu clinics as soon as possible.

Dr's Roy, Kodde, Mogford and Buchanan
Partners
Old Bridge Surgery