

PATIENT NEWSLETTER



BY CHIPAMPE CHISHIMBA

SMEAR TESTING: BENEFITS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT IS SMEAR TESTING?

A smear test, also known as cervical screening, is a simple procedure that checks for abnormal cells in the cervix, which can develop into cervical cancer if left untreated. This test is a vital part of women's health care and can save lives by detecting potential issues early.

BENEFITS OF SMEAR TESTING

Early Detection: Identifying abnormal cells early can prevent cervical cancer from developing.

Peace of Mind: Regular screening provides reassurance that your cervical health is being monitored.

Simple and Quick: The test usually takes just a few minutes and can be done at your GP surgery.

WHO SHOULD BOOK A SMEAR TEST?

Women aged 25 to 64 in the UK are invited for screening every 3 years (ages 25-49) or every 5 years (ages 50-64)

If you're within this age range and haven't had a smear test recently, or if you've received an invitation, contact your GP to book an appointment.

Remember, even if you're vaccinated against HPV, regular screening is still essential.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Information on Smear Testing

RSV Vaccine: Helpful Information

Back to School Immunisations!

Sickle Cell What, Who, How & Why?

Health & Wellbeing Corner

& More!



RSV VACCINE - HELPFUL INFORMATION

WHAT IS RSV?

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common virus that affects the lungs and respiratory tract. While RSV typically causes mild, cold-like symptoms, it can be more severe in infants, older adults, and those with underlying health conditions.

The vaccine is available for those at higher risk of severe illness, such as the elderly or those with compromised immune systems. If you or your child fall into a high-risk category, speak to your GP about whether the RSV vaccine is right for you.

A new RSV vaccine is now available, offering protection against severe RSV-related illness. This vaccine is particularly important for:

Infants and young children: Especially those born prematurely or with congenital heart or lung conditions.

Older adults: Particularly those over 60 or with chronic health conditions.

Pregnant women: To protect newborns through passive immunity.



BACK TO SCHOOL IMMS!

As the school year begins, it's crucial to ensure your child's immunisations are up to date. Vaccinations protect against serious diseases like measles, mumps, rubella, and whooping cough, keeping your child and the wider community safe.

HOW TO CHECK AND BOOK

If you're unsure if your child's vaccinations are up to date, check their Red Book or contact your GP. If any vaccinations have been missed, they can still be caught up. It's never too late to protect your child's health.

WHICH IMMUNISATIONS SHOULD BE UP TO DATE?

Primary Vaccinations: Typically given in the first year, including vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, and more.

MMR Vaccine: Protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. The first dose is usually given around 12 months, with a booster before starting school.

Pre-School Booster: Given around 3 years and 4 months old, covering diphtheria, tetanus, polio, and whooping cough.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CORNER

This month, we will discuss what a healthy, balanced diet consists of. In particular, we will be looking at fruit, vegetables and carbohydrates. Together, these should make up just over about two thirds of your diet. You may have come across the NHS Eatwell Guide pictured below.

The Eatwell guide tells us how much of each food group we should be aiming for over the course of the day or week to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.

For fruit and vegetables, the NHS states: "Most of us still are not eating enough fruit and vegetables. They should make up just over a third of the food we eat each day. Aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and veg each day. Choose from fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced. Remember that fruit juice and smoothies should be limited to no more than a combined total of 150ml a day. Fruit and vegetables are a good source of vitamins, minerals and fibre."

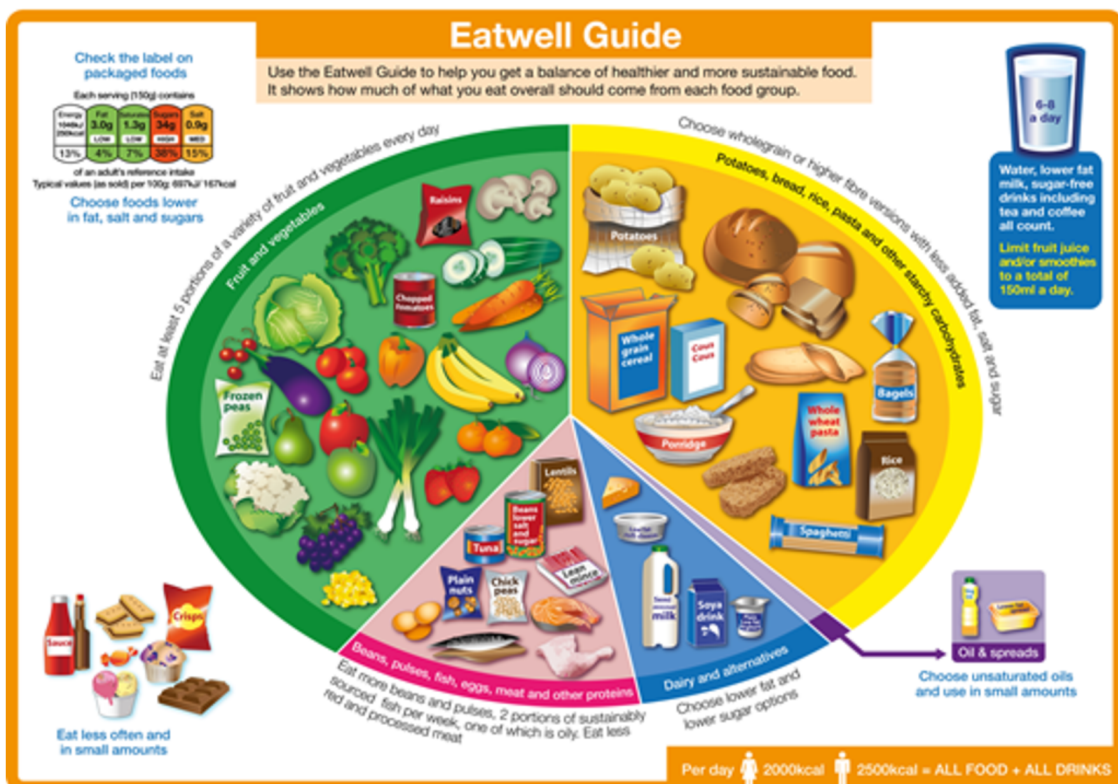
For carbohydrates, the NHS states: "Starchy food should make up just over a third of the food we eat. Choose higher fibre or wholegrain varieties, such as wholewheat pasta and brown rice, or simply leave the skins on potatoes. There are also higher fibre versions of white bread and pasta. Starchy foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet."

It is important to remember, however, that everyone is different. The information here generalised. If you have specific dietary requirements or dietary requirements based on a specific medical condition or concern, please consult a GP or relevant medical professional.

Next month we will look at the rest of the Eatwell Guide. In the meantime, see how your fruit, veg and carbohydrate intake compares to the guidelines and try and set yourself a relevant goal if applicable. Remember to start small and start SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound goals). It is also never too late to make a change. We are all stronger than we think, so don't give up. I wish you luck.

-Sophie
(Health and Wellbeing Coach for PCNIW, Certified Personal Trainer and Nutritional Advisor)

Make sure you check back every month for all your health and wellbeing titbits.



GENERAL HEALTH CHECKS USING THE DIGITAL HEALTH KIOSK



WHY REGULAR HEALTH CHECKS MATTER

Regular health checks are essential for catching potential issues early, even if you feel well. Routine checks like blood pressure, weight, and smoking status can help identify risks and prevent more serious conditions.

INTRODUCING THE DIGITAL HEALTH KIOSK

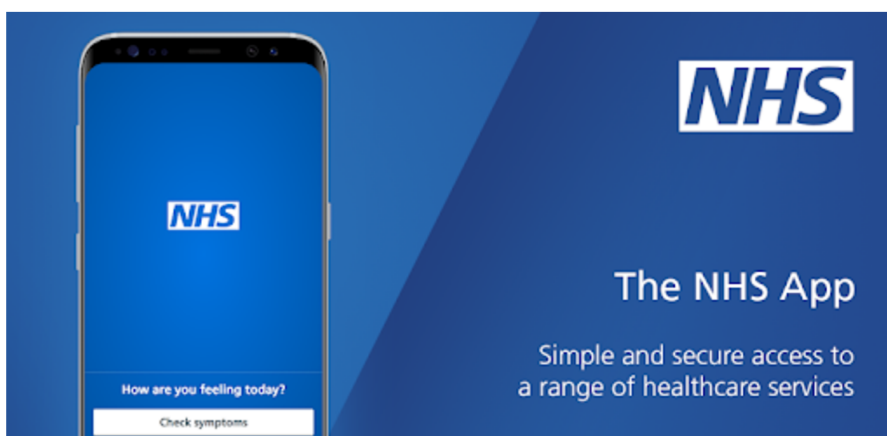
Our GP surgery now offers a convenient way to monitor your health with a digital health kiosk. Located in the waiting area, the kiosk allows you to check your:

- Blood Pressure: High blood pressure can be a silent killer. Regular checks help keep it in check.
- Weight and BMI: Monitoring your weight can help you stay within a healthy range.
- Smoking Status: Get support to quit smoking if needed.



HOW TO USE THE KIOSK?

- Using the kiosk is simple and private. Just follow the on-screen instructions, and your results will be saved to your medical records, which your GP can review. You don't need an appointment—just pop in when it's convenient for you.





SICKLE CELL DISEASE: WHAT, WHO, WHY, HOW?

The world is going crazy for the #1 series on Netflix "Supacell", whilst this series left us with cliff hangers and some exciting superhero characters, there was an underlying important message in the series; the importance of knowing about sickle cell disease.

WHAT IS SICKLE CELL DISEASE?

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a serious, inherited blood disorder that affects the shape and function of red blood cells. Instead of being round and flexible, the cells in someone with SCD are crescent-shaped (like a sickle) and rigid, which can block blood flow and lead to severe pain, infections, and other serious health complications.

WHO IS MORE AT RISK?

Sickle Cell Disease is more common in individuals of African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, and South Asian descent. In the UK, it is particularly prevalent among people with African or Caribbean heritage. However, it can affect anyone, regardless of background, so awareness and testing are essential.

WHY GET TESTED?

Early Detection: Early diagnosis can help manage the disease effectively and reduce the risk of complications.

Family Planning: Knowing your sickle cell status is crucial if you are planning to have children, as SCD is inherited.

Better Health Management: Even if you are a carrier (sickle cell trait), knowing your status allows you to monitor your health and take necessary precautions.

HOW TO GET A BLOOD SCREENING FOR SICKLE CELL AND OTHER BLOOD DISORDERS

Getting tested is simple and can be done through a blood screening at your GP surgery. If you belong to a higher-risk group or have a family history of Sickle Cell Disease, it's especially important to consider screening. Here's how you can get tested:

Contact Your GP: Schedule an appointment to discuss your concerns and request a blood test for Sickle Cell Disease or other blood disorders. **Blood Test:** Your GP will arrange a blood test, which is quick and usually takes just a few minutes.

Results and Next Steps: If your test results show that you have Sickle Cell Disease or are a carrier, your GP will discuss the next steps and any necessary treatments or precautions.

Early diagnosis and regular monitoring are key to managing Sickle Cell Disease and living a healthier life. If you're unsure about your status, don't hesitate to reach out to your GP for a screening.



Receive messages from your surgery in your NHS App, instead of by SMS text or letter

MORE SECURE, MORE RELIABLE

Download the NHS App and turn on notifications

The graphic features the NHS logo in the top right corner. Below it, a smartphone is shown with a notification bubble. To the left, a person is depicted interacting with the phone. Various icons representing health services (a stethoscope, a pill, a DNA helix, a lock, and a person) are arranged around the phone, connected by dotted lines.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SEPTEMBER?

WORLD ALZHEIMER'S MONTH (ALL SEPTEMBER)

A global campaign to raise awareness and challenge the stigma surrounding Alzheimer's and dementia.

UROLOGY AWARENESS MONTH (ALL SEPTEMBER)

Focuses on raising awareness about urological diseases and conditions, including prostate cancer and incontinence.

BLOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH (ALL SEPTEMBER)

Dedicated to raising awareness of blood cancers, including leukaemia, lymphoma, and myeloma.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH (ALL SEPTEMBER)

Highlights the impact of childhood cancer and promotes support for affected children and families.

VASCULAR DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH (ALL SEPTEMBER)

Aims to raise awareness about vascular diseases, including strokes and aneurysms.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS! WEEK (2ND – 8TH SEPTEMBER 2024)

An awareness campaign focused on encouraging people to monitor their blood pressure regularly.

ORGAN DONATION WEEK (2ND – 8TH SEPTEMBER 2024)

Promotes the importance of organ donation and encourages people to register as organ donors.

MIGRAINE AWARENESS WEEK (8TH – 14TH SEPTEMBER 2024)

Raises awareness about migraines, their impact, and the support available for those who suffer from them.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY (10TH SEPTEMBER 2024)

A day dedicated to promoting awareness and prevention of suicide, with a focus on offering support and reducing stigma.

SEXUAL HEALTH WEEK (16TH – 22ND SEPTEMBER 2024)

Promotes sexual health awareness, focusing on various issues such as consent, STI prevention, and access to services.

NATIONAL EYE HEALTH WEEK (23RD – 29TH SEPTEMBER 2024)

Highlights the importance of eye health and encourages people to get regular eye check-ups.

WORLD HEART DAY (29TH SEPTEMBER 2024)

A global initiative to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases and promote heart health.

