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**SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2026 ISSUE 38**



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Compiled by the Patients Participation Group (PPG)

## **SURGERY NEWS**

### **Farewell and Welcome to Our GPs**

Firstly, we would like to wish Dr Nick Stubbings all the very best as he leaves the practice following a move out of the local area. We thank Dr Stubbings for his dedication and the care he has provided to our patients over the years.

We are also delighted to welcome two new GPs to our team. Dr Monica Perez-Pellicer joined us in March and has already received wonderful feedback from many of our patients for her compassionate and thorough approach to care. Dr Saz Al Jaf will be joining the practice in June, and we look forward to introducing her to our practice community.

### **Bluebell Surgery Merger**

As many of you may be aware, we officially merged with Bluebell Surgery on 1st May. At present, this is a contractual merger, but work is already underway to create a fully integrated operational service later this summer.

Our aim is to ensure that patients across both sites have fair and equitable access to appointments and services, whilst maintaining the high standard of care you expect from us. We will keep you updated as these plans progress.

### **Improving Access to Our Services**

We are working closely with NHS Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) to review and strengthen our triage and appointment system. This work is focused on ensuring that patient demand is matched to the most appropriate clinical capacity, helping us to improve access and make the best

use of the healthcare professionals available within our practice team.

We appreciate that changes to how services are accessed can take time to embed and we would like to thank our patients for their patience, understanding, and continued support while this work is ongoing.

### **Pharmacy First – Getting You the Right Care, Faster**

As part of our improved access model, we will continue to support the NHS Pharmacy First service. Community pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals who can assess and treat a range of common conditions without the need for a GP appointment. For many illnesses, they can provide expert advice and, where clinically appropriate, supply NHS prescription medicines. Using Pharmacy First for suitable conditions often means you can be seen more quickly, freeing up GP appointments for patients with more complex medical needs. If our team signposts you to a pharmacy, please be assured that this is part of providing you with the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### **DNA's (Did not Attend)**

Last Quarter  
(FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL)

# **716**

If you are unable to keep your appointment Please cancel by phone, as this leaves a space for other patients, **IN TURN**, if other patients cancel their appointment, this will leave a space for **YOU**.



## **Important Update for Patients – Bluebell Surgery Joins Mill Road Surgery from 1 May 2026**

We would like to share an important update about the future of Bluebell Surgery. From 1 May 2026, the management of Bluebell Surgery will change, with Mill Road Surgery becoming the permanent provider of GP services at the site.

This decision follows a formal procurement process carried out by NHS Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB). Since May 2024, Bluebell Surgery has been supported by Highwoods Surgery under a temporary caretaker arrangement, which has now come to an end.

The ICB has expressed its thanks to Highwoods Surgery for their dedication and the positive work they have delivered during this period.

### **What This Means for Patients**

The transition has been carefully planned to ensure continuity of care. Here's what you need to know:

#### **Bluebell Surgery is not closing**

You will continue to see the same team, at the same premises

There are no immediate changes to appointments or opening hours

Patients registered with Mill Road Surgery will also see no changes

#### **No action is required from patients**

From 1 May 2026, Bluebell Surgery will operate as a branch site of Mill Road Surgery, supporting more joined-up, resilient care for the local community.

The local NHS remains committed to ensuring patients continue to receive high-quality, accessible services that meet their needs. Further updates will be shared as arrangements progress.

### **Patient FAQ's Why is this happening?**

Bluebell Surgery has been operating under a temporary caretaker arrangement with Highwoods Surgery. Following a formal NHS procurement process, Mill

Road Surgery has been awarded the long-term contract to provide services.

### **When will the change take place?**

The new arrangements begin on Friday 1 May 2026.

Is Bluebell Surgery closing? No. Bluebell Surgery will remain open, with the same staff and services.

Will anything change for me as a patient?

Patients should not notice any changes in how they access care. The focus is on a smooth, safe transition.

### **Am I still registered as a patient?**

Yes. You will remain registered as normal. In due course, patient records will be held on a single clinical system to support joined-up care.

### **How do I book appointments?**

Over time, more digital access options will be introduced alongside telephone and face-to-face appointments.

### **Will opening hours change?**

No. Opening hours remain: Monday–Friday, 8:00am–6:30pm, with enhanced access on Wednesdays until 8:00pm.

### **What about urgent care?**

Contact the surgery as normal. When closed, call NHS 111, or 999 in an emergency.

### **Do I need to do anything?**

#### **Where can I find more information?**

Updates will be shared on the surgery website and in the waiting room. You can also contact the team at [millroad.surgery@nhs.net](mailto:millroad.surgery@nhs.net).



# Meningitis now



## What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an infection of the membranes and fluid that surround the brain. Meningitis is caused by a small number of viruses, bacteria or occasionally fungi. Bacterial meningitis can be associated with bloodstream infection, which is sometimes referred to as septicaemia, or sepsis. It is this bloodstream infection which results in the rash in other parts of the body.

What are the symptoms of meningitis (for adults and children)?

It typically causes headache, neck stiffness and fever (high temperature) but can also cause drowsiness, nausea/vomiting and increased sensitivity of the eyes to light.

Certain types of meningitis can also cause a rash, which is typically described as non-blanching as the colour doesn't fade with light pressure, for example when pressed with a glass. If infected, you may experience any combination of these symptoms, and young children may just be non-specifically ill or irritable.

How does *Neisseria meningitidis* spread?

*Neisseria meningitidis* is most commonly found living in the throat. It is spread between people through contact with secretions from the mouth or airway and it usually requires close or prolonged contact between people for the bacteria to be transmitted.

## Are meningitis vaccines available in the UK?

There are two highly effective *Neisseria meningitidis* vaccines available, one to types A,C, W and Y, and another to type B. ACWY vaccine is routinely offered to students in secondary school, although around 20% of adolescents remain unvaccinated in the UK and therefore at risk.

Type B vaccine is now routinely offered for babies in the UK, however, there has not been a catch up for unvaccinated older children, and the vaccine is not given to teenagers. Students currently at university therefore do not have protective immunity to type B. There are also cases of meningitis caused by types of *Neisseria meningitidis* not included in the vaccine, but these are exceptionally rare in the UK, and we have not typically seen outbreaks in students.

**This is a rapid reaction to a breaking news story.**

## EAT A HEALTHY BALANCED DIET

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good health, and can help you feel your best and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. People with special dietary needs or a medical condition should ask their doctor or a registered dietitian for advice.

### Food groups in your diet

The Eatwell Guide shows that to have a healthy, balanced diet, people should try to: eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day (see 5 A Day) base meals on higher fibre starchy foods like potatoes, bread, rice or pasta have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks) eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein choose unsaturated oils and spreads, and eat them in small amounts, drink plenty of fluids (at least 6 to 8 glasses a day)

If you're having foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar, have these less often and in small amounts. Try to choose a variety of different foods from the 5 main food groups to get a wide range of nutrients. Most people in the UK eat and drink too many calories, too much saturated fat, sugar and salt, and not enough fruit, vegetables, oily fish or fibre. The Eatwell Guide does not apply to children under the age of 2 because they have different nutritional needs. After the age of 2 years, children should move to eating the same foods as the rest of the family in the proportions shown in the Eatwell Guide.

### Starchy foods in your diet

Starchy foods should make up just over a third of everything you eat. This means your meals should be based on these foods. Choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties of starchy foods, such as brown rice, wholewheat pasta, and brown, wholemeal or higher fibre white bread. They contain more fibre, and usually more vitamins and minerals, than white varieties. Potatoes with the skins on are a great source of fibre and vitamins. For example, when having boiled potatoes or a jacket potato, eat the skin too.

### Milk and dairy foods (and alternatives)

Milk and dairy foods, such as cheese and yoghurt, are good sources of protein. They also contain calcium, which helps keep your bones healthy. Go for lower fat and lower sugar products where possible.



**Wearing Appropriate Gear:** Choose light, moisture-wicking clothing and wear sunscreen.

Be Mindful of Allergies. Summer can bring about seasonal allergies.

**Checking Pollen Forecasts:** Stay indoors when pollen counts are high. Keep windows closed, use air conditioning to filter out pollen.

**Taking Allergy Medication:** If needed, use antihistamines or other medications as directed by your GP.

**Travel Safely; If you're travelling this summer, keep these tips in mind:**

**Stay Informed About Health Guidelines:** Follow local health advice and regulations.

**Pack Essential Medications:** Ensure you have enough medication for the duration of your trip.

**Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitiser.

**Seek Medical Advice:**

If you have any health concerns or experience symptoms such as persistent headaches, dizziness, or nausea during the summer months, seek medical advice promptly.



## LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE (PD)

Emotional adjustment to Parkinson's involves a range of feelings including denial, shock, discouragement, frustration and identity changes. Each person experiences these stages differently and may revisit them as new challenges arise. Practical impacts include changes in abilities and family roles, requiring more time for tasks and causing stress, which may worsen symptoms. Recognizing these changes helps manage daily life and maintain independence.

Support, utilizing resources and connecting with others with PD can provide encouragement and guidance for navigating life with Parkinson's. Changing abilities and assuming new roles can cause frustration and emotional upheaval, while stress makes PD symptoms worse. At this stage, you may realize that PD has impacted your life.

**What You Can Do.** Remember that you are not alone. One million people in the U.S. and 10 million people worldwide live with PD. With a diagnosis and the freedom to learn at your own pace, you can begin to understand PD, its treatments, and the role they will play in your life.

It is common for many people to experience a wide range of emotions upon diagnosis from shock, to anger and even to sometimes a sense of relief at being able to name symptoms (perhaps a small tremor or weaknesses). Receiving a Parkinson's disease (PD) diagnosis is life-changing, but focusing on proactive care can help maintain quality of life. Key steps include building a specialist medical team, starting a regular exercise routine (like walking, yoga, or boxing), educating yourself via credible sources, and seeking emotional support from friends, family, or support groups.

**Free confidential helpline on 0808 800 0303 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, and 10am to 2pm on Saturdays).** Email [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk).



Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition where cells become resistant to insulin or the pancreas produces insufficient insulin, causing high blood sugar levels. It is largely driven by obesity, inactive lifestyles, and genetics, leading to symptoms like excessive thirst, frequent urination, and fatigue. Treatment focuses on managing blood glucose through diet, exercise, and medication to prevent complications like heart disease, kidney damage, and nerve damage.

### Symptoms of type 2 diabetes and how it's diagnosed Symptoms of type 2 diabetes

**The most common symptoms of type 2 diabetes are:**  
feeling very tired  
peeing more than usual  
feeling thirsty all the time  
losing weight without trying to.

### **Blurred vision**

cuts or wounds taking longer to heal  
itching around your penis or vagina, or you keep getting thrush

These symptoms are the same for both adults and children. If you get symptoms (not everyone gets them), they may develop gradually. The symptoms can be similar to type 1 diabetes, but type 1 diabetes usually develops more quickly and is more common in younger people.

### **Who is more likely to get type 2 diabetes.**

Some people have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. You may be more at risk if: you're white and over 40 years old or over 25 years old and from a South Asian, Chinese, Black African or Black Caribbean ethnic background a parent, or your brother or sister has it you're overweight and not very physically active you have a condition that increases your risk, such as high blood pressure

Although type 2 diabetes is less common in children, ethnic background, weight, activity and family history can also increase the risk.

### **See a GP if:**

you think you or your child may have type 2 diabetes  
you or your child have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Not everyone with type 2 diabetes has symptoms, so it's important to get checked out.

### **Information: Check your risk**

Use Diabetes UK's Know Your Risk tool to help you find out your risk and get advice on next steps. Get a free NHS health check. If you're between 40 and 74 years old, and do not have an existing health condition, ask your GP surgery or local pharmacy for a check.

This is an overall check that may tell you if you're at higher risk of health problems such as diabetes.

### **How type 2 diabetes is diagnosed**

Type 2 diabetes is diagnosed with a blood test that checks how high your blood glucose (sugar) levels are. The results usually take a few days.

Tests will confirm if you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Get advice about what to ask your doctor or other healthcare professional.

### **If you're told you have type 2 diabetes**

If you're diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, it can feel overwhelming. You may feel anxious about how it will affect you. But there'll be doctors, nurses and other health professionals in your diabetes care team you can talk to. They'll be able to help with any questions about treatment and what happens next.

### **If you're diagnosed with prediabetes**

Prediabetes means that your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal but not high enough for you to be diagnosed with diabetes. This also means you'll be at higher risk of getting diabetes in the future. Most people do not have symptoms of type 2 diabetes, such as peeing more, feeling tired and losing weight without trying.

Talk to your care team about how eating more healthily, exercise and other lifestyle changes can help prevent you getting type 2 diabetes.



**Patient Participation Group**

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)**

Please see our PPG noticeboard in the waiting room or contact us via the online form on our website

<https://www.millroad-surgery.co.uk>

**Any comments or queries or if you would like to receive future copies by email, send to Mill Road Surgery Patient Participation Group at [mrsppgc@gmail.com](mailto:mrsppgc@gmail.com)**

