

Dear fellow patient of Grove Park Surgery.

For me April seemed to fly past, probably because we were able to sit and shiver at someone else's tables a couple of times. The sun even shone on a birthday lunch in my household. Still no extra-household hugging, but we've added a hip bump to the elbow greeting.

I honestly don't have any practice news but I'll soon be meeting with the new practice manager Vanessa Zahran. And on Monday 10th we'll have the next Grove Park Patient Group Committee meeting so if there's anything you want us to discuss please let us know.

The following does not represent the views of the practice or its staff.

Vaccination stuff

Over-40s, you're up. I can hardly keep up with the opening up of vaccinations, last week it was the over-40s, in fact anyone hitting 40 by June 30. If that's you, you can click here to book at a mass vaccination centre <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Pregnant? Breastfeeding? Planning to start a family one day? There are a lot of questions around having a baby and the vaccines because it is all so new. I have been asked by the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) team to share, and to ask all of you to please share with your families and groups, details of a free NHS NW London webinar this Thursday May 6 at 7.30pm: **COVID-19 vaccines, pregnancy, fertility and breastfeeding**. The panel will consist of NHS specialists who will provide updated information and an independent chair who will lead the discussion.

Registration: To register click on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/covid-19-vaccines-pregnancy-fertility-and-breastfeeding-webinar-tickets-152500263393>

12 weeks since first jab and no news of the second? Either dial 119 for advice if you had your first jab at a mass vaccination site or, if your first was more than 12 weeks ago at Chiswick Health Centre or at home, contact the practice. I know, I'm not telling you anything new!

Might miss second vaccination...

I don't yet have an answer for anyone worried about missing their second vaccination, something that might happen as holidays appear to be on the horizon. The date can be pushed back, but it seem only once the invitation comes to you.

As of my last enquiry there is no formal/automatic system for getting one earlier than the scheduled date, even for people going into hospital for a lengthy stay (if you are concerned on this count, keep talking to your medical team). I'll keep asking.

Testing and vaccination

Very good question from a fellow patient: Do we still need to follow the council's invitations to get tested before mixing with other people if we've been vaccinated? The answer (from the Engagement Team in the CCG) is YES. They say:

"It may be tempting to think as vaccinations increase and cases drop, that testing will become less important. In fact, this will only make it more important to spot and prevent new outbreaks. This also applies regardless of whether you have been vaccinated or not. While the latest evidence suggests vaccines provide a high level of protection, they don't yet provide a guarantee that you can't still get the virus or pass it on to others."

Although Hounslow has lots of testing sites, we probably need a bit more of a nudge once vaccinated. I've found we can now order a set of tests on [the.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests) website to use at home. <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>. Box arrives in the post. No requirement to use them by a set date. Nice for reassurance.

That's about it at the mo. May 17 will be interesting. By then we will know more about the effect of the current loosening up on social mixing. Also the UK's view of travel abroad. But I don't know how much we'll know about our destinations' plans and procedures to protect themselves. Might not be that easy.

One last thought, we (the GPSPG committee) might try out a couple of surveys which you can fill in if you wish. They'll be anonymous. Work in progress at the moment. And hopefully offer another Health Living Talk.

As ever, let me know if you want to come off the mailing list. Or ideas and suggestions we should follow up.

Good to be in touch,

Liz