

Meadowbridge SURGERY

November 2025

ISSUE 10



MED SAFETY WEEK

3–9 November 2025

Experiencing a problem with a medicine or medical device?

We all have the power to make healthcare products safer. Help others by reporting a problem using the Yellow Card Scheme.

You can report suspected side effects to medicines, adverse incidents with medical devices, safety concerns about e-cigarettes/vapes and defective, low quality or falsified (fake) products to improve patient safety. Every report counts!





COVID 19 CAMPAIGN

AUTUMN 2025



Vaccination remains the best form of defence against severe illness, hospitalisation, and death as a result of COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccination is aimed at protecting the most vulnerable in our society.

Appointments for Covid vaccination clinics will be available to book from mid September on line or via reception.

Eligible Patients are:

- all adults aged 75 years and over; born before 31 March 1951.
- residents in a care home for older adults (in NI this will apply to all residents of a care home for older adults);
- individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed

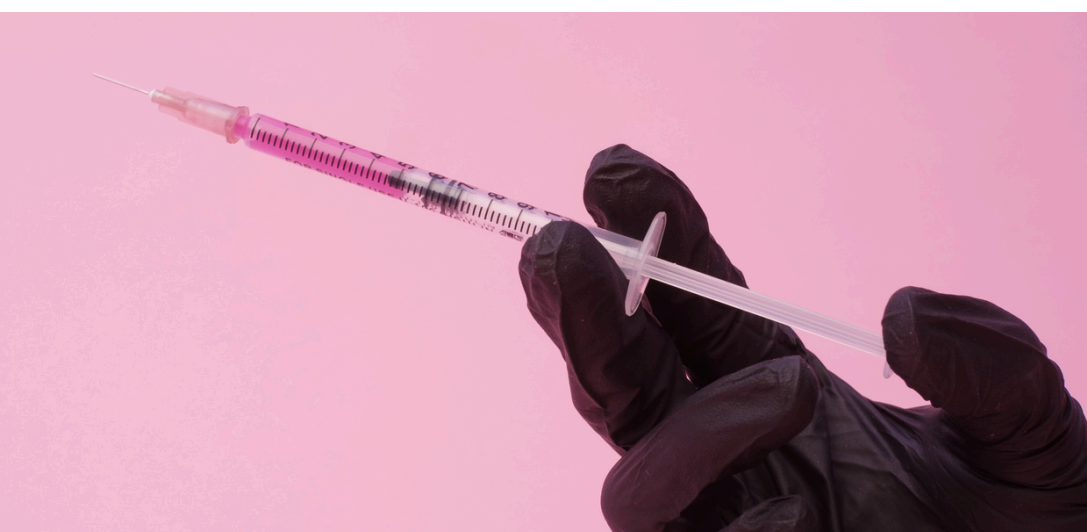
Unlike in previous autumn campaigns, adults aged 65 to 74 years of age and people aged under 65 years of

age with underlying medical conditions, including pregnant women (apart from those who are immunosuppressed) will not be eligible for Covid vaccination.

JCVI does not advise the inclusion of health and social care workers (HSCWs).

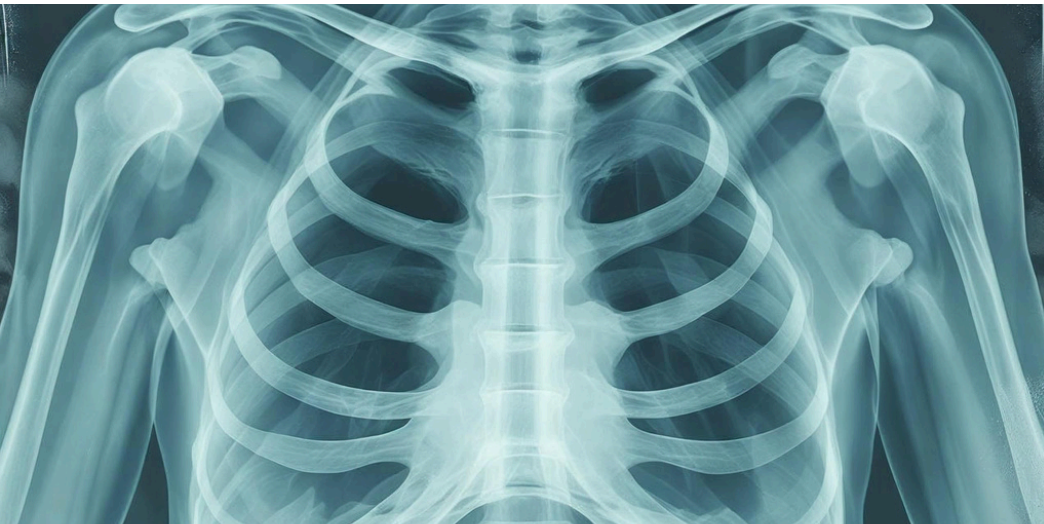
Immunosuppressed patients aged 5 to 17 years (i.e. those born between 1 October 2008 and 31 September 2020), are advised that they are eligible for vaccination, and can attend a Trust led clinic to receive the vaccine.

Community Pharmacies will be responsible for vaccination of all care home residents, including mop-up visits.





RSV VACCINATION



RSV is a common respiratory virus that can cause serious lung infections.

leads to the inflammation of the small airways and significant breathing difficulties.

For most people, RSV infection causes a mild respiratory illness. Globally, RSV infects up to 90% of children within the first 2 years of life and frequently reinfects older children and adults.

It is a leading cause of infant mortality globally, resulting in 20 to 30 deaths per year in the UK.

Adults are invited for the RSV vaccine from they turn 75 until the day before their 80 birthday and can contact reception to book an appointment.

While RSV infection can occur at any age, the risk and severity of RSV and its complications are increased in older adults and in neonates and small infants.

Infants receive the RSV vaccine as part of their baby vaccination schedule.

The clinical significance of RSV in infants is that it can cause bronchiolitis which



AUTUMN FLU VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Child nasal flu appointments are available to book for pre-school children aged from two years of age, born between 2nd July 2021 and 1st Sept 2024.

Appointments are available to book online or via telephone after 9.30am any morning.

Appointments for the Flu vaccine will be available to book from mid September for all patients aged 65 years and over born on or before 31st March 1961 and for those in an AT RISK group.

In 2025/26, **healthy** 5-64 year olds will **NOT** be eligible for the flu vaccination.

Flu can be serious,
if you are over 65 or in an 'at risk' group.

Between 18 September 2024 and 18 May 2025

3158 people aged 18 and over had a hospital admission with influenza in Northern Ireland.

2155 were as an emergency hospital admission.



If eligible help protect yourself against flu

Last year 862 children and young people, and 3,158 people aged 18 and over were hospitalised with influenza in Northern Ireland. Of those 2,922 were as an emergency hospital admission.





This year the flu vaccine is being offered to:

- all adults aged 65 years and over;
- people aged six months to 64 years in a clinical risk group, as laid out in the Immunisation Green Book influenza chapter (Green Book);
- pregnant women;
- residents and staff in care homes;
- all health and social care workers;
- all preschool children aged two to four years on 1 September 2025;
- all primary and secondary school children (up to and including year 12);
- carers;
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals.

The COVID-19 vaccination will be offered to:

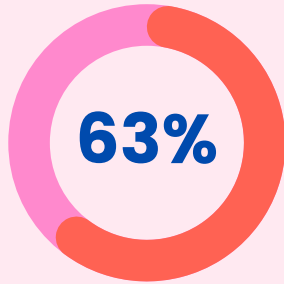
- adults aged 75 years and over;
- residents in care homes for older adults;
- individuals who are immunosuppressed, aged 6 months and over.

Winter viruses can be serious, who is eligible and where to get your vaccine.

Where to get your vaccine	COVID vaccine	Flu vaccine
GP Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults aged 75 years and over • 18 and over who are immunosuppressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 years and over • 6 mths. - 64yrs. clinical risk group (excluding those eligible in school) • Pregnant women • Pre-school children • Carers • Household contacts of immunosuppressed
Community Pharmacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents in care homes for older adults • Adults aged 75 years and over • 18 and over who are immunosuppressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care home residents and staff • All HSC workers • 65 years and over • 18 - 64yrs. clinical risk group • Pregnant women • 18- 64 yrs. who are carers • 18- 64 yrs. household contacts of immunosuppressed
HSC Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed • Housebound via home visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All HSC workers • Pregnant women via maternity • Housebound via home visits
In school 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children in primary and secondary school (up to Year 12), including children in risk groups

MBS Online Statistics

October 2025



Patients Registered for Patient Online Services

To register for this service, send an email to reception.z00382@gp.hscni.net including your name and date of birth. You will receive a registration token.



799

Total newsletter subscriptions

2,294

Website
views



19

NEW
Newsletter
subscriptions
in October

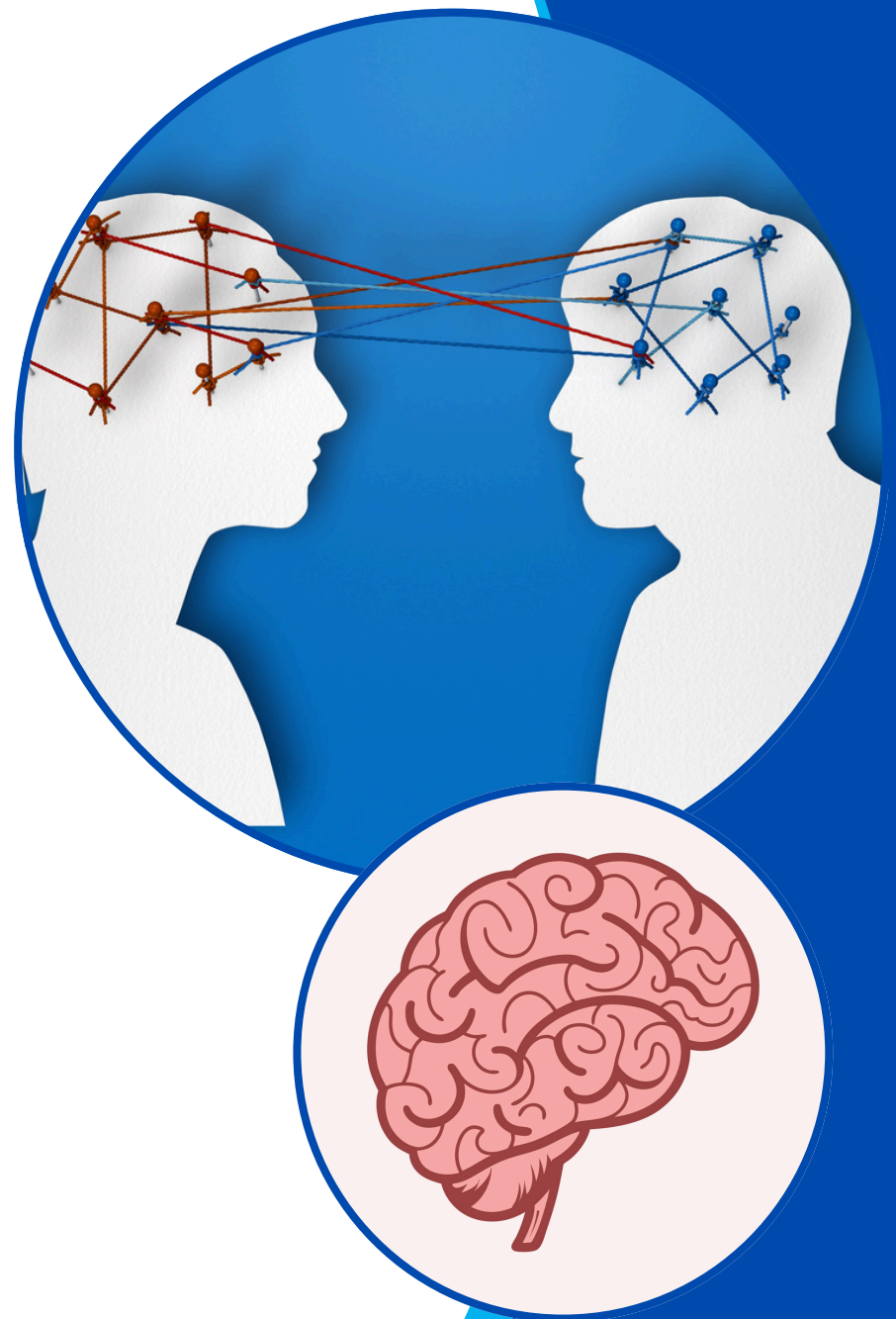
New Mental Health Service

We are very pleased to welcome Ryan Looney and Jennifer Johnston to our Practice team as part of our new MDT staff. Ryan and Jennifer are Mental Health Practitioners offering additional support to Meadowbridge patients experiencing a range of mental health issues.

Some of the issues the Mental Health Practitioners can deal with are:

- Stress
- Addictions
- Bereavement
- Anxiety
- Suicidal Ideation
- Panic Disorder
- Psychosis
- Trauma
- Mood instability
- Sleep disturbance

Patients can avail of this service by contacting the surgery via triage any morning at 8.30am by telephone or online services. The GP will triage a patients issues or symptoms and make a clinical decision as to whether this may be appropriate for the MH Practitioner.



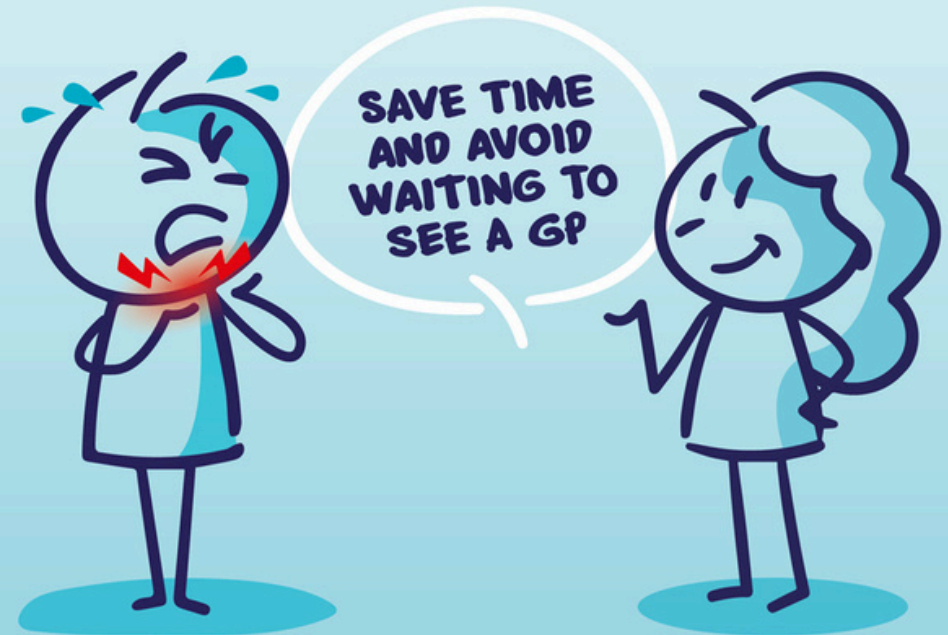
Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

Do you have any of the
following urinary symptoms?



Ask your pharmacist first for Advice, Test & Treatment
(if needed) without having to contact your GP

Pharmacy First for sore throat



Ask your pharmacist **FIRST**
for free and confidential
advice, test and treatment
for **sore throat**

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING SLEEP PROBLEMS DURING MENOPAUSE

If you can't sleep, get up after 20 minutes and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy again. There is more information and advice about dealing with sleep problems on the NHS Every Mind Matters website.



Non-Hormonal Treatments

If HRT is not suitable or is not preferred, other treatments may help:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is the most effective treatment for chronic insomnia and can be carried out in person, in groups or online. It can take about 6 weeks and can be effective during menopause. Digital apps are available including Sleepful, Sleepio and Sleepstation.
- Medications such as certain antidepressants, gabapentin or clonidine may reduce hot flushes and can then improve sleep.
- Melatonin is licensed for short-term use in people over 55 years of age (up to 13 weeks).
- Daridorexant, a licensed sleep medicine, can help with chronic insomnia and is recommended if CBT-I is not appropriate or useful.
- Newer treatments (neurokinin B receptor antagonists, such as fezolinetant) show promise for improving sleep.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

HRT can improve sleep. It can help directly by improving hormone levels and also by reducing hot flushes and sweats. If HRT helps other symptoms but sleep disturbance is still a problem, it may be worth reviewing the type of progestogen taken as part of your HRT. Using natural micronised progesterone orally may help to improve your sleep, although other progestogens do not seem to have the same benefit. Your healthcare professional can help you decide which type of HRT is right for you.

Vaginal Estrogen

If sleep is disturbed by a change in bladder function leading you to be woken by the need to pass urine overnight, the use of vaginal estrogen can improve bladder function and hence improve sleep.



UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING SLEEP PROBLEMS DURING MENOPAUSE



When to Seek Help

If poor sleep is affecting your quality of life, talk to your healthcare professional. Help is available, including effective treatments for chronic insomnia, restless legs and sleep apnoea. You don't have to put up with poor sleep.

For more information

Please go to www.meadowbridgesurgery.co.uk to access more information on Menopause.

Alternatively, www.womens-health-concern.org for more information on help, advice, support and events in relation to coping with menopause.

Restless Legs

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) causes uncomfortable sensations in the legs, often in the evening or at night. Movement can temporarily relieve symptoms. It is more common after menopause. If you have RLS, ask your healthcare professional for a blood test to check your ferritin level (iron stores), as low iron can be a cause. Other treatments, including medications, are available if symptoms are severe.

Sleep Apnoea

Sleep apnoea is when breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep. It is more common in menopause and may cause loud snoring, morning headaches, fatigue, or mood changes. Not all women with sleep apnoea snore. If suspected, your healthcare professional may arrange a sleep study and treatment such as Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP); a machine that helps keep the airways open during sleep.



OCTOBER STATISTICS

An summary of work output throughout the month of October by all practice staff.
MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY | 2025

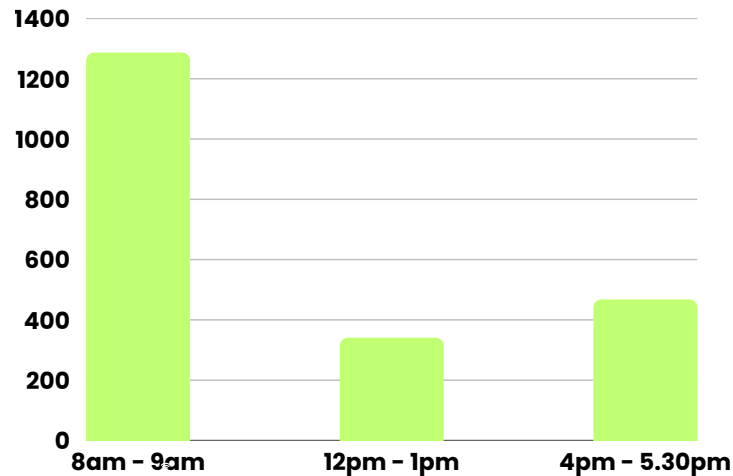
TELEPHONE STATISTICS

8,101

Incoming Telephone Calls to
the Practice



AVERAGE CALLS RECEIVED HOURLY



Average Patient Wait Time once in the queue

2 minutes 49 seconds



DAILY TRIAGE AREAS

50



Patient Home
Visits by a GP

5,162



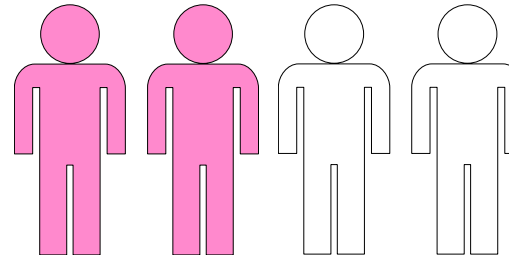
Face to Face
Appointments

2,087



Triage call back to
Patients

APPOINTMENTS BOOKED AND NOT ATTENDED DNA (Did not attend)



213

These are appointments
that have been wasted
and could have been
offered to another patient.

ADMINISTRATION TASKS



2,749

Hospital letters
actioned by Practice staff



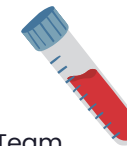
20,722

General Admin
Tasks by Clinical and Admin Team



5,636

Prescriptions
Issued



2,585

Patient Results
Reviewed

Alzheimer's Society Virtual Dementia Information Programme Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trust - November 2025

A series of free online information sessions for anyone caring for or supporting someone with diagnosis of Dementia or anyone with an interest in Dementia.

Wednesday 5th November 2025 @ 2.30pm

What is Dementia?
Dr Sean Doherty - Consultant
Psychogeriatrician

**Wednesday 12th November 2025 @
2.30pm**

Wills and Enduring Power of Attorney
Jane Millar - Partner, Macauley Wray
Solicitors

**Wednesday 19th November 2025 @
2.30pm**

Nutrition and Dysphagia in Dementia
Oonagh Moffett and Erin Kelly - Northern
Dietetic Service

Tuesday 26th November 2025 @ 2.30pm

My Care Encompass Information Session
Encompass is the new digital records
system used by Health and Social Care
throughout NI. My Care is a patient portal
to accessing certain health information, the
session will explain key features, how to
access and how to use it.

Suzanne Doherty - Credentialed trainer
with Business Services Organisation



**To register and receive the
zoom link to join:
Scan the QR code
or email causeway@alzheimers.org.uk**

General practice in Northern Ireland is underfunded.

We asked the government for an extra **£39 per patient** to maintain and improve your GP services.



They gave us less than 50p per patient.

We know you deserve better than this.
#GPsAreOnYourSide



We want you to know that we hear your concerns and understand how difficult it can be to get a GP appointment right now.

Behind the scenes, we are working tirelessly to improve our services for our patients, but the challenges we're facing are very real.

Over 28 GP practices have closed in Northern Ireland since 2018. GP surgeries are seeing a high volume of patients every week with only 5.4% of the health budget.

These issues directly affect how quickly and efficiently we can care for you.

We're doing everything we can, but general practice in Northern Ireland needs proper funding to meet your needs.

**Thank you for your patience,
your support, and for standing
with us.**

ALL DRUGS CARRY RISK

We strongly advise you not to take any drug which has not been prescribed to you. However, if you do choose to use drugs, you can help to reduce the risk of harm by:

- Dosing low and going slow – take the smallest amount you can and leave as long as you can between doses, at least 2 hours.
- Sticking to one drug – mixing drugs can cause unexpected and unpredictable results. This includes mixing with alcohol.
- Never using alone – make sure that there are people around who can respond in the event of an emergency

If someone becomes ill, get medical help urgently! For more information on drugs and alcohol, visit www.drugsandalcoholni.info.

This site provides help and support as well as information on drugs and alcohol.

Drug and Alcohol Coordination Teams (DACTs) are made up of statutory and community agencies with an interest in, or need to, address drug and alcohol issues in the Trust area. There is a DACT for each Health Trust area in Northern Ireland, and each has a Connections team.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We would love to hear from you, our patients, on the service we provide

“ In an era where most seek to complain I feel like I would like to acknowledge the positive experience I've had since registering with Meadowbridge surgery. The first person I encountered was Deborah at reception, she was friendly and so helpful. This made the registration process easy and efficient. The medical and nursing staff I have encountered have all been professional, understanding and caring. I'd like to make particular mention to the nurse practitioner Gill who was very supportive during a recent visit. Thank you for your continued efforts. ”



Remember: Know, Check, Ask
Know that combination painkillers
should only be used short-term,
maximum of three days.

Check that you are using your
combination painkillers the correct
way.

Ask your health care professional if
you are not sure.

Find out more about medicine safety at:
<https://bit.ly/KCA-info> or scan the
QR code

! Know
✓ Check
? Ask



Scan me

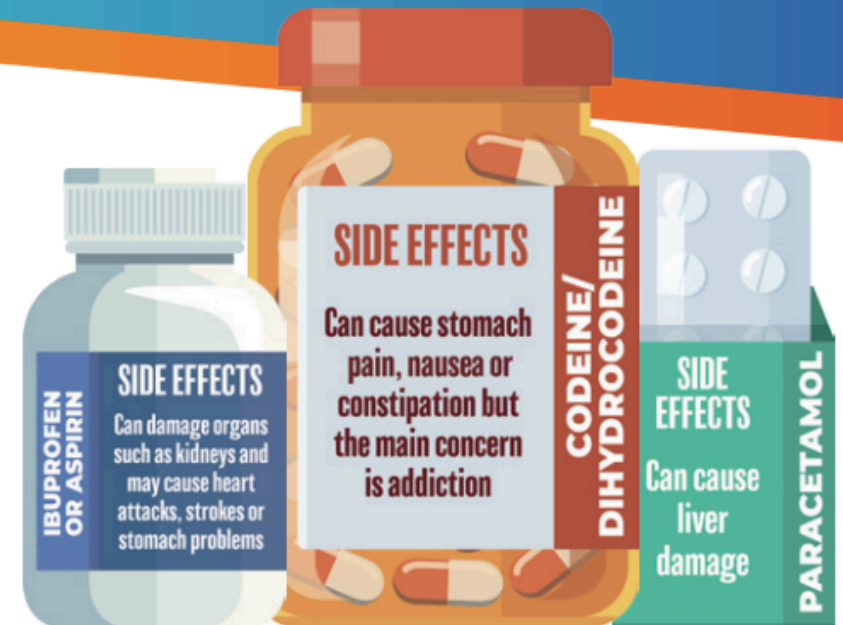
Taking care with medicines used to relieve pain

Are you aware of the risks associated
with some common painkillers?

Further information and support

- Speak to your local Community Pharmacist.
- Find details of other groups that can help you at www.drugsandalcoholni.info
- **Contact your local Drug and Alcohol Coordinating Teams at:**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	connections@bdact.info	028 9084 0555
Northern Health and Social Care Trust	connections@ndact.info	028 2568 9306 028 2568 9356
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	connections@sedact.info	0800 254 5123
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	connections@sdact.info	028 3832 2714
Western Health and Social Care Trust	connections@wdact.info	0800 254 5123



Sometimes we need to buy medicines to treat pain

What painkillers can be purchased in Community Pharmacies?

Paracetamol and ibuprofen are the most commonly used medicines to relieve mild or moderate pain e.g. headache, toothache or fever.

Stronger combination painkillers (can also be called pain relievers), which contain a mixture of paracetamol or ibuprofen along with codeine or dihydrocodeine, can sometimes be needed to treat more severe pain, for example, after an operation or injury.

Taking medicines safely

Taking more than the recommended dose of any of these medicines can cause serious harm.

Combination painkillers that you buy from a pharmacy (or other online pharmacy retail outlets) should only be used short-term, for a maximum of three days.

The leaflet or box of the medicine will tell you how to take the medicine, and for safety reasons, you should not take more than the maximum recommended dose.

If you are in any doubt, or if your pain lasts for more than three days, ask your community Pharmacist for advice.

Sometimes the Pharmacist may provide you with less medicine than you have asked for, or refuse to sell you any.

This may be because they are concerned about your pain or how you are using the medicine. The Pharmacist will advise you what you should do next.

Risks of combination painkillers

All medicines can cause side effects or have risks, especially if used for longer than they should be. Combination painkillers can be effective in treating short term pain, but if they are not taken safely, they can cause serious harm.

Here are some of the main things to be aware of:

- **Codeine or dihydrocodeine** – can cause stomach pain, nausea or constipation, but one of the main concerns when taking these without review is **addiction**.
- **Ibuprofen or aspirin** – can damage organs such as kidneys and may cause heart attacks, strokes or stomach problems.
- **Paracetamol** – can cause liver damage.

Find out more information about:

Combined
ibuprofen and
codeine

[https://bit.ly/
IbuprofenCodeine](https://bit.ly/IbuprofenCodeine)



Scan me

ADDICTION CAN AFFECT ANYONE



Addiction

It is possible to become addicted to combined ibuprofen/paracetamol and codeine painkillers. Some of the warning signs are:

- feeling that you need the medicine for longer periods and in higher doses than recommended;
- when stopping them, you feel unwell but you feel better when you start taking them again.

Addiction can cause long term problems for some patients, for example, with their personal life or work.

Please speak to your Community Pharmacist, General Practice Pharmacist or GP if you are worried that you may be getting addicted to these medicines, as they can provide advice.

How to use medicines safely

[https://bit.ly/
HowToUseMedicationsSafely](https://bit.ly/HowToUseMedicationsSafely)



Scan me

vimeo

How to safely use pain relief medication

The video is here -

<https://vimeo.com/1076680448>



- 01** Patient called to reception to request a triage. They did not feel comfortable discussing their symptoms at the reception desk.
- 02** The patient felt the receptionist didn't understand their point of view and the patient felt pressured to discuss their symptoms in a public place
- 03** An apology was offered to the patient for their feelings of discomfort and pressure from the Office Manager. The patient was reassured that symptoms are taken so the GP can assess their needs i.e. how long they will need for an appointment etc. The patient understood and was happy with the outcome of the phone call.
- 04** At the weekly admin meeting, admin staff were reminded to show empathy and understanding to patients. All admin staff were registered to an online refresher course for confidentiality, empathy and communication.



LEARNING EVENT AUDIT

A brief description on feedback received and how it was actioned by management.