

Meadowbridge SURGERY



Monthly Newsletter March 2026

WWW.MEADOWBRIDGESURGERY.CO.UK

BANK HOLIDAY CLOSURE

We will be closed on
Tuesday 17th March for the
bank holiday.

The surgery will re open on Wednesday 18th
March at 8.30am.

Please allow 72 working hours
to order your repeat prescription
requests, bearing this in mind.

For any urgent medical issues please contact
Dalriada urgent care on 03001231123



MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY LATEST NEWS/UPDATES : MARCH 2026

EMIS

In the next few months the Practice will be beginning to make plans and preparing to migrate from our current clinical system 'VISION' to a new clinical system being rolled out in N Ireland called 'EMIS Web VDI'. Our go live date is currently scheduled for 12 May 2026. A total of 125 N. Ireland Vision practices will have migrated to 'EMIS Web VDI' by June 2026 as Vision will no longer be available to N Ireland practices.

CRYOTHERAPY

We are no longer doing Cryotherapy treatment at Meadowbridge Surgery: this will need to be sourced privately if required.

URINE SAMPLES

Urine sample bottles have changed. You can still collect your sample kit from reception, but please make sure to return both tubes given (blue/yellow tube and green tube). You will receive this with x2 straws, an instruction sheet and a symptom sheet. For any queries, please ask our reception staff.

REMINDER

Dental problems must be managed by qualified dentists and the GPs at the surgery are not equipped to handle dental conditions. For urgent dental issues, patients should contact a dentist directly or use NHS 111 to find an emergency dental service.

LATEST

NEWS



CLINICAL SYSTEM CHANGE

Changes for Our Patients: Management of Online Patient Services

We are changing our computer systems from May 2026.

There will be some disruption to our services such as repeat prescriptions and appointments before, during and after this time.

What can you do?

You should continue to contact us as normal if you need an appointment, although you may experience a longer wait.

Please review any repeat medications which may be due over the transition period. If you need a repeat prescription please use the re-order form on the right-hand side of your last repeat prescription, and drop that into the practice. If you do not have one, you can come into the practice to get a new reorder form. Allow extra time for your request to be processed.

Please be patient with our staff as we move to a new computer system to serve you better.

We will keep you informed as we progress through this journey together.



ONLINE PATIENT SERVICES



IS CHANGING!

We are switching to a new clinical IT system from May 2026!

What does that mean for me?

You will no longer be able to order repeat prescriptions from 6pm on the date of the move

What do I need to do?

You will need to re-register for an online account to order prescriptions.

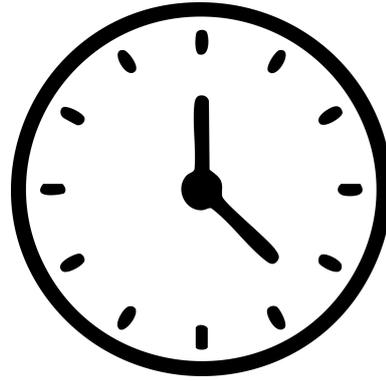
We will contact you by email and send you:

- 1) Information on how to register for the new online prescription service
- 2) New login details

Please check your emails and spam folders.



TELEPHONE TRIAGE SYSTEM



Our triage opens at 8.30am Monday - Friday and is available until 10.30am. If the Triage GP feels the days general appointment allocation (25 per GP per day) has been filled before 10.30am, triage will be closed, taking clinically urgent or emergency only issues.

This is an issue that the patient feels can not wait until 8.30 the next day. This triage information will be passed to and assessed by the Triage GP with a response issued to the patient.

As part of our telephone triage system our patient care admin team are trained in Care Navigation. With our staff fully trained and accredited in Care Navigation this means they can safely guide patients to the most appropriate healthcare service for your needs, helping you get the right care, at the right time, from the right professional for example: Pharmacy First, advanced nurse practitioner, MDT staff or any one of a number of schemes offered by local pharmacies.

When our reception team ask a few questions, it's not to be difficult, it's to ensure you receive the most appropriate care as quickly as possible.

Thank you for supporting Care Navigation in our practice and supporting our Triage system.

This helps us keep GP appointments available for those who need them most.

[#CareNavigation](#) [#RightCareRightPlace](#)

SAVE MONEY ON YOUR RATES

A guide to rates



Lone Pensioner Allowance

Ratepayers aged 70 or over who live alone may be entitled to 20 per cent discount on their rates. Tenants and homeowners are eligible for Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA). Your social security benefits should not be affected because the allowance is not means-tested.

How to qualify for Lone Pensioner Allowance

To qualify for LPA, you must be 70 or over and live alone. If you are eligible you can make an application at any time during the rating year. If you are over 70 and don't live alone you may be entitled to LPA if you:

- live with a carer who is not your spouse or partner
- provide care for someone who lives with you who is not your spouse or partner
- live with anyone who is under the age of 18
- live with someone who has a severe mental impairment including your spouse or partner

Applying for LPA with Land & Property Services

Homeowners can apply for LPA through Land & Property Services. To apply to LPS you must fill in an application form. You will need to sign the form and provide any documents to support your claim to the address shown on the form.

You can get an application form or contact LPS by:

LPS Lone Pensioner Allowance application form from

www.nidirect.gov.uk

or, you can write to:

Land & Property Services,
Lone Pensioner Allowance
Lanyon Plaza
7 Lanyon Place
Town Parks Belfast
BT1 3LP



TEL: 0300 200 7801 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CARENTS: DO YOU CARE FOR AN ELDERLY RELATIVE?



There are approximately **4 million** people in the UK looking after an elderly parent.

What are Carers?

Our word for adults caring for elderly relatives or friends in the community

Our Mission

To take carenting and ageing a happier, healthier and more engaged experience.

Founded by Dr Jackie Gray, a dually qualified GP and Consultant in Public Health Medicine with over 30 years of experience tackling the consequences of ageing in individuals and communities.

Carer Support: Emotional, Practical and Financial Support For You

Caring for a loved one can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging. Carer support services offer vital assistance and guidance to those providing care to their elderly family members. Navigating the various support options available can be tricky, but our guides aim to simplify the process, ensuring that you have access to the finances, resources and information you need to support both yourself and your loved one.

Financial support and benefits for carers

Money worries are common for carers. You may have given up work or reduced your hours, and caring often comes with extra costs. The good news is that there is financial help available.

The main types of support are:

- Carer's Allowance – a weekly payment if you care for someone 35+ hours a week
- Carer's Credit – helps protect your State Pension if you've had to stop working
- Other benefits like Universal Credit or Pension Credit, depending on your situation

The person you care for might also be entitled to benefits which can be used to offset the costs of their care. Find out more about the benefits available to pensioners who need care.

Although the options are similar throughout the UK, the arrangements, eligibility criteria and payments vary in each country.

You can find full details and apply on the official [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk).

ENDOMETRIOSIS AWARENESS MONTH MARCH 2026

Endometriosis Awareness Month 2026 takes place in March, dedicated to raising awareness, education, and advocacy for those living with endometriosis.

Endometriosis affects 1 in 10 women and those assigned female at birth in the UK

What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis occurs when cells similar to the ones in the lining of the womb (uterus) are found elsewhere in the body. These cells can grow and change in response to hormones in the menstrual cycle, this can cause inflammation, pain and scar tissue.

Endometriosis is most commonly found on the lining of the pelvis (peritoneum) and may occur in the ovaries and involve other pelvic organs, like the bowel or bladder. Less commonly, endometriosis can also be found outside the pelvis, such as in the chest.

Endometriosis affects 1 in 10 women and those assigned female at birth from puberty to menopause, although the impact may be felt for life. In the UK, that's over 1.5 million from all races and ethnicities living with the condition.

Endometriosis Symptoms

Symptoms vary from person to person, some may have severe and debilitating symptoms, others may have no symptoms at all. Symptoms are not always related to the location, amount or the type of endometriosis. It's also important to know that endometriosis symptoms can also be symptoms of other health conditions. We recommend that you speak to a doctor if your symptoms are interfering with day-to-day life.

Common symptoms include:

Pelvic pain

Painful periods that interfere with everyday life

Heavy menstrual bleeding

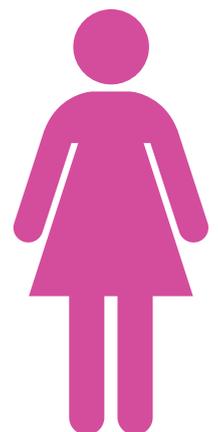
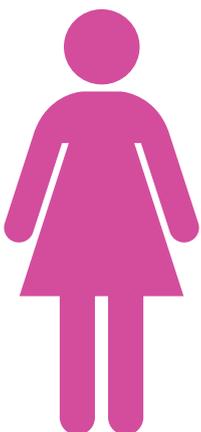
Pain during or after sex

Painful bowel movements/when having a poo

Pain when urinating/peeing

Difficulty getting pregnant –
up to 70% of those with endometriosis
will be able to get pregnant naturally

Fatigue, with one or more of the
above symptoms



World Kidney Day 12th March 2026

Kidney Health for All

What is World Kidney Day?

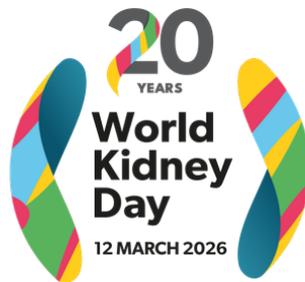
World Kidney Day is an annual campaign to help raise awareness of kidneys and show the impact when they don't work properly. It also aims to educate people on what kidneys do, the symptoms of kidney disease and how to improve your kidney health.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a major and growing global health challenge, affecting 1 in 10 people worldwide.

Often silent in its early stages, CKD can progress unnoticed until it causes severe health consequences, profoundly impacting individuals, families, and communities. The disease significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular complications, reduces quality of life, and may advance to kidney failure, where survival depends on life-sustaining kidney replacement therapies such as dialysis or transplantation.



**KIDNEY
DISEASE
IS THE 9TH
BIGGEST KILLER
WORLDWIDE**



**24 PEOPLE
START TREATMENT
FOR KIDNEY
FAILURE
EVERY DAY
IN THE UK**

**67%
OF KIDNEY
PATIENTS
EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS
OF DEPRESSION**

The Kidney Charities Together Group coordinates the World Kidney Day activity in the UK. The Group consists of Kidney Care UK, Kidney Research UK, Kidney Wales, the National Kidney Federation, the Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD) Charity, Popham Kidney Support and the UK Kidney Association.

For more information
visit: <https://www.worldkidneyday.co.uk/>

NATIONAL NO SMOKING DAY

 **March 12, 2026**

Breathe easier and celebrate a smoke-free life. National No Smoking Day is an annual health awareness day in the UK, aiming to inspire and support smokers to quit for good. For those considering breaking free from the hold of tobacco, this day presents the perfect opportunity to take that crucial step.

What is National No Smoking Day?

National No Smoking Day is dedicated to promoting the benefits of quitting smoking and offering support and resources to those who wish to give up the habit. Beyond individual health benefits, the day emphasizes the broader positive impacts on families, communities, and the environment.



When is National No Smoking Day?

This vital awareness day falls on the second Wednesday of March every year. In 2026, smokers and supporters alike will unite in their mission to promote healthier, smoke-free lives on March 13th.

How to Get Involved

Whether you're a smoker aiming to quit, or someone looking to support others, here are ways to engage with National No Smoking Day:

- **Commit to Quit:** If you're a smoker, use this day as your starting point to quit. Seek out resources and support to assist you on your journey.
- **Spread Awareness:** Share information about the dangers of smoking and the benefits of quitting.
- **Host or Attend Events:** Participate in community workshops, seminars, or support groups centered around quitting smoking.
- **Engage on Social Media:** Share personal stories of quitting, offer words of encouragement, and use the official hashtags to broaden the conversation.
- **Offer Support:** Encourage and stand by someone you know who's trying to quit. Sometimes, a supportive friend can make all the difference.

For more information

visit: <https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/national-no-smoking-day/>

MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY ONLINE

Practice
Website
Views
1,738



Newsletter
Subscriptions
in February
25

TOTAL Newsletter Subscriptions

865

SIGN UP to our newsletter at the bottom of our website by adding your name and email to receive the newsletter automatically to your inbox each month.

Online Patient Services

24/7 ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION ORDERING
REQUEST A **TRIAGE** SLOT FROM 8.30AM DAILY
UNTIL CAPACITY REACHED
TO **REGISTER**, EMAIL
RECEPTION.Z00382@GP.HSCNI.NET

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

March 2026

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in the UK and we're calling on you to help us raise awareness of the symptoms and signs of ovarian cancer.

Why is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month important?

Currently only 3 in 10 women diagnosed with ovarian cancer live beyond 10 years. It's unacceptable.

With 7500 women receiving an ovarian cancer diagnosis in the UK each year, it's vital we make faster progress to reach a vision of ovarian cancer being survivable for all women.

That's why we, Ovarian Cancer Action, created Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in the UK in 2005 - to empower women, raise awareness of symptoms and change the future for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

When is ovarian cancer awareness month?

March is ovarian cancer awareness month in the UK.

During the month of March, Ovarian Cancer Action - alongside other UK gynae charities - put the spotlight on ovarian cancer and ask our supporters to help us raise awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms, statistics and stories.

What are the symptoms of ovarian cancer?

Understanding the symptoms of ovarian cancer is pivotal for early detection. Common symptoms include:

- Persistent bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Difficulty eating or feeling full quickly
- Changes in urinary habits
- Fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss or gain

What resources do you have?

You can download and share our [ovarian cancer symptoms tracker](#), to help conversations with the GP.



Nutrition & Hydration Week: 16 - 22 March 2026

Nutrition and Hydration Week is an annual event with a shared objective to highlight, promote and celebrate improvements in the provision of nutrition and hydration locally, nationally and globally. It has taken place every March since 2012. Its purpose is to bring people together to create energy, focus and fun in order to highlight and educate people on the value of food and drink in maintaining health and well being in health and social care. Organisations from around the world and from all areas of health and social care take part and new organisations are welcome to join in the fun.

HYDRATION
FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE
FOR YOU AND YOUR KIDNEYS

Did you know?

Some people with chronic kidney disease can drink plenty

Others may need to have less fluid to prevent swelling, high blood pressure, or other complications.

Conditions like kidney stones or polycystic kidney disease may mean people need to drink more

Ask your kidney dietitian about the right balance for you

BDA British Dietetic Association
Kidney Dietitian Specialist Group

Nutrition Hydration Week

YOUNG CARERS ACTION DAY: 11TH MARCH 2026

CARERS TRUST

Young Carers Action Day is an annual event that takes place in mid-March.

The next Young Carers Action Day will take part on Wednesday 11th March 2026. The day is organised and led by Carers Trust, and we encourage as many organisations, communities and individuals as possible to take part in the day by taking action, supporting and raising awareness of young carers.

Young carers face a huge array of challenges as a result of their caring role. Many Carers Trust young carer surveys repeatedly shows many young carers are disadvantaged across multiple aspects of their lives, including mental and physical health, finances, education and employment.

Research shows that young carers are much more likely to experience severe psychological distress compared to their peers without caring responsibilities. It's crucial for them to have time away from their caregiving duties to rest, recharge, and focus on themselves – whether that's pursuing a hobby or simply spending time with friends, just like others their age

Young Carers Action Day provides an opportunity for everyone to call for better support for young carers and young adult carers, and to bring about change.

Anyone can support Young Carers Action Day by posting on social media using #YoungCarersActionDay.

If you're a young carer and would like to get involved in Young Carers Action Day we would like to hear from you. Please email: youngcarers@carers.org.



IF YOU ARE A YOUNG CARER, PLEASE LET YOUR GP KNOW SO WE CAN UPDATE OUR RECORDS.



What is IMPACT Agewell?

IMPACTAgewell[®] is a community led integrated care model of support delivered in partnership with your GP, Community Pharmacist, and NHSCT thanks to funding from the Department of Health.

If you are eligible, you will be supported by a dedicated IMPACTAgewell[®] Officer for up to six months. This officer will work in partnership with you and your healthcare professionals to ensure your needs are met holistically. You will engage in guided conversations covering important topics such as your home environment, health, well-being, community involvement, and future plans. Our goal is to help you identify and address areas that can significantly improve your quality of life

Eligibility Criteria

To participate in IMPACTAgewell[®], you must meet the following criteria:

- Age 60 and over
- Live alone or with another older person, in your own home or in sheltered housing
- Registered with one of the participating GP practices
- Interested in discussing your general health and well-being
- Keen to learn about and access support available in your local community
-

Additionally, you should have a long-term health condition, such as:

- Diabetes
- Heart Failure
- Stroke
- Parkinson's Disease
- Coronary Heart Disease
- Respiratory conditions (e.g., COPD)
- Frailty
- Hypertension
- Osteoporosis
- Anxiety & Depression



IMPACT AGEWELL



IMPACTAgewell is offered through Meadowbridge Surgery which involves an IMPACTAgewell® Officer who will call out to your house for a few visits to have conversations about your health and wellbeing and discuss any additional services or support that might be available to help you, in addition to those currently offered by the GP practice.

Go to <https://www.meadowbridgesurgery.uk/impact-community-support/> to complete a self referral form which can be sent to MEAAP, 18 Queen Street, Ballymena BT42 2BD or left at our reception and we will forward on.

Become a Befriending Volunteer with Agewell

As 2026 gets under way ,many of us look for meaningful ways to make a difference. Giving one simple hour of your time a week can change a life – and yours too.

Agewell's Building Flourishing Friendship (BFF) befriending volunteers offer companionship to local older people in their own homes in the Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area , helping to reduce loneliness and bring warmth, conversation and connection. It's just one hour a week, spent chatting, sharing stories, or enjoying a cup of tea together.

Volunteers can visit on their own or in pairs / as a couple , making it a flexible and rewarding way to give back. No special skills are needed – just time, kindness and a willingness to listen. This new year, new start could mean so much to an older person who may be feeling really isolated. Your visit can become the highlight of their week.

Start the year by making a real difference. Become a Befriending volunteer and help turn an hour of your time into lasting companionship.

For further information contact Ellen (our Volunteer Coordinator at Agewell) or request a volunteer application pack sent out to you today
Tel: 028 2565 8604



Email: Ellen.Nixon@meaap.co.uk

MBS WORKLOAD STATISTICS

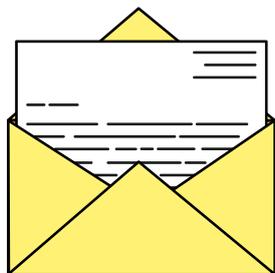
FEBRUARY 2026

DID NOT ATTEND APPOINTMENTS

190

These are appointments that have been booked and the patient did not attend. The appointment was not refilled and therefore wasted.

ADMINISTRATION TASKS



2,385

Hospital letters
actioned by
Practice staff



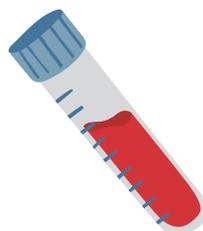
5534

Prescriptions
Issued



15776

General Admin
Tasks by Clinical
and Admin Team



2331

Patient Results
Reviewed

TRIAGE STATISTICS



46

Patient Home
Visits by a GP



2951

Face to Face
Appointments



2468

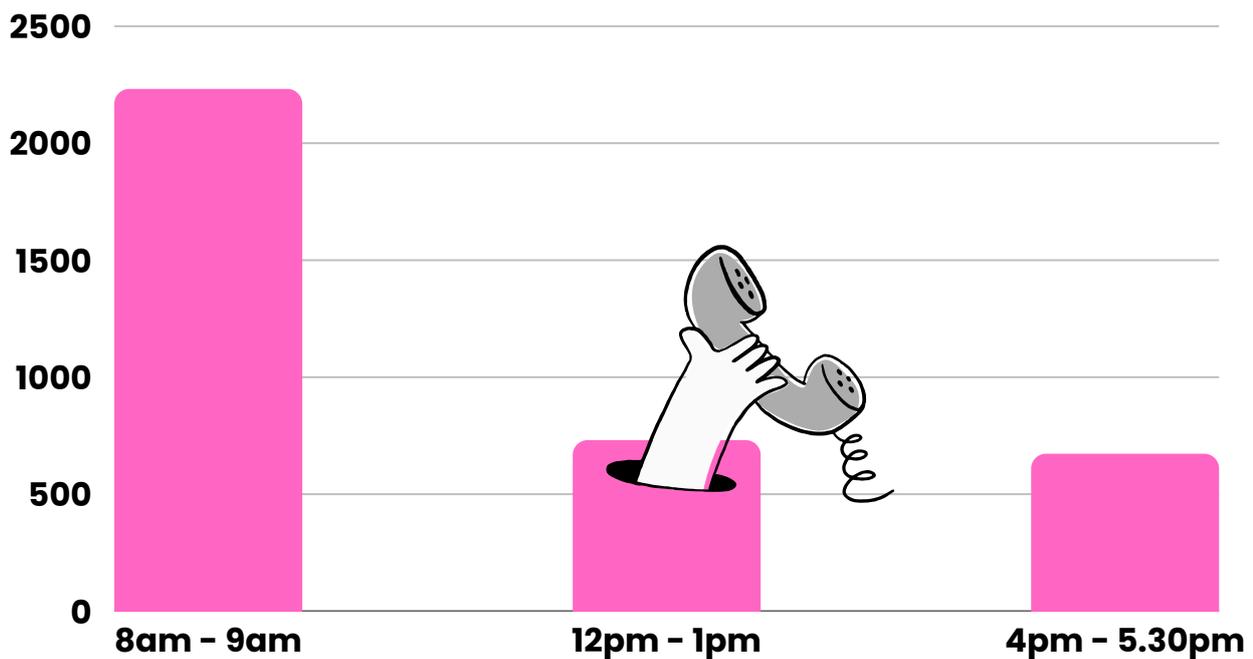
Triage call back to
Patients

INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS TO THE PRACTICE

16,131



AVERAGE HOURLY CALLS RECEIVED



AVERAGE PATIENT WAIT TIME IN A TELEPHONE QUEUE



1 minutes 04 seconds

PRESCRIPTION INFORMATION



Meadowbridge Surgery is closed every weekday between 1pm - 2pm for lunch. An emergency line is available for urgent and emergency symptoms that cannot wait until our telephone lines reopen.

Prescriptions

- We remind patients that prescriptions can be ordered 7 days in advance
- We encourage and remind patients to allow sufficient time to order repeat prescriptions and have it dispensed prior to the practice closures especially bank holidays..
- Nominate your chemist preference and your prescriptions will be available for collection within 72 hours. This is essential prior to bank holiday closures.
- Dalriada are for emergency clinical consultations not for requesting prescriptions when there is a practice closure
- It is vital that patients take responsibility for their own medications and prescription ordering arrangements.

Guidance on Prescriptions after seeing a Private Practitioner

In Northern Ireland, most patients get their medical treatment from the Health and Social Care (HSC) service which means that you don't need to pay anything for the treatment which includes:

- Seeing a healthcare professional such as a GP for advice and/or treatment
- Getting a prescription written for any medicines that you need
- Getting the prescription dispensed by a community pharmacist
- Receiving other treatment such as physiotherapy or having surgery

However sometimes patients may choose to have a private consultation and/or treatment. This is treatment that is provided outside the national health service and is privately paid for. Please click the link below to download a patient information leaflet on 'prescriptions after seeing a Private Practitioner.'

Please allow 3 working days for prescriptions to be ready to collect in your local chemist



MEDICATION SAFETY

While Medicines are hugely important in healthcare, they also have the potential to cause problems.

Five Moments for Medication Safety



Starting a medicine

- ▶ What is the name of this medicine and what is it for?
- ▶ What are the risks and possible side-effects?



Taking my medicine

- ▶ When should I take this medicine and how much should I take each time?
- ▶ What should I do if I have side-effects?



Adding a medicine

- ▶ Do I really need any other medicine?
- ▶ Can this medicine interact with my other medicines?



Reviewing my medicine

- ▶ How long should I take each medicine?
- ▶ Am I taking any medicines I no longer need?



Stopping my medicine

- ▶ When should I stop each medicine?
- ▶ If I have to stop my medicine due to an unwanted effect, where should I report this?

CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

The immunisation programme gives vaccines to babies and children at different ages. Routine immunisation for babies begins when they are eight weeks old. Your child needs several vaccines to protect them from infections, so it's important to complete their immunisation programme.

Summary of the changes to the routine childhood schedule from 1 July 2025

From	Change to be implemented
1 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First PCV13 dose moved from 12 weeks of age to 16 weeks of age. Second MenB dose brought forward from 16 weeks of age to 12 weeks of age• Cessation of routine Hib/MenC (Menitorix®) offer to those turning 12 months for those born on or after 1 July 2024• Removal of monovalent HepB dose at one year for infants on the selective HepB pathway schedule born on or after 1 July 2024
1 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of an additional (fourth dose) of DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (hexavalent) vaccine at a new routine appointment at 18 months for children born on or after 1 July 2024
1 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second MMR dose moved from 3 years 4 months to the new routine 18-month appointment for children born on or after 1 July 2024

There are no new vaccine products in the amended schedule – the hexavalent vaccine administered at age 18 months is the same vaccine that is given at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age. Further information about potential issues or questions that may arise will be available in the '2025 and 2026 childhood immunisation schedule changes Information for healthcare practitioner' guidance on GOV.UK



CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

When and where your child will get vaccines

The Child Health system or your doctor's surgery usually sends out your invitation to make vaccination appointments. Your child can get some vaccinations in school. The school will contact you before they give your child a vaccine.

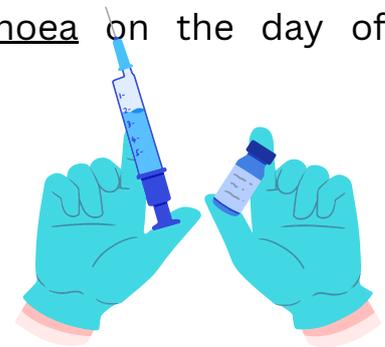
It is important that vaccines are given on time for the best protection, but if your child missed a vaccination, contact your GP to catch up. You will continue to be called for all your child's scheduled vaccination appointments when they are due. Remember, vaccinations are safe, effective and can save lives.

Why your baby might not get a vaccine

There are some reasons why immunisation might not be right for your baby. It's important to tell your GP or nurse about any illnesses or allergies your baby has had.

Before vaccination, the doctor or nurse needs to know if your baby:

- has a very high temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea on the day of the appointment
- has had convulsions or fits
- had a bad reaction to a previous immunisation
- is allergic to anything
- has a bleeding disorder
- has had or is having treatment for cancer
- has an illness that affects the immune system, for example leukaemia, HIV or AIDS
- takes medicine that affects the immune system, for example high dose steroids or treatments given after organ transplant or for cancers
- has any other serious illness

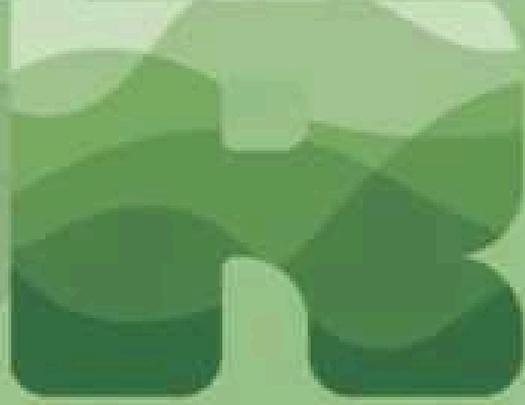


For more information please visit: www.nidirect.gov.uk



Cithrah Renew

in association with www.renewwellbeing.org.uk



Renew Wellbeing

Thursdays 1pm-3pm in our
upstairs room

The Cithrah Foundation, De Courcy Centre
Carrickfergus

Bring a
hobby, or
take part
in hobby
activities
provided

refreshments provided

Optional prayer room available



Take time out for the renewing of your wellbeing