

Meadowbridge SURGERY

Monthly Newsletter April 2026

WWW.MEADOWBRIDGESURGERY.CO.UK

**BANK HOLIDAY
CLOSURE
Monday 6th
Tuesday 7th April**



BANK HOLIDAY CLOSURE

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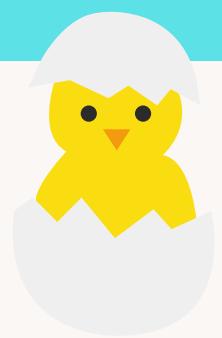
REMINDER

We will be closed on Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th April for the Easter bank holiday.

The surgery will re open on Wednesday 8^h April at 8.30am.

Please allow 72 working hours to order your repeat prescriptions and have them delivered to the pharmacy.

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



MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY LATEST NEWS/UPDATES : APRIL 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.

Patient consent

Anyone over the age of 16 requires written consent to allow a friend or family member access to their medical records. You can find a patient consent form on your website or collect one at reception

Registration

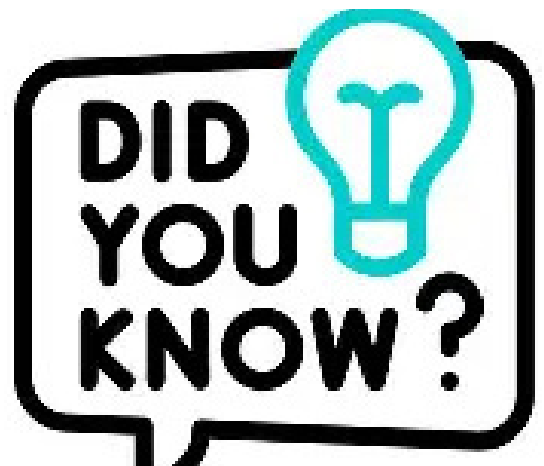
For any new patients registering with Meadowbridge, please source an 'encounter report' - a brief summary of care from your previous surgery to bring with you when registering

REMINDER: Online patient services

When using the online patient services to add a triage message, this is simply your message being added to a call back list - it will automatically generate a time but this is **not** an appointment time. A member of staff will be in touch via telephone.

Prescription requests

Please allow 72 working hours for prescription requests to be available to collect at your nominated chemist.



MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY: OUR DAILY TRIAGE SERVICE

Meadowbridge Surgery provides a daily routine triage service which will close at 10:30am each day or once the GP on Triage considers capacity to have been reached (whichever comes first).

Triage continues to be available for the remainder of the day for clinically urgent issues a patient considers cannot wait beyond that day. The triage Doctor will assess these urgent triages and prioritise each accordingly.

Please do note, that once your details have been added to the triage list - this is an all day call back service and the GP can respond at any point throughout the day up until 5.30pm.

To help us to help you we ask that you:

Cancel any unwanted appointments in plenty of time, allowing us to reallocate the appointment to another patient. Please note that patients who continue to miss appointments after receiving a warning from the practice may be removed from our list.



MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY: FEEDBACK

We were delighted to receive some very kind feedback from one of our patients regarding our Advanced Nurse Practitioner
Gillian

'My daughter was unwell. I rang the health centre and I was offered an appointment with Gillian, who was excellent with my daughter and appropriate treatment was prescribed. Within one hour I had rang, been seen and was at the chemist getting her much needed medication. Thank you so much for this speedy treatment'



ASTHMA INFORMATION FROM OUR PRACTICE NURSE LYNN

Lynn Martin, our Practice Nurse has provided some information below regarding Asthma, which can be particularly problematic during the change of season..

Do you have asthma?

Did you know that the frequency with which you need your blue inhaler indicates how well / poorly controlled your asthma is?
Are you needing more than 1 blue inhaler per year? If so this means your asthma is not well controlled

If you are having the following symptoms - chest tightness, shortness of breath, wheeze or cough every week then your asthma medication may need changed.

Well controlled asthma= No symptoms

Frequent symptoms = Poorly controlled asthma with increased risk of a potentially life threatening attack.

If you are concerned about your asthma please make a review appointment by calling the surgery on 02893353454



ALCOHOL AWARENESS INFORMATION FROM OUR HCA JULIE

Julie Weir, our Health Care Assistant has provided some information regarding Alcohol Awareness

Realising you have a problem with alcohol is the first big step to getting help. In the UK, it is recommended that both men & women drink no more than 14 units of alcohol per week, spread over three or more days, with several alcohol-free days

Be honest with yourself; how much do you actually consume?

These strategies can help you make healthier choices about your alcohol consumption and improve your overall well-being.

-Cut Down Gradually. This can help you avoid withdrawal symptoms and make the process easier.

-Set Limits

-Try different non-alcoholic beverages, such as water, sparkling water or mocktails to keep your options open.

-Monitor Your Drinking: Keep track of your alcohol consumption to identify patterns and triggers. This can help you manage your drinking habits better.

The immediate effects of cutting down include:

-feeling better in the mornings

-being less tired during the day

-better looking skin

-feeling more energetic

-better weight management

-Long-term benefits include: Better Mood /Sleep/ Behaviour /Heart /Immune system

DRINKLINE UK (0300 123 1110), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), & your GP are some useful contacts for helping with alcohol problems

Keep this in mind on your personal journey - Alcohol does not solve problems, it postpones them.

MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY

WINTER PRESSURES



WWW.MEADOWBRIDGESURGERY.CO.UK

All GP practices in N. Ireland took part in a Winter Pressures, GP Workload & Activity data collection over 1 week in January 26.

The SPPG/DOH has issued individual Practice outcomes, measured against Belfast/S.East/North/South/West and NI averages as follows:

GP contact rate for MBS (96 per 1,000 patients) significantly above NI average (63).

Meadowbridge Surgery (MBS) - Total GP contacts : 898 in week commencing 12 January.

Key areas were broken down as follows:

Face-to-face appointments: 328: (above NI avg)

Telephone contacts: 570: significantly above NI avg)

Clinical admin tasks: 882: (3.5x NI average)

DNA rate: Very low (positive)

A&E referrals: Low and appropriate

Home Visits: In line with NI averages

Patient turnover: Moderate

GP Clinical sessions: Above NI average per 1000/pts

Sustained GP workload significantly above regional average.

To support service development we have recently been able to expand our practice pharmacist team from 5 to 6 WTE staff per week.

We also hope soon to be able to welcome physiotherapists and social workers into our current MDT team.



CLINICAL SYSTEM CHANGE

Changes for Our Patients: Management of Online Patient Services

We are changing our computer systems on 12th 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 on 12th May 2026!

What does that mean for me?

You will no longer be able to order repeat prescriptions from Wednesday 6th May after 5.30pm.

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 after 12th May or we can re-set you up for online prescriptions on Emis when you order your next prescription after 12th May 26 by telephone.

You will be provided with:

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

Please check your emails and spam folders.



PATIENT CONSENT



Accessing GP services for someone else, with consented access

GP surgeries can give someone secure access to another patient's GP services, so they can help them manage their health and care.

This is sometimes called consented access or third party access.

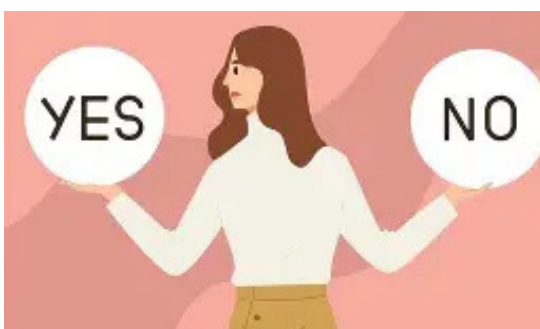
You can ask to be proxy, to help someone else with their prescriptions, appointments or other GP services: Just complete a consent form from our reception, or they can be found on our website.

Our consent form grants permission for both clinical and administrative staff within Meadowbridge Surgery to speak to another on your behalf. This may include relatives, friends, carers, etc. We therefore request that you complete this form appropriately and return it to Meadowbridge Surgery where a copy will be filed within your medical record for future reference.

Withdrawal of your Consent

This withdrawal form removes any previous permission granted for both clinical and administrative staff within Meadowbridge Surgery to speak to another on your behalf. We therefore request that you complete this form appropriately and return it to Meadowbridge Surgery where a copy will be filed within your medical record for future reference.

Please note, any young person over the age of 16 requires written consent for a family member or friend to access and help manage their health and care.



STRESS AWARENESS MONTH APRIL 2026



Stress Awareness Month 2026 is observed throughout April focusing on the theme ‘Be the Change’ to encourage proactive stress management and mental wellness.

Stress Awareness Month, observed every April since 1992, is a crucial initiative aimed at raising public awareness about the causes, effects, and management of stress. In our increasingly fast-paced world, stress has become a common part of everyday life, yet it remains a topic often overlooked or misunderstood. Stress Awareness Month provides an important opportunity to break the stigma around mental health, promote stress management strategies, and encourage healthier, more resilient lifestyles.

Stress can have a profound impact on various aspects of life, contributing to conditions such as anxiety, depression, heart disease, and weakened immune response. By increasing understanding and promoting open conversations about stress, this month encourages individuals to prioritize self-care and seek support when needed.

Why is Stress Awareness Month Important?

Stress, if left unmanaged, can negatively affect nearly every system of the body and undermine overall health and happiness. Raising awareness about stress and its effects is essential for encouraging early intervention, reducing stigma around mental health struggles, and promoting resilience and wellbeing at both personal and community levels.

How can you get involved?

- **Practice Self-Care Daily:** Make time for activities that nourish your mind and body, such as exercise, meditation, journaling, or spending time in nature. Prioritizing self-care routines can help manage and reduce stress levels over time.
- **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about the symptoms of stress, coping mechanisms, and mental health resources available. Share helpful articles, host a lunch-and-learn session, or distribute informational materials at work or school.
- **Limit Stress Triggers:** Assess areas of your life that contribute to unnecessary stress and work on setting healthy boundaries. Whether it's managing screen time, setting work-life balance limits, or learning to say no, small changes can have a big impact.

BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH APRIL 2026



**BOWEL
CANCER**
AWARENESS MONTH
APRIL

Bowel cancer can affect **anyone**, but risk increases with age, particularly from 50 onwards. However, younger adults are also being diagnosed more frequently, making widespread awareness critical for all age groups.

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in many countries. Yet, when diagnosed early, more than 90% of bowel cancer cases can be treated successfully. Raising awareness helps dispel myths, reduce stigma around discussing bowel habits, and empowers people to seek help sooner.

Main symptoms of bowel cancer

Symptoms of bowel cancer may include:

- changes in your poo, such as having softer poo, diarrhoea or constipation that is not usual for you
 - needing to poo more or less often than usual for you
 - blood in your poo, which may look red or black
 - often feeling like you need to poo, even if you've just been to the toilet
 - tummy pain
 - a lump in your tummy
 - bloating
 - losing weight without trying
- feeling very tired or short of breath

- **See a GP if:**

you have any symptoms of bowel cancer for 3 weeks or more

Try not to be embarrassed. The doctor or nurse will be used to talking about these symptoms.



WWW.NHS.UK/CONDITIONS/BOWEL-CANCER

World Autism Acceptance Month

APRIL 2026

World Autism Acceptance Month is an opportunity for everyone to come together and raise awareness, acceptance, and create a society where autistic people are supported and understood. Whether you're at home, at school, or at work, your involvement can make a real difference. It's about how you show up, whether you're supporting your autistic colleagues, students, or family members, your actions can help create an inclusive and accepting world.

Join us in April 2026, help us change attitudes towards autism. Your support can help create a world that works for autistic people and their families.

Ways to Participate

There are many meaningful ways to engage during the week:

- **Wear Blue:** Participate in the global “Light It Up Blue” campaign by wearing blue clothing or accessories, and observe landmarks that light up in blue to show support.
- **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about autism, share resources, books, documentaries, or personal stories to increase understanding in your community.
- **Support Autism-Friendly Businesses:** Visit or promote businesses that are inclusive and accommodating to autistic individuals.
- **Fundraising and Events:** Join or organize walks, runs, virtual fundraisers, or local events to support organizations providing resources and advocacy for autistic people and their families.
- **Community Engagement:** Attend seminars, talks, or local charity events to learn more about autism
-

visit: www.autism.org.uk for more information



MS AWARENESS WEEK 28TH APRIL- 04TH MAY

www.mssociety.org.uk

What is MS?

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a condition that affects nerves in your central nervous system. That's your brain and spinal cord. In MS, the coating (called myelin) that protects your nerves is damaged. This causes a range of symptoms like blurred vision and problems with how we move, think and feel.

Once diagnosed, MS stays with you for life, but treatments and specialists can help you to manage the condition and its symptoms.

More than **150,000 people in the UK have MS**. In the UK people are most likely to find out they have MS in their thirties and forties. But the **first signs of MS** often start years earlier. Many people notice their first symptoms years before they get their diagnosis.

MS affects about two and half times as many women as men. People from many different ethnic backgrounds can get MS.

Speak to someone who knows MS

The MS society offers a MS Helpline, which gives emotional support and information to everyone living with MS. They are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 7pm except bank holidays on 0808 800 8000.

They are a mix of paid staff and volunteers, MS nurses, benefits and legal specialists, health and social care and fitness experts.

Send them a private message on Facebook messenger. Or send them an email: helpline@mssociety.org.uk.



Allergy Awareness Week

Allergy Awareness Week in 2026 will take place from **April 22 to April 28**, focusing on raising awareness about allergies and their impact on individuals' lives

What is an allergy?

An allergy is a reaction your body has to a particular food or substance. Whilst in most people these substances pose no problem, for allergic individuals their immune system identifies them as a threat. As a result, the body can produce a response to try and combat the supposed threat. This can range from something minor such as itching to something much more severe and life-threatening, like anaphylaxis. Allergies are more common in children, but they can persist into adulthood too.

The topic of Allergy Awareness Week 2026 is 'childhood food allergy.' It will focus specifically on the experience of parents and carers of babies with food allergies, combating any anxieties and offering practical, researched support

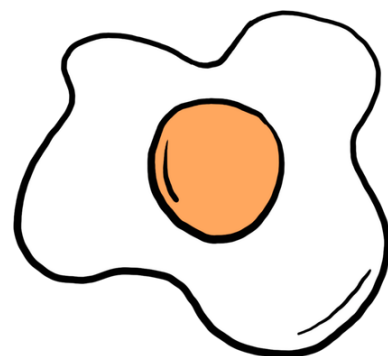
Did you know...

- Allergies are very common. They affect more than 1 in 4 people in the UK at some point in their lives.
- They're particularly common in children.
- People can develop allergies to things they were not previously allergic to.
- The most common allergies include: grass and tree pollen (hay fever), food (such as nuts, shellfish and eggs), dust mites and medicines like penicillin.

Some common symptoms of an allergic reaction:

Not all allergic reactions will have the same symptoms, but here are some general ones to look out for are;

Sneezing, coughing, a runny or blocked nose, a red, itchy rash, worsening of eczema or asthma symptoms, red, itchy and watery eyes



MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY ONLINE

**Practice
Website
Views
3,700**



**Newsletter
Subscriptions
in March
19**

TOTAL Newsletter Subscriptions

884

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

WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY: SATURDAY 11TH APRIL



Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition.

People with Parkinson's don't have enough of the chemical dopamine in their brain because some of the nerve cells that make it have stopped working.

Around 166,000 people live with Parkinson's in the UK. Parkinson's is on the rise. In the UK today, someone is diagnosed every 20 minutes. By 2050, the number of people with Parkinson's worldwide will double to 25 million.

What is 'Parkinson's disease'?

Parkinsonism is a term that covers several conditions, including Parkinson's and others with similar symptoms. Some, including healthcare professionals and people with the condition, call it Parkinson's disease, or PD for short.

Parkinson's symptoms

Symptoms start to appear when the brain can't make enough dopamine to control movement properly.

There are over 40 symptoms of Parkinson's. But the 3 main symptoms of Parkinson's are a tremor (shaking), slowness of movement and rigidity (muscle stiffness).

Types of Parkinson's

Parkinsonism is a term that covers several conditions. This includes Parkinson's and other conditions with similar symptoms such as slow movement, rigidity (stiffness) and problems with walking.

There are three main forms of parkinsonism:

- idiopathic Parkinson's
- vascular parkinsonism
- drug-induced parkinsonism

Need to talk to someone?

Parkinson's helpline advisers are here to answer any questions you have about Parkinson's.

Call us on 0808 800 0303.



email: hello@parkinsons.org.uk

WORLD IMMUNISATION WEEK 2026: FOR EVERY GENERATION, VACCINES WORK



World Immunisation Week 2026 - 24 to 30 April

World Immunization Week, celebrated in the last week of April, aims to promote the life-saving power of immunization to protect people of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines have long been one of the most powerful tools in public health. Over the last 50 years, vaccines have saved more than 150 million lives – not by accident, but because ordinary people made the decision to protect themselves, their children and one another. That’s 6 lives every minute, every day, for five decades.

Health workers rolling up sleeves, parents bringing their children to health clinics, communities showing up, and generations deciding that preventing infectious diseases, such as measles, diphtheria, pertussis and polio, is worth it.

Those choices to vaccinate have contributed to a 40% improvement in infant survival during that time and protected tens of millions of children from lifelong disabilities. More children now live to see their first birthday – and grow up, fall in love, have families, and grow old – than at any other point in human history.

This year’s World Immunisation Week theme, “For every generation, vaccines work”, aims to promote how vaccines have safely protected people, families, and communities for generations – and continue to safeguard our future.

Is it safe to receive several different vaccines during one visit, or combination vaccines?

Yes, it is safe to receive several different vaccines during one visit. Combination vaccines are also as safe and effective as individual vaccines.

Receiving several vaccines or combination vaccines in one visit is important to protect children from various diseases as early as possible. This also makes it easier to complete the recommended doses on time. Combination vaccines (e.g. DTP for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) reduce the number of injections.

Receiving multiple doses also does not overwhelm the immune system. The antigens present in vaccines are a small fraction compared to what our bodies naturally encounter every day.

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@meap.co.uk

MBS WORKLOAD STATISTICS

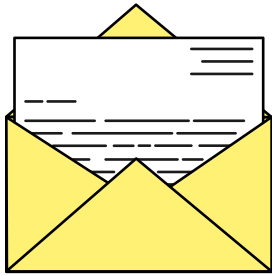
MARCH 2026

DID NOT ATTEND APPOINTMENTS

115

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

ADMINISTRATION TASKS



2,542

Hospital letters
actioned by
Practice staff



6,276

Prescriptions
Issued



17,395

General Admin
Tasks by Clinical
and Admin Team



2,603

Patient Results
Reviewed

TRIAGE STATISTICS



18

Patient Home
Visits by a GP



3,850

Face to Face
Appointments



2,600

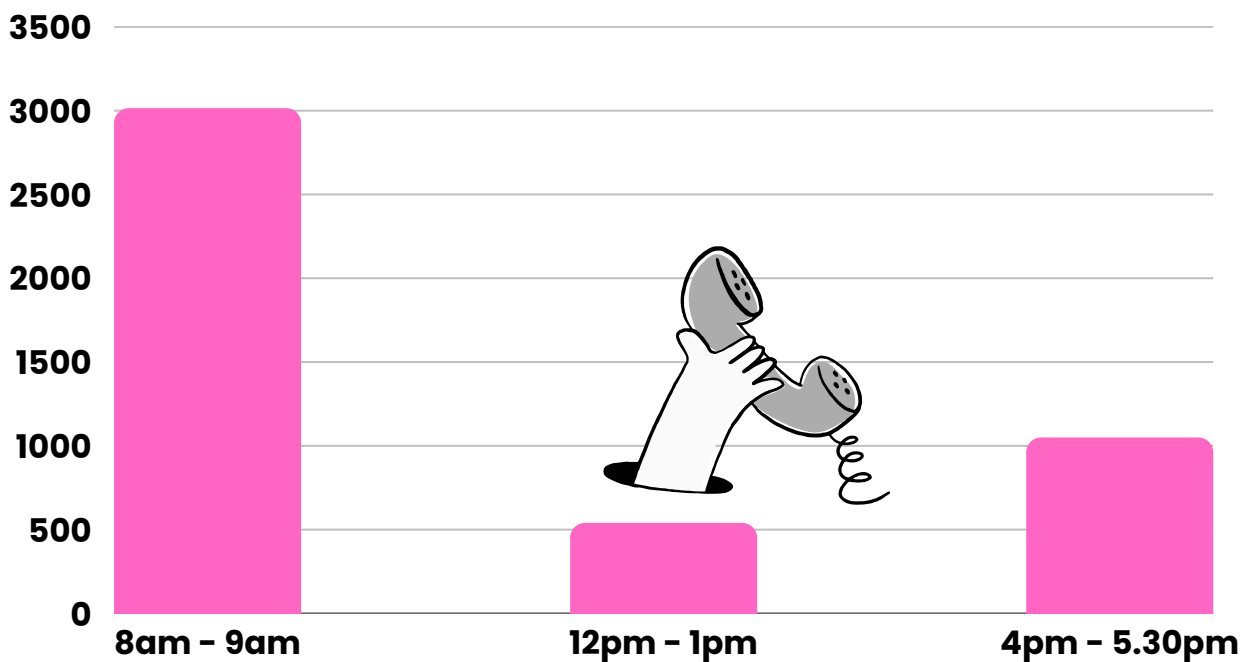
Triage call back to
Patients

INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS TO THE PRACTICE

21,371



AVERAGE HOURLY CALLS RECEIVED



AVERAGE PATIENT WAIT TIME IN A TELEPHONE QUEUE



2 minutes 28 seconds

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.

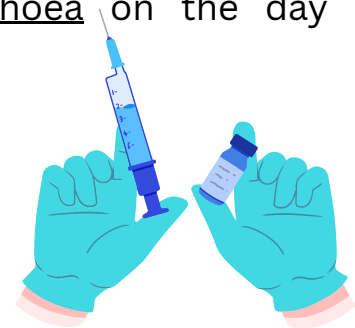
It is important that vaccines are given on time for the best protection, but if your child missed a vaccination, contact your GP to catch up. You will continue to be called for all your child's scheduled vaccination appointments when they are due. Remember, vaccinations are safe, effective and can save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



GOOD HAND HYGIENE AT MEADOWBRIDGE SURGERY

Hand hygiene – reducing the spread of infection.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) would remind the public of the need to maintain good hand hygiene. This will help to reduce the risk of picking up or spreading of viruses.

The PHA recommends simple, practical steps to minimise the risk of illness and infection including:

- Always maintain good personal hygiene. Wash your hands frequently, especially after visits to the toilet, and before preparing or eating food.
- Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, throw the tissue in the bin and wash your hands as soon as you can.
- Encourage children to wash their hands frequently and use tissues as well.
- People with vomiting or diarrhoea symptoms should not prepare food.
- Use an anti-bacterial gel or wipe when hand washing facilities are not available.





Healthy hands

Fact sheet

What makes our hands dirty?

We get microbes on our hands from everything that we touch like door handles, school desks, the floor or our pets. We also get microbes on our hands when we hold hands, pick our nose or sneeze into our hands.

Why should we wash our hands?

We wash our hands to get rid of harmful microbes that might make us poorly. It is important that we wash our hands after using the toilet, before eating or cooking, after stroking animals or after coughing or sneezing.

Surprise your friends and family with these fun facts!

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

- Most microbes on our hands are under our fingernails.
- Nearly everyone says they wash their hands after using the toilet, but more than half don't. Just think what may be on their hands.
- Most toilet handles have 400 times more microbes than the toilet seat.
- There are more microbes on one person's hand than people on the planet.
- Hand washing is the best way to stop microbes spreading.
- Some microbes can stay alive on our hands for up to three hours.