



## Practice Newsletter – March 2020

**Welcome to our Newsletter** and our new logo, above! It's not yet widely used but you will see it in due course on our stationery and signage and then on our new website which will be launched soon. The main item in the newsletter is advice about "COVID-19", caused by the new coronavirus. Current advice is shown below including where to get up to date information as the situation develops; we suggest you keep this newsletter so that you can easily access these resources.

### COVID-19 and the Coronavirus

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a form of coronavirus.

**What's the risk of COVID-19 in the UK?** The UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. Health professionals are working to contact anyone who has been in close contact with people who have coronavirus.

**What's the risk of COVID-19 for travellers?** There are some countries and areas where there's a higher chance of coming into contact with someone with coronavirus ([check on-line](#) for up to date list)

#### Symptoms of COVID-19:

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

**How coronavirus is spread.** Because it's a new illness, we do not know exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person. Similar viruses are spread in cough droplets. It's very unlikely it can be spread through things like packages or food.

#### How to avoid catching or spreading COVID-19

##### Do

- wash your hands with soap and hot water often – do this for at least 20 seconds each time
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use alcohol based hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

##### Don't

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

#### Check if you need medical help

NHS 111 has an [online coronavirus service](#) that can tell you if you need medical help and advise you what to do. Use this service if:

- you think you might have coronavirus
- in the last 14 days you've been to a country or area with a high risk of coronavirus – see [NHS advice for travellers](#)
- you've been in close contact with someone with coronavirus.

**Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Use the [on-line NHS 111 coronavirus service](#) or call NHS 111 if you need to speak to someone.**



### **For more information:**

The information above is taken from the NHS website as at the time of writing (6th March). The situation changes rapidly so for up to date advice and more detail please use these on-line resources.

- The NHS website, [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk), click on the yellow banner for coronavirus information for the latest updates and to see more detail.
- To find out what you should do if you think you have symptoms, you can also use the on-line NHS 111 service, [111.www.nhs](http://111.www.nhs), and again, click on the yellow banner for coronavirus information.
- The government's website also has more detailed information from Public Health England and elsewhere; see [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and scroll down to see the Coronavirus link.

**Please do not visit the surgery for advice if you think you have COVID-19 or are worried about coronavirus. Instead, use these specialised resources and help keep the community safe by following advice to isolate at home and limit the risk of spreading the virus.**

### **“LIVI” video consultations**

As you may have seen, along with other practices in the area, we have teamed up with LIVI to provide free, NHS GP video consultations from your smartphone or tablet. Appointments are available during evenings and weekends and can be booked in advance or at short notice. LIVI doctors have access, with your consent, to the records held by the practice, can prescribe or refer if necessary and a record of your consultation is made in the notes we have at the surgery allowing continuity of care.

You need to download the app to use this service and to register before you can book an appointment – it only takes a few moments but why not do this now so that it is ready and available for when you or your family might need it. Just follow these steps:

1. Download LIVI from the App Store or Google Play. It works on mobile or tablet.
2. Sign up and search for Old Bridge Surgery in the app.
3. You're ready to book! (You will need some ID the first time you book - a passport or driving licence).

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 and need further medical advice, a video consultation via LIVI offers an ideal solution; download the app now so it is ready when you need it.

### **Remember your health when you plan a holiday**

Despite some anxiety about COVID-19, many people are planning holidays for later in the year. If you are planning a trip that might require travel vaccinations, please plan ahead. For more information, visit our website ([www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk](http://www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk)) and fill in our travel questionnaire. Make an appointment to see one of our nurses for travel advice at least six weeks before you travel; some conditions require a course of vaccinations which can take time. Please note that not all travel services are funded by the NHS – charges may apply.

### **Management changes**

Our practice manager, Mark Allen, is retiring in mid-April. He joined the practice at the end of 2015 and has been practice manager here and elsewhere for 15 years. As a result of his departure, there will be some changes to our management team which will be led by Tracey Stammers. Karen Richards continues in her role overseeing patient facing services. These two colleagues already have several years' experience in the practice and will be joined by a Finance and Project Manager, a position for which we are currently recruiting.

As some will know, Mark is married to Dr Claire Allen; her patients may be reassured that she has no plans to retire just yet!

**Remember to keep this newsletter handy so that you can access up to date advice about COVI-19 – see above.**