

Dr O J Carey & Dr M R Chowdhury



OAKLEY SURGERY
Addington Way, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 9FJ
TEL: 01582 496050
FAX: 01582 561808
E-mail: oakley.surgery@nhs.net

22nd December 2020

Dear patients and the wider community,

I felt that it would be an important time now more than ever, to communicate and reach out to you in what has undoubtedly been an incredibly challenging year for society.

In 2020, General Practice and the NHS in its entirety, has had to undertake some quite substantial adjustments in order to continue effective, but safe, service to the community. This has included the introduction of improved technologies, alongside new protocols and procedures, to ensure you can continue to access medical professionals, in a manner which will not compromise your health, nor the continuity of accessibility to the practice, in order to service the 6,500 patients on our list. This has consequently seen Oakley Surgery take on a 'triage first' approach, when accessing your GP.

This does not however mean you cannot see your GP; our GP's continue to physically assess patients, based upon clinical need. It is important to remember that even in these difficult times, you still have access to your GP. We will continue to facilitate access, including telephone and video consultations, with face-to-face assessments where appropriate. Please do not hesitate to contact your GP, should you experience medical problems.

In addition, I would like to give praise and my personal thanks to the nursing team at the surgery, who have continued to provide high-standard care throughout the COVID pandemic, with face-to-face appointments with appropriate PPE, and regular remote engagement with our patients remotely (and face-to-face if needed), for the management of chronic diseases, such as Asthma, COPD and Diabetes.

As we enter a critical stage of the year, I thought it would be important to underline and potentially answer some of the frequent questions that we are having about some of the services at Oakley Surgery:

Flu Vaccination Programme 2020-21

The annual flu vaccination programme is well underway and will continue until the end of March 2021. Uptake in this programme at this stage is higher than previous years, which is inevitably in response to the current COVID pandemic. Oakley Surgery still possesses vaccinations, so please do not hesitate to contact the surgery should you meet any of the following criteria:

- Aged 65 and over
- Have long-term health conditions (Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, Heart Failure, Obesity, problems with your spleen, Liver disease)
- Are currently pregnant
- Are the main carer for an older or disabled person who is at risk
- Are a frontline health and social care worker

An additional criteria has been added this year, with vaccines made available for patients between the ages of 50-64; Oakley Surgery possesses vaccines for people in this group, so please do not hesitate to book an appointment for your flu vaccination!

COVID Vaccination Programme 2020-21

The COVID Vaccination Programme is now very much amongst us in the UK now, with Wave 1 already rolled out, meaning some practices/Hospital Trusts are now vaccinating.

Oakley Surgery will be participating in the COVID Vaccination Programme, which will be a joint effort within our Primary Care Network, the Hatters Health Network. Whilst we are very much in the planning process, we anticipate that this programme will commence on the week beginning Monday 11th January 2021. This will take place at the Legrave Centre, Strangers Way, LU4 9ND.

More information on the vaccination programme can be found on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk). We understand that there is a substantial level of demand for this vaccine, but please be assured once further information becomes available on the delivery of the COVID vaccination programme as your GP, we will share this with you.

Standard Operations

As I am sure you are aware, current COVID guidelines outline that members of the community can be subject to periods of self-isolation, depending on symptoms, or level of contact with any COVID-related cases. Despite our premises being 'COVID-secure', it is on occasion unavoidable that members of our team may require to self-isolate for periods of up to 10 days throughout the winter period.

In order to maintain continuity of care, I reach out to you with recommendations for how you, as our patients, can help us to assist you in the safest method possible:

- Please, where possible, request prescriptions in writing via our website. Alternatively, a written request to oakley.surgery@nhs.net with your medication details and demographic details (Name, DOB etc), will suffice. Even during a COVID pandemic, our staff will not be able to accept requests for medication over the telephone.
- All GP appointments, unless specified otherwise by the clinician, are listed as a telephone appointment. You will be allocated a schedule time for the phonecall. In some circumstances the GP may contact you at an earlier time; should we fail to establish contact with you at that time, we will contact again at the time of the appointment. However, should we fail to establish contact during the scheduled appointment time, we will consider this to be a failed contact and will be marked as per our appointment policy as 'Did Not Attend'. Please take this into consideration when booking an appointment with the surgery.
- Please ensure that you register the correct contact details with the reception team when booking a telephone appointment with the surgery; this will allow our clinicians to access you quicker, in order to listen to your medical concerns. If there is an unsuitable time to call, please inform our team, who will ensure that your clinician is aware of this.
- Please continue to display respect to our administration team at all times; Remember, we are here to help!

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the administration team here, who have endured a particularly tough and career-defining year. I would also like to thank you, the community, for your efforts and understanding during this pandemic. It has been a vastly challenging year with little hope at times, but with the COVID vaccination programme now underway, there is now some light at the end what feels like an incredibly long tunnel. **Just remember; We are in this together.**

Stay safe,

Liam Harris – Practice Manager
Oakley Surgery