

October 2025

LAMBTON ROAD MEDICAL PRACTICE



Dear Reader

Flu

As we approach half-term, flu cases are rising, particularly among children. We strongly encourage parents to ensure their children are vaccinated. For most children, the flu vaccine is given as a nasal spray rather than an injection.

Children aged 2 to 3 years on 31st August 2025 should be vaccinated at the surgery. All school-aged children (Reception to Year 11) will be vaccinated at school. If your child misses their school vaccination, please contact the school directly – catch-up clinics are usually arranged.

The adult flu campaign began on 1st October 2025, slightly later than usual. The change was made nationally to ensure peak immunity levels during the Christmas period, when families gather and flu spreads most easily.

Children are often ‘superspreaders’, so vaccinating them also helps protect the extended family, where elderly relatives may be more vulnerable.

Eligibility for free flu vaccination remains unchanged this year. The flu vaccine is free for:

- Anyone aged 65 or over (including those turning 65 by 31 March 2026)
- People with certain long-term health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, kidney or liver disease, asthma, COPD)
- Pregnant women
- Care home residents
- Main carers for older or disabled individuals, or those receiving a Carer's Allowance
- Anyone living with someone who has a weakened immune system

COVID

In Merton, COVID vaccinations are available at local pharmacies, not GP practices. The nearest participating pharmacies are Trident and Barkers – visit the NHS website for further details: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/book-covid-19-vaccination/.

Stop Smoking Resources

Merton Council offers a range of Stop Smoking services, which you can find out more about by visiting their website, www.merton.gov.uk/healthy-living/smoke-free.

A Stop Smoking service is also available at St George's Hospital (appointment needed) – call 0800 389 7921.

You can also speak to a specialist adviser via the Stop Smoking Helpline on 0300 123 1044, open Monday – Friday, 9am - 8pm and Sunday, 11am – 4pm.

3-9 November is Medicines Safety Week

If you take repeat medication – even if you feel well – you should have a medication review at least once per year. Many medicines need regular blood tests or blood pressure checks. We set a review date for all drugs suitable for repeat prescribing, and it is easy to see your review date on your prescription on the NHS App or on your prescription slip handed to you at the pharmacy.

We spend a lot of time contacting patients to make appointments with our in-house pharmacists, but we have now introduced two new online bookable slots: **“Medication review with the pharmacist face to face”** and **“Medication review with the pharmacist telephone”**. These slots enable patients to take the initiative and book themselves an appointment when their review is due.

Medicines Safety Week is a global campaign now in its 10th year and focuses on how everyone can contribute to making medicines safer. One key tool is the MHRA Yellow Card Scheme, which allows both clinicians and patients to report suspected drug side effects. You can submit a “yellow card” at www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/.

For more information about Medicines Safety Week, visit the MHRA website: www.yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/MedSafetyWeek.

Musculoskeletal Problems

In September, we hosted a webinar with Surrey Physio, who provide our “First Contact Practitioners (FCPs)” – experienced physiotherapists who should be your first point of contact for all neck/back pain, joint problems, and sports injuries.

The webinar recording is available on our website. It explains how FCPs can organise X-rays, refer on to secondary care physiotherapy and orthopaedics, and offer expert self-management advice. Appointments are available Monday to Saturday and can be booked directly online.

Hospital waiting times for physiotherapy remain long, so we recommend the 'Get you better' app – a free, NHS-approved app for managing musculoskeletal injuries and women's pelvic health. It now also includes heart and lung health resources.

Simply download the app and enter your GP practice name when prompted. For more information, visit: www.getubetter.com/patient/.

Prostate Cancer Screening

In July, we hosted a well-attended webinar on PSA testing for prostate cancer, which was timely, as it followed the news of Sir Chris Hoy's recent diagnosis.

Prostate cancer is the most common cause of cancer in the UK, affecting 50,000 men each year and causing 12,000 deaths.

We had anticipated a national prostate cancer screening programme to be announced this year, but instead, the government has recommended targeted testing for higher-risk groups, including:

- White men over 50 years
- Black men over 45 years
- Men with a family history of prostate, breast, or ovarian cancer.

Data from the National Prostate Cancer Audit revealed that men from the wealthiest areas of England are twice as likely to receive a diagnosis as those from more deprived areas. Black men are also twice as likely to develop prostate cancer. When caught and treated early, prostate cancer is almost always treatable.

We plan to host another webinar to discuss the benefits of PSA testing, led by Dr Harry Gunn and Dr Josh Collier-Keywood on Wednesday 12th November. We will be inviting those deemed to be in the higher-risk groups to join us. Please look out for our invite.

Asthma

Asthma treatment has progressed rapidly in recent years. We recently published a webinar recording on our website from September, featuring London Asthma Lead Pharmacist Reena Rabheru-Dodhy, who explained the benefits of newer inhalers in detail.

Please do not ignore your invite for an asthma review when you are contacted. We strongly recommend that you watch the webinar beforehand. Under the new 2025 guidelines, newer inhalers have been shown to provide better asthma control. As a result, our in-house pharmacy team will be switching over patients aged 12 and over from older inhalers such as Salbutamol/Ventolin and Clenil to newer, more effective alternatives.

Winter Children's Hub

We have reintroduced our Paediatric Hub for children under 12 this winter. Appointments are held in the ground floor annexe at the rear of the main building with a separate entrance.

This has benefits for children, who have a quiet and dedicated waiting area, and for our wider patient cohort, as children are 'superspreaders' of winter infections, be it in the community or surgery, so this minimises cross-infection.

Appointments are released daily from 6.00 am and start at 9.30 am or 10.00 am, running until 1.00 pm. They have all been deliberately set up as online bookable with the GP. This helps to keep phone lines fluid and efficient for all during the day; however, we receive many telephone calls at 8.00am, which parents could avoid by using the online booking facility.

Going into this busy winter period, please book online for this service and ensure you have online access for all of your children.

Mental Health

Mental health trusts have launched a new “Know where to turn” campaign toolkit for mental health support. For more information, see the South West London NHS website: www.swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/know-where-to-turn-new-nhs-resources-support-signposting-in-south-west-london-2804.



Staff News

We welcome back Dr Fitch from maternity leave as Dr Wright leaves to start hers.

Dr Elizabeth Ring joins us on the 1st November 2025 and Dr Kelechi Oganya returns as a maternity locum.

As the days shorten and winter approaches, please use your GP services thoughtfully. Coughs, colds, and sore throats are common – our community pharmacy and self-help resources should be your first port of call. This helps us keep appointments available for medical problems that need GP input.

If you cannot attend an appointment, please cancel in good time. Cancelling just 5-15 minutes before often means it cannot be used by someone else. There is no excuse not to cancel, as the cancellation option on our phone is open 24/7, 365 days a year. Just press option 1 and enter your date of birth. It is that easy.

Ensure your vaccines are up-to-date, keep warm, and stay happy.

With all best wishes

Dr Penelope Smith

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Penelope E Smith".

Senior Partner, Lambton Road Medical Practice

