

UPDATE FROM MARTINBOROUGH HEALTH CENTRE & UNICHEM PHARMACY NUMBER 3: 12 APRIL 2020

APPOINTMENTS

A few reminders:

- Our appointments are currently **telephone consultations** with either a GP or Nurse Practitioner
- We find we can treat a significant number of conditions over the phone, and then arrange treatment as applicable. There is a charge for a phone consultation, an invoice will be sent out.
- If not, please be assured we will make a face-to-face appointment
- We will ask when you book how you want to be contacted: home phone or mobile
- It's important you keep your line free around the time you have been given. We are busy, as you will appreciate, and if the clinical staff have trouble getting hold of you, they will need to move on to the next patient, and you will have to reschedule.

DRIVER LICENCE FOR 75+

Here is the latest news regarding Driver Licence Renewal during the Covid-19 Pandemic, with NZTA closed.

“Cabinet agreed to extend all expired licences by *up to* 6 months, by way of a Rule change. The amended rules come into force Friday 10 April. The change applies to any licences that were due to expire from 1 January (unless they were otherwise already revoked), and applies for a period for up to 6 months.

“Waka Kotahi is working on a plan for transitioning out of the lockdown, recognising that there will be a backlog of licence (and WOF and other requirements) renewals to work through. As part of that transition, we might shorten the exemption period (i.e. require licences to be renewed before the end of the 6 month period). We will communicate the transition plan as it's developed.

“For now the message for general practitioners to communicate to drivers over 75 is that they can continue to drive using their existing licence, as the term of the licence has been deemed to have been extended until further notice.”

See this summary of the changes: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/about-us/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-services-update/frequently-asked-questions/rules-changes-general-faqs/>”

FLU CLINICS

First, the **bad news, sorry**: The Ministry of Health has deferred the start date from which we can vaccinate patients who don't qualify for the funded vaccine. The new date is early May. This means patients younger than 65 and without any chronic conditions. I will let you all know when we can vaccinate as soon as I have the details. Watch for an email or txt message.

The good news is we have managed to get some more vaccines so:

- The planned 25 April Flu Clinic is now being **combined** with the 18 April Flu Clinic
- So everyone booked for 25 April is **now booked in for Saturday 18 April, from 9am – 1pm**,
- We will contact everyone who is booked either by txt, email or phone. Bookings are still essential. If you can't do this date, please email us at reception@mmc.net.nz
- The other good news is that we find we can power through administering the vaccines in the car, so you don't need to make specific appointments – you can just turn up after 9am

- Even if everyone turns up at 9am, it's not a problem **but please just be aware** you will have to wait in the car queue just like a MacDonald's drive-through!
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HOW IT WORKS (a reminder)

- The Marquee is at the end of the Cork Street / Strasbourg Street intersection. Entry is from Oxford Street into Cork Street to keep the traffic flowing. Please do not enter from Strasbourg Street, as it will be hard to get in the queue.
- A Traffic Warden on the Oxford/Cork Street intersection will direct you to proceed to the Marquee.
- When you get to the Marquee please wait until directed to drive into the Marquee and up to where the nurses are standing. **Do not get out of the car or open the window until directed to do so.**
- The flu vaccines will be administered **in the car**, through the window, in the arm closest to your window. Please roll up your sleeve and have your arm ready, and **stay in your car**.
- You will then be told to drive out, park up for up to 20 minutes before leaving. If you feel unwell after the vaccination, please let one of our staff know by tooting your horn. They will come to you.

FLU VACCINES FOR CASUAL PATIENTS

We are aware that many of our community are enrolled at practices in Wellington, as this is often more convenient for commuters or they have extended family staying during lockdown and are eligible for the funded flu vaccine i.e. over 65 or have a chronic conditions that makes them eligible.

When casual patients are booking in, please have ready the information we need: the patient's full name, date of birth, usual address and medical centre he/she is registered with. We would appreciate it if you could email us at reception@mmc.net.nz to request a flu vax appointment, and include all these details. **Because**

TELEPHONE LINES

We know it's frustrating for everyone trying to get through on the phone at present, sorry, but with clinical staff doing phone consultations you can see – obviously – it ties up the lines. The **good news** is that we now have some mobile phones which should alleviate this overload.

With many patients calling about flu vaccinations as well, our lines get blocked and people are naturally frustrated.

So to book for the 25 April flu clinic, please email reception@mmc.net.nz if you can. If you are under 65 but eligible for early vaccination, please let us know your qualifying condition.

Thank you

Thanks for your understanding, co-operation and support. Working together, we are minimising the effect Covid-19 has on Martinborough.

Pam Shackleton
Practice Manager