

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

SURGERY UPDATE



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System pressures—an important message

You may be well aware that many NHS services in Devon are under an extreme amount of pressure at the moment, with people waiting a very long time in emergency departments to be seen and treated.

We understand that people will always need medical care, and this need is the same no matter whether we have the resources to help everyone as we would like.

The following advice has been given to all local GP surgeries for their patients - please remember that everyone's actions right now will make a huge difference to the hospitals in Devon. We thank you for your continued support and for continuing to be kind to our staff at this very difficult time.

- Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if you come down with a winter bug and do not feel well enough to carry on with your normal activities. Follow self-care tips from www.nhs.uk or your local pharmacy.
- If you're ill or injured and it's not life-threatening, and you are not sure where to go, visit 111.nhs.uk or call **111** for advice. The 111 service will book you into NHS services if needed.
- Follow the latest advice during the winter period, on local NHS social media channels and websites.
- Please do everything you can, as a relative or carer of someone in hospital, to work with us to get patients home from hospital as quickly and safely as possible, with additional support if necessary from your local NHS community services or adult social care teams.
- Wear a face mask in healthcare settings, wash your hands regularly, and keep two metres apart from other patients whenever you can.
- Boost your immunity—if you are eligible, get a COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination without delay, if you haven't already.

FEEDBACK

We welcome feedback of any kind - this is used to improve the service we provide for our patients and to identify what works well. If you would like to leave any feedback, you can speak to any member of staff in the surgery - or speak to a member of our Reception team on the phone. If you would prefer, you can also write a few words and pop them through our letterbox, or send us an email

(enquiriesatalbany.L83034@nhs.net).

Additionally, anonymous feedback can be given via the Friends and Family Test. To complete this, please visit our website (www.albanysurgery.co.uk) or fill out a Friends and Family test card at our main reception.

THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

The PPG welcomes new members who are passionate about improving the care their surgery provides. Current patients of all ages and backgrounds are invited to apply.

If you would like to apply, please ask for an application form at our front desk, or visit www.albanysurgery.co.uk/patient-participation-group for more information or to complete the form online.

UNDER 25 AND LOOKING AFTER SOMEONE?

If you're under 25 years old and giving support to a friend or family member with their daily activities, you may be a young carer. If you're unsure, the most important question to ask is - **do you look after someone?**

If you are a young carer, you may not be aware of the support available to you if you need it.

Visit carers.org/about-caring/about-young-carers, or Google "NHS help for young carers" to find out what help is available.

If you do look after someone who could not manage without your support, it's important that you let your GP know so we can get a better picture of your individual health needs and the extra pressures that you may have in your life. When you're giving crucial support to another person, you must also make sure your own health is not being overlooked.

CONTRACEPTION SERVICES IN DEVON

Devon Sexual Health is the hub for contraception and sexual health services in the local area.

Visit devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk or call **0300 303 3989** to find the right service for you, and to get advice on a range of healthcare needs including:

- Routine STI testing
- Emergency contraception
- Contraceptive choices
- Abortion services



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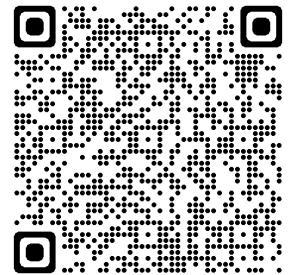
Images courtesy of:
vecteezy.com

MEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

The period right after Christmas can be challenging for some. Men in particular may find it difficult to open up about how they're feeling, and are far less likely than women to seek help if something isn't right.

Three times as many men die by suicide than women, with men aged 40-49 having the highest rates of suicide in the UK. If you or someone you know is struggling, it is crucial to speak to someone.

To find out more about men's mental health and the support that's available, please scan the QR code on the right or visit www.mentalhealth.org.uk and search "**Men and mental health**".



CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION WEEK

The week of 23rd January to 29th January is Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, and Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust is raising awareness of how important it is to have routine screening.

If you have been invited for a smear test, please don't ignore this. It is always better to get checked out in case something is wrong - and if so, finding it early can make a huge difference.

Visit www.jostrust.org.uk for more information on the amazing work done by Jo's Trust.

If you are concerned that something has changed, it's better to speak to someone. Symptoms to look out for can include:

- Unusual vaginal bleeding (especially after menopause)
- Changes to vaginal discharge
- Pain or discomfort during sex
- Unexplained lower back pain, or pain between your hip bones

ONE DEVON—GET INVOLVED!

One Devon is a network of NHS and care organisations working together with local communities to improve people's health, wellbeing and care. Since it is the people in a community who use the local health and care services, their feedback on these services is the most important and valuable.

Involve One Devon has been designed to connect healthcare providers to the people and communities in Devon, giving people the chance to see what work is happening in their local area and beyond, and to be part of conversations about their health and care.

To find out more, please visit involve.onedevon.co.uk.

The Albany team wishes you a Happy New Year!

If you would like a copy of any previous newsletters, please see our website (www.albanysurgery.co.uk) or ask a member of Reception