Willenhall Primary Care Centre-1

October / November 2026 Newsletter

AUTUMN COVID & FLU VACCINES

The practice will be offering COVID and flu vaccinations for eligible patients this Autumn.

Patients in certain eligibility cohorts will be offered their vaccination appointment via SMS link.

From **September 2026**, the following groups will be offered a flu vaccine:

- Pregnant women
- Children aged 2–3 years (on 31 August 2026)
- Primary & secondary school children
- Children aged 6 months to under 18 years in clinical risk groups

From **October 2026**, the following groups will be offered a flu vaccine:

- Adults aged 65 and over
- Adults aged 18–64 in clinical risk groups
- Residents of care homes
- Eligible carers
- Close contacts of immunocompromised people
- Eligible frontline social care workers

The following cohorts of patients will also be offered a **COVID** Booster vaccine from **1st October 2026**:

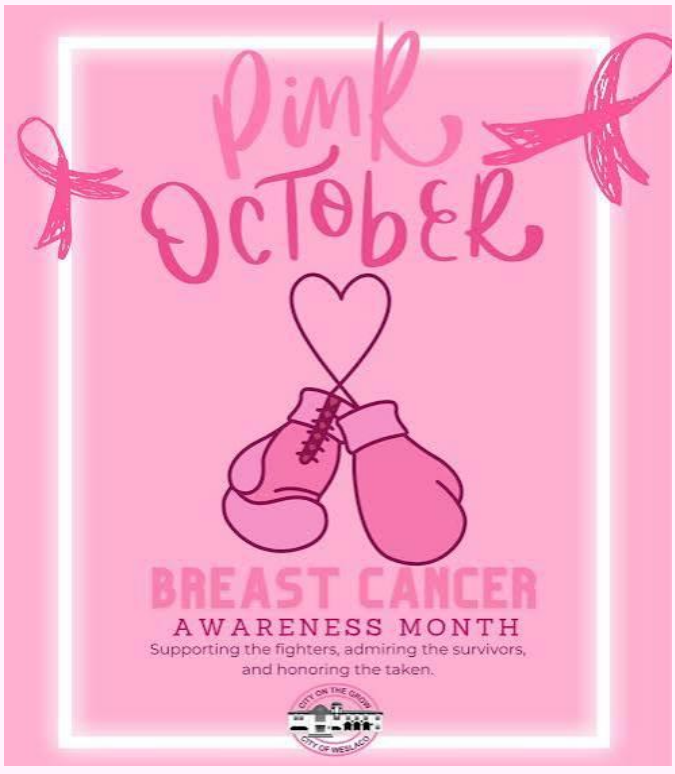
- Adults aged 75 years and over
- Residents in a care home for older adults
- Individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed

Where possible, patients eligible for both the flu and COVID vaccine will receive both vaccines in the same appointment.

Patients who are housebound or live in a care home will be contacted and vaccinated at home.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an annual international health campaign held every October to increase awareness of the disease, promote early detection and screening, and raise funds for research. Symptoms of breast cancer include: Lumps in the breast Swelling or lumps in your armpit Skin changes (including puckering, dimpling, rash, redness, sores) Fluid leaking from the nipple Changes to the nipple Breast pain Breast cancer is most common in women but it can also affect men too. Symptoms are similar to women and include any changes to the chest area, collar bone area and arm pits. When it comes to treating breast cancer, early detection is key. The NHS breast screening program provides free routine mammograms (breast X-rays) every 3 years to all women aged 50 up to their 71st birthday It is also important to know the symptoms of breast cancer and to seek medical advice if you notice any changes. For more information about breast cancer symptoms and support, visit: https://breastcancernow.org/ or https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-in women



https://willenhallprimarycarecentre.nhs.uk/FriendsAndFamily/

Please click on the link to provide feedback following an appointment with either one of our GP's, Nurses, or other members of our team.

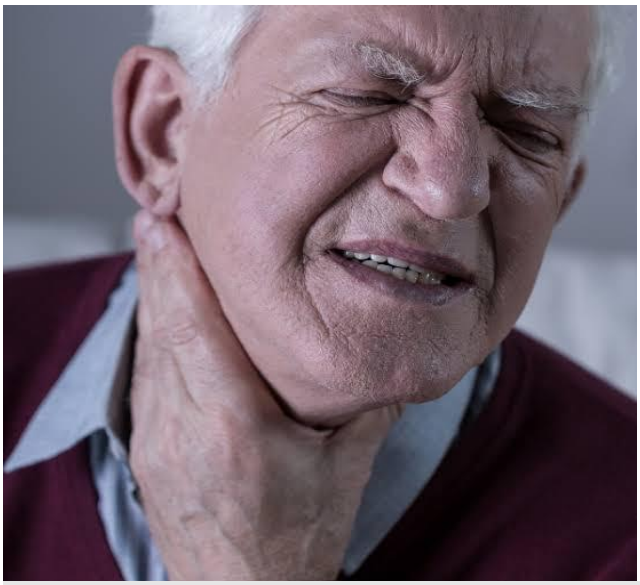
PRACTICE TRAINING DATES 2026!

The practice will be closed for important staff training on the following dates from 1.00pm. The practice will re-open as normal the following morning.

- **Wednesdays 18th November 2026**

General safety for bonfires and fireworks

- **Supervision:** Never leave children unsupervised around bonfires or fireworks, and ensure a responsible adult oversees lighting them.
- **Protective gear:** When handling sparklers, wear gloves and hold them at arm's length. Avoid loose clothing and tie back long hair when near a fire.
- **Distance:** Keep bonfires at least five meters from buildings, fences, and trees, and maintain a safe distance for spectators.
- **Alcohol:** Do not drink alcohol when in charge of a bonfire or fireworks.
- **Fireworks:** Buy only fireworks with an official CE mark and never throw fireworks onto a bonfire.
- **Starting fires:** Never use flammable liquids to start a bonfire. Only use untreated wood and paper.



Sore throat - NHS

Sore Throat

SELF-CARE FORUM FACT SHEET NO 10

Having a sore throat can feel very unpleasant. In most cases is harmless, but sometimes it can be more serious, and you may need to ask for advice from a health professional. This fact sheet helps you understand what to expect if you or your child develops a sore throat. You also learn when to ask for further advice and where to find it.

Useful facts

How common is a sore throat? Sore throats are common. Around half of us will have at least one sore throat a year. Most will usually get better without treatment within a week.

What causes a sore throat? Four in five sore throats are caused by viruses. This includes cold and flu type viruses, COVID19 and the Epstein-Barr virus causes glandular fever, a viral infection mostly affecting teenagers and young adults. Bacteria may also cause sore throat, such as in scarlet fever (see our separate fact sheet) or some sexually transmitted infections.

Sore throats can turn into tonsillitis. Tonsillitis is when the clumps of tissue on either side at the back of your throat (tonsils) become painful and swollen. Patches of creamy pus can appear on the tonsils. Painful lumps can develop in the neck from swollen glands. It may cause fever, and usually there is no cough.

Coronavirus (COVID19): COVID19 can cause a sore throat. If you think you might have it, look at the advice for your country in the last section: "where can I find out more?"

What can I expect to happen?

How long are my symptoms likely to last? Four out of five sore throats will get better within seven days. Hardly any last longer than two weeks.

Will I need antibiotics? Most sore throats are caused by viruses and don't need antibiotics. When antibiotics are not needed, they can do more harm than good.

What will happen if I do need to see a professional? They will ask you some questions and may examine your throat. This will help them decide how to treat you.

Will I need any tests? You are unlikely to need tests. A throat swab is sometimes taken to check if there are any harmful bugs in the throat. Rarely they may take a blood test to check for glandular fever.

What can I do myself to get better - now and in the future?

Home treatment Cool drinks, cool, soft food, and ice lollies can ease the pain. Adults can suck ice cubes or hard sweets and gargle with warm, salty water.

Talk to your pharmacy if you're not sure what's best for you or your child, or if you have other health conditions.

Smoking and vaping. Avoid smoking and other peoples' smoke. Vaping can cause throat soreness.

Fluids Adults should drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid every day. Water is best, especially when you have a raised temperature (fever). Children should be offered fluids regularly.

Going to school. Unless your child has a raised temperature or feels unwell, it is OK for them to go to school with a sore throat.

If scarlet fever is common in your area, have a look at our fact sheet on it.

Treatment

Symptom relief Paracetamol and ibuprofen can help reduce symptoms from sore throats, temperatures and headaches.

Don't give paracetamol to a child under 2 months or ibuprofen to children under 3 months, or who have asthma unless prescribed by a doctor. Never give Aspirin to under-16s unless prescribed by a GP as it can cause brain and liver damage.

Lozenges gargles and sprays are available without prescription from your pharmacy or supermarket. Talk to your pharmacy team about what's best for you. Always read the safety information that comes with them.

Some lozenges are 'medicated' and contain active chemicals rather than just having a soothing effect. Some may contain a chemical to numb the pain. For people over the age of 12, lozenges containing flurbiprofen can quickly lessen the pain of a sore throat and can help with difficulty swallowing and a swollen throat.

Fact Sheet No 10 Sore Throat V5.
The Self-Care Forum. www.selfcareforum.org
Reviewed Oct 2024. Next review due: October 2026

Self-Care Forum
Helping people take care of themselves

When to seek help if you have a sore thoat

Your pharmacist can help and can give you antibiotics if you need them. This is under the Pharmacy First Scheme. Speak to your pharmacy team or look at the NHS or Patient.co.uk websites below.

Seek professional advice if you or your child's symptoms are:

- Severe,
- No better after 2 weeks
- Get worse.
- Don't get better after over-the-counter medicines and you are worried.

Warning symptoms and signs:

Temperature over 37.8°C: Consider COVID19 and follow the advice on the link below.

Temperature of over 38°C for more than 3 days. That doesn't come down, even with ibuprofen or paracetamol. Contact your surgery or call 111.

Children under 5 with a temperature of 38 or more. See our fact sheet 'Fever in Children'.

Severity. Pain is severe and is not helped by painkillers or is getting worse and you are having difficulty swallowing.

Voice changes. Your voice becomes muffled.

Difficulty getting enough fluids. You find it difficult to drink enough fluids and are dehydrated.

Effect on day-to-day life. Your symptoms stop you from going about your daily life normally.

Weak immunity. Ask for medical advice if you have weakened immunity. This might be because you have HIV/AIDS. Or if you take drugs such as high dose steroids, some anti-rheumatic drugs, a drug called carbimazole. People who are now undergoing or have recently completed chemotherapy should also seek help.

If you have any of these, contact your surgery or call:

England and Wales. Dial 111 This is the number for NHS 111.

Phone First service in Northern Ireland.

NHS24 in Scotland.

They will tell you what to do next. They can arrange a call from a health care professional if you need one.

Call 999 or go to A&E if you or your child has any of these:

- **Breathing problems.**
- **The throat feels like it is closing up.**
- **Breath sounds are high pitched.**
- **Drooling and difficulty swallowing.** Drooling or finding it hard to swallow even small quantities of water is an emergency!

Where to find out more

Your pharmacy team can help with advice on how to manage your symptoms. Or visit an NHS website for more information:

NHS 111 Wales

NHS website

NHS Inform Scotland

NHS Direct NI

For coronavirus information go to:

NHS Website

For information on Scarlet Fever visit our website.

Pharmacy First in England

Under the Pharmacy First Scheme, your pharmacist can treat seven conditions that may require an antibiotic.

- **Sore throat**
- Sinusitis
- Earache
- Infected insect bites
- Impetigo (a skin infection)
- Shingles
- Some urinary tract infections in women

For more information go to the Patient.co.uk website here, or NHS England website here.

This fact sheet was developed with an unrestricted grant from Reckitt,who was not involved in creating or reviewing the content.

Fact Sheet No 10: Sore Throat V5
The Self-Care Forum. www.selfcareforum.org
Next review due: October 2026

Self-Care Forum
Helping people take care of themselves

NHS Pharmacy First Service

What is Pharmacy First?

What is the NHS Pharmacy First service?
This NHS service allows you to get quick access to healthcare advice as you can walk into a pharmacy and request the service.
You can get help with the following seven conditions:

- Earache (for people aged 1 to 17 years)
- Impetigo (for people aged 1 year and over)
- Infected insect bites (for people aged 1 year and over)
- Shingles (for people aged 18 years and over)
- Sinusitis (for people aged 12 years and over)
- Sore throat (for people aged 5 years and over)
- Urinary tract infections (UTIs) (for women aged 16 to 64 years)

What does the service involve?
You will speak to a pharmacist in a private consultation room, with some pharmacies also offering appointments online via a video consultation.
The pharmacist will talk to you about your symptoms and will provide advice and, if necessary, supply a prescription medicine to treat the condition.
If you are given a prescription medicine, NHS prescription charges apply if you normally pay for medicines supplied on prescription.
An electronic message will be sent to your GP surgery so your GP health record can be updated with information about the consultation.
Should the pharmacist be unable to help, you will be directed to your GP surgery or another health professional.

How do I get this service?
You can be electronically referred by certain healthcare professionals including your GP surgery to a pharmacy of your choice.
Or you can walk in and speak to the pharmacy team about the service or phone the pharmacy to ask about the service.
You may be asked to book an appointment or it may be possible to just turn up and have a consultation with the pharmacist.

Your choice of pharmacy
You have the right to choose to use any pharmacy that provides the service.
Most pharmacies provide the NHS Pharmacy First Service. Use the **NHS Find a Pharmacy tool**.
Your choice of a pharmacy should not be influenced or limited by websites or apps, emails or letters you receive in the post, or by any doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.
If you have a concern about using your right to choose a pharmacy, you can **contact your local NHS management organisation** (which is called the integrated care board) for help with this.