

Monthly Patient Newsletter



Embracing Digital Healthcare: Enhancing Access and Convenience at MVMG

Digital tools were made more widely available during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting how patients access and engage with their health services. The use of health apps, digital platforms, technological tools dramatically increased, presenting opportunities to enhance healthcare delivery. At MVMG, we have embraced a range of digital tools, such as eConsult, the NHS App, and Health Kiosks, to ensure our patients receive faster, more accessible, and personalised care. While these tools have transformed the way we deliver healthcare, it's important to remember that they are designed to complement, not replace, the personal experience that comes with seeing your clinician.

Getting Care, When You Need It, No Matter Where You Are

One of the greatest advantages of digital healthcare is the ability to access care wherever you are. Tools like eConsult allow patients to reach out to their GP, get self-help advice, or see how their local pharmacy can help online. This is especially important for those living in remote areas, individuals with mobility challenges, or anyone who prefers not to leave their home when feeling unwell. By eliminating the need

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to travel, digital tools make it easier for patients to manage their health, no matter their circumstances.

At MVMG, we understand that convenience is key. By using digital tools such as eConsult, we help triage patients quickly, ensuring they get the right care from the right clinician the first time. Whether it's a routine check-up, advice on symptoms, or follow-up care, these tools help us streamline the process, reduce waiting times, and get you the help you need without unnecessary delays.

Accessing Health Information with Ease

Digital tools like the NHS App have made it easier than ever for patients to stay informed about their health. Through the NHS App, patients can access their health records, review test results, and order repeat prescriptions—all at the touch of a button. This level of accessibility allows patients to stay on top of their health without needing to contact the practice for every small query, saving both their time and that of the healthcare providers. Currently, 56% of our North Somerset patients are using the NHS App, while 30% of the population in another area are also actively engaged with the app. We encourage all patients who are able to sign up and take full advantage of the app's features, helping to streamline access to services and manage your health more easily.

At MVMG, we encourage all our patients to download and use the NHS App. It provides a convenient way to manage appointments, order prescriptions, and keep track of their health. By enabling patients to access their records and results, this will help you feeling more in control of their health and ensure they have the necessary information to make informed decisions.

Empowering Patients through Health Kiosks

Although not an online digital tool, the Self Health Kiosks are an excellent example of how Primary Care is integrating technology to alleviate some of the smaller pressures faced by practices while providing added convenience for patients. These kiosks, located at the reception of each surgery, allow patients to easily check vital signs such as blood pressure, weight, and height. In addition, patients can complete health questionnaires on conditions like asthma or contraception. The answers provided are securely saved directly to the patient's health record, ensuring that clinicians have up-to-date information to review and discuss during the next appointment. This streamlined approach helps save time, improve efficiency, and enhance the quality of patient care. So, you have more time to ask your clinician the questions you want answered during your time-sensitive appointment.



While digital tools, such as the NHS App, help ease some of the pressures on the practice, we understand that not all patients have access to the necessary devices or internet. If you're interested in learning more about the NHS App, eConsult, or Self Health Kiosks, please don't

hesitate to contact your surgery for more information and guidance. You can also find details about all our helpful tools on our website.

Additionally, there are various local groups and services designed to help you build confidence in using digital devices, ensuring that everyone has the support they need to take full advantage of these technologies.

- North Somerset: [In-person help to get online | North Somerset Council](#)
- Bristol: [Get online | NBAC](#)
- Or go online to [Explore the subjects | Learn My Way](#) for free online sessions.

If you know someone who regularly uses healthcare services but doesn't have access to the internet on their phone, please get in touch with the practice. We offer free SIM cards to ensure they can access essential online health services and information, including the NHS App, eConsult, and other digital tools. This will help ensure they stay connected to the healthcare resources they need.

Do more with the NHS App!

- 🔗 Order repeat prescriptions
- 📅 Book appointments
- 👁️ View your records
- And much more...



Stay Connected with the NHS App!

Did you know that NHS App offers a simple way to manage your health? You can:

- Book and manage appointments
- Order repeat prescriptions
- View your medical records
- Access trusted health information

If you haven't downloaded the NHS App yet, now is a great time to give it a try! . For more information regarding the NHS go to www.nhs.uk/nhs-app

Better Health
Smoke free

NHS

“Since quitting, I’ve got extra money to put towards a trip away.”

March 12 Take back your life this **No Smoking Day.**

Search **Better Health quit smoking** for free quitting support.





TARGET

Keep Antibiotics Working

HOW CAN I MANAGE MY COMMON INFECTION?

A leaflet for adults aged 16 years and over

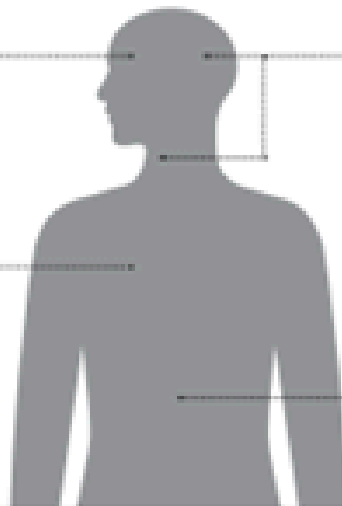
1 What are the symptoms of a common infection?

Eyes

- Red eyes
- Sticky eyes
- Eyes burn or feel gritty

Chest

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up green or yellow mucus



Ears, nose and throat

- Pain or soreness
- Blocked or runny nose
- Swollen tonsils

Gut

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

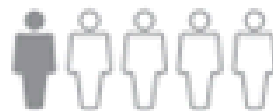
2 How common is my infection?

Every year in the UK...

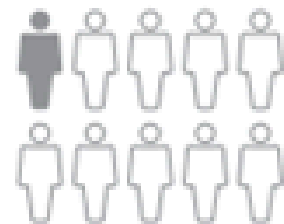
adults have 2 to 3
colds, on average
(more common in children)



1 in 5 people have
a gut infection



1 in 10 people have
a sinus infection



3 How can I treat a common infection?



Get plenty of rest until you feel better.



Take pain relief if you need to (make sure you follow the instructions).



Drink enough fluids to avoid dehydration and pass urine regularly (6 to 8 cups or glasses).



For coughs, try honey and cough medicines.
For sore throats, try medicated lozenges and pain relief.



Soothe eye infections with boiled and cooled water on the eyelids, apply cool compresses gently around the eye.



For an outer ear infection, consider over-the-counter ear drops.

4 How long could my infection last?

Cough



3 to 4 weeks

Sore throat or earache



7 to 8 days

Common cold



14 days

Norovirus (winter vomiting)



2 to 3 days

Sinus infection



3 to 4 weeks

Eye infection



7 to 14 days

Contact your GP if your symptoms are getting worse or if you are not better by the times above.

Visit www.nhs.uk for self-care advice on common infections

5 Will my infection need antibiotics to get better?

- Your body can normally fight off common infections on its own
- You do not usually need antibiotics unless symptoms of a bacterial infection are severe – follow your healthcare professional's advice on this
- Taking antibiotics when you do not need to may put you and your family at risk
- Follow your healthcare professional's advice on antibiotics
- Find out more about antibiotics at www.antibioticguardian.com

6 How can I stop my infection from spreading?

If you need to cough or sneeze:



Catch it
with a tissue
(or your inner elbow)



Bin it
throw away
used tissues



Kill it
by cleaning
your hands

Clean hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitiser:

- before preparing and eating food
- after touching pets or animals
- after using the toilet
- when leaving and arriving home



Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. If possible, keep your distance from others (2 meters or 6 feet), especially vulnerable people in your household.



Do not share items that come into contact with your mouth, such as eating utensils and toothbrushes.



Keep yourself and your family up to date with vaccinations. Always get winter vaccines (such as flu) if you are eligible.

Visit or call a pharmacy for further advice on common infections

7 What symptoms of serious illness should I look out for?



Severe **headache** and **vomiting**



Ongoing **fever or chills** (temperature above 38°C or less than 36°C)



Problems **swallowing**



Coughing blood



Breathing faster or slower than usual, **chest pain** or tightness



Kidney pain in your back just under your ribs



New **very fast or slow pulse**



Very cold skin

If you have the symptoms above, contact your GP urgently or use the following services for your region.

NHS England



NHS 111
Wales

NHS 111 *Wales*

NHS Scotland



Northern
Ireland

Contact your
GP practice



These services can provide a confidential interpreter if you need one.

8 What if I suspect signs of sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening reaction to an infection.

Possible signs are:

- **slurred** speech, confusion or drowsiness
- **extreme** shivering
- **passing** no urine in a day
- **severe** breathlessness
- it feels like you're going to die, and
- **skin blotchy** or discoloured

If you suspect sepsis: Call 999 immediately

Mendip Vale Menopause Support Group

This month, we held our first Menopause Engagement Event with Dr. R Kenyon, attracting approximately 100 patients who tuned in to gain valuable insights on menopause. The virtual session focused on providing essential information, guidance, and support to help participants navigate this important stage of life.

The aim of the event was to ensure patients feel empowered and equipped to take the next step in managing their menopause journey. Whether through lifestyle changes, self-help strategies, or group consultation sessions, the event served as a resource to point patients in the right direction for further support.

We are pleased to announce that this event is part of an ongoing rolling programme. Throughout the year, all eligible patients will be invited to participate in a session at a time that suits them. If you're interested in attending, please be assured that you will receive an invite during the year.



If you have been invited to these sessions, please be assured that these messages are not a scam. The message you would likely receive is:

“You are invited to our Menopause Virtual Patient Event on [date and time]. We are inviting all women aged 45-55 from the practice.”

attached with a video from Dr Kenyon and a link to register to an event.

For more information, support and guidance on Menopause, on the Mendip Vale website: [Menopause Support | Mendip Vale Medical Group](#)



Message from the Fraud Support service at Avon and Somerset Victim Support - Relationship Fraud

Avon and Somerset Police have been working closely with Victim Support, utilising their fantastic new service for supporting victims of relationship fraud.

Relationship fraud is a complex and manipulating crime, which can take place over a long period time. Fraudsters usually use a false identity with stolen images and information. They target a large number of people with whom they build a relationship of trust and form an emotional bond. They are very convincing and will attempt to extract money from the victim or convince them to move money between bank accounts. Relationship fraud can have devastating impacts on those affected, not only financially but also emotionally. It can result in feelings of violation and betrayal which are hard to overcome in future relationships. Relationship fraud can happen to anyone, it does not define your strength or character.



If you would like to be involved or find out more, you can contact us by phone on 0300 303 1972 and we are open Monday, Wednesday and Friday

9:30am-5:30pm and Tuesday and Thursday 11am-7pm. Or email us at avon.andsomerset@victimsupport.org.uk

Here are some red flags of relationship fraud to look out for:

- ▶ The person you are speaking to lives or works overseas
- ▶ Jobs including the military, oil rig worker, United Nations employee or any medical professionals (surgeon/doctor)
- ▶ Any mention of a high value box; this could include money, gold bars, jewels, or inheritance
- ▶ Moving your conversation away from the website/social media to Google Chat or WhatsApp
- ▶ Asking you for any kind of money – this includes gift cards or cryptocurrency
- ▶ They cannot video call you with a crystal-clear image and in sync audio
- ▶ Any sob stories – the fraudster may claim to be a struggling single parent, widowed, hungry, homeless, injured, sick or stranded in a foreign country
- ▶ Declaring their love for you very early on and even introducing the subject of marriage
- ▶ Claim to have things in common with you, e.g., widowed or having the same religion
- ▶ Promise to meet you but will always have an excuse as to why they cannot



Bristol
tea & tech

Frustrated that everything is online these days?

Bristol Tea and Tech are running free drop-ins where friendly volunteers can help you get online safely and easily to develop your digital skills and confidence.

Whether you have no experience of computers, or just want to update your skills, we can help. Bring your own smartphone, tablet or laptop, or use one of ours.

Westbury on Trym Methodist Church

46 Westbury Hill,
Bristol, BS9 3AA

Thursdays 10:30 - 12:30

Mar 6th, 20th, Apr 3rd,
May 1st, 8th, 15th.

Henbury and Brentry Community Centre, Henbury

Machin Rd,
Bristol, BS10 7HG

Wednesdays 11am-1pm

*Focussed sessions - email
nicola@northbristoladvice.org.uk
for further details*

Feb 12th, 26th, Mar 12th, 26th,
Apr 9th, 23rd.

St Chad's Church, Patchway

Rodway Road,
Bristol, BS34 5ED

Thursdays 10am-12noon

*Focussed sessions - email
nicola@northbristoladvice.org.uk
or further details*

Feb 13th, 27th, Mar 13th, 27th,
Apr 10th, 24th.

Trinity-Henleaze United Reformed Church

Waterford Road, Henleaze,
Bristol, BS9 4BT

Fridays 10am-12noon

Feb 14th, 28th
March 14th, 28th
Apr 11th, 25th

Avonmouth Community Centre

257 Avonmouth Rd,
Bristol, BS11 9EN

Fridays 10.30am -12.30pm

*Focussed sessions - email
nicola@northbristoladvice.org.uk
for further details*

Feb 21st, Mar 7th, 21st,
Apr 4th, 18th, May 2nd.

Langley Centre, Lockleaze

Behind NBAC Office,
Gainsborough Square
Lockleaze, Bristol, BS7 9XA

Tuesdays 10:30 - 12:30



eConsult – Responding to your Feedback

“After giving you the option to explain your problem (which I thought was an improvement) , I then had to answer numerous irrelevant questions which is irritating and time wasting as they had no relation to the problem I was trying to contact the practice about”

Thank you for your feedback. I'm sorry to hear that you found the questions irrelevant and that they didn't help with the issue you were trying to address. We completely understand how frustrating it can be to answer questions that don't seem directly related to your concern. The questions are intended to assist the GP in effectively triaging the issue, ensuring that the right support or guidance is provided as quickly as possible. However, we appreciate that this process may feel time-consuming. We are currently working with eConsult to see how we can improve the experience to streamline the form while still capturing the essential information.

“As not an emergency was really easy and got a call before end of stated time and had a face-to-face appointment really pleased with the service and have used it again with same result”

Thank you so much for your kind words! We're thrilled to hear that you had a positive experience with our service and that everything went smoothly, from the call to the face-to-face appointment. It's great to know that the process worked well for you, and we're pleased to hear you had the same positive outcome when you used the service again.



“The response was within a reasonable time period and the face-to-face appointment has resolved the issue”

Thank you so much for sharing your feedback. We're pleased to hear that our response time met your expectations and that your face-to-face appointment was able to resolve the issue you were facing. We strive to provide timely and effective care, and it's great to know that the appointment made a positive difference.

“It is not difficult to use if one is used to computers. I have witnessed several people being told that it is a requirement even when they explain they cannot fill it in. This is discriminatory”

Thank you for sharing your feedback. We understand that not everyone is comfortable using digital platforms, and we apologise if anyone has felt pressured to use the eConsult system. Please be assured that the eConsult online is just one option available to our patients. If someone prefers not to complete the eConsult online, they can always call the practice directly or fill out a paper eConsult form at reception. Our goal is to ensure that all patients have access to the care they need, regardless of their comfort with technology. If you or anyone else has concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We're committed to providing equal access to services for everyone.



Research Updates at Mendip Vale

In 2024 the research team had many achievements including North Somerset becoming the top recruiters for the COAT and DaRe2THINK studies, topping the leader board for PRES, having the highest number of recruited patients in the whole of the Southwest, and taking on a whopping 11 new research trials. We are hoping to continue to triumph in 2025.

We are particularly keen to recruit patients in our Bristol sites into research. If you are interested in any of the below studies, please do not hesitate to contact the research team on bnssg.researchmendipvale@nhs.net

Update on current Research Studies



RAPID-TEST is a randomised controlled trial, which aims to investigate whether the use of a rapid microbiological Point-of-Care-Test (POCTRM) can reduce same-day antibiotic prescribing for patients presenting to their GP with a respiratory tract infection.

Most respiratory tract infections are caused by viruses, but antibiotics only work if the infection is caused by bacteria. If GPs knew whether a respiratory tract infection was caused by bacteria or a virus, they could prescribe antibiotics in a better way. Therefore, this trial is aiming to find out whether the use of a POCTRM can reduce same-day antibiotic prescribing for children and adults presenting to primary care with respiratory tract infections.



Recruiting adults who present with Cellulitis of the leg. Cellulitis is a deep infection of the skin and subcutaneous tissues and most often occurs in the legs. It is a painful condition that is associated with inflammation and swelling of the site, and often systemic symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle aches, malaise, and fatigue. Patients report feeling unwell and that it has a significant impact on their mobility and ability to carry out their usual activities. The study will be assessing the effectiveness and safety of a 5-day treatment of Flucloxacillin versus the standard 7-day treatment. We also aim to evaluate the cost-consequences of a shorter course from an NHS and personal perspective.



Recruiting Children with Asthma and the best way for them to use their Preventer inhaler. This study will measure if the number of asthma attacks is different between children who take their preventer inhaler everyday (the “daily” group) and those who take it only when they have symptoms (the “symptom-driven group”)

For more information go to the Mendip Vale website: [Research | Mendip Vale Medical Group](#)



Recruiting children aged between 3 months and 2 years old with a diagnosis of eczema. The TIGER study is aiming to find out whether changes to the diet of children with eczema, based on the results of food allergy tests, improves their eczema control or not.



Optimising Treatment for Mild Hypertension in Older People at Risk of Adverse Events

Recruiting people aged over 75 years who have blood pressure within a normal range and are taking two or more medications and are at a higher risk of drug-related side-effects This trial will establish whether deprescribing common drugs that lower blood pressure is safe in older people. We will answer:

- What is the effect of deprescribing blood pressure lowering drugs on hospital admissions and death?
- Does deprescribing improve quality of life and/or save money for the NHS?

Glencoyne Wellbeing Garden



Thursdays from 2pm
Southmead and Henbury
Family Practice

Southmead and Henbury Family Practice are looking for new members to join the Glencoyne Wellbeing Garden group. No gardening experience necessary.

To get involved and for more information email bnssg.admin.shfp@nhs.net or ask at Reception

