

# PATIENT NEWSLETTER

September 2026



Welcome to the third edition of our Captain French Surgery patient newsletter and our vaccination special! You can sign up to receive a copy to your email via our website. Your support and engagement is so important to us and we love to share anything we can with you to make your experience with us smoother.



## STAFF UPDATES

Dr Aileen Munsch is now on maternity leave until Summer 2027  
Date TBC.

We are welcoming 2 new GP's, Dr Gowri Miller (working 3 days a week) & Dr Shabana Joseph (working 2 days a week) from October.

iWantGreatCare

Have you received great care from us? We'd love to hear your feedback. Scan the QR code or visit [www.iwantgreatcare.org/gpsurgeries/captain-french-surgery](http://www.iwantgreatcare.org/gpsurgeries/captain-french-surgery)



## IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1- Staff updates

Page 2- Flu & Covid Eligibility

Page 3- Nasal Flu & RSV Updates

Page 4- Is it cold or flu?

Page 5- Self care and choosing right this Winter

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **1<sup>st</sup> Sept- Flu season starts for 2-3 year olds, pregnant patients and 6mths-17years at risk**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Sept- Increase in eligibility for RSV vaccine**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Oct- Flu season starts for 18years +**





# CAPTAIN FRENCH SURGERY



## FLU & COVID VACCINATIONS

From 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2026, another flu season begins! As well as the autumn Covid boosters and an increase in eligibility for the RSV vaccine. We encourage all patients to protect themselves and their loved ones by having their winter vaccines at Captain French- every vaccine we give invests money back into the surgery to improve services, equipment and your overall patient experience.

### Flu Eligibility

The flu vaccine is recommended for people at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu, and is given to patients during Autumn and Winter.

#### **Eligible from 1 September 2026**

- Children aged 2 or 3 on 31 August 2026
- School-aged children (Reception to Year 11- Done in schools unless in a clinical risk group)
- Pregnant women
- Children aged 6 months to under 18 in clinical risk groups

#### **Eligible from 1 October 2026**

- Adults aged 65+
- Adults aged 18-64 in clinical risk groups
- are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person, or receive carer's allowance, or are a close contact of an immunocompromised individual.
- Residents of long stay care homes

### How to book?

- We text all eligible patients a booking link so you can choose a date and time that's convenient for you.
- Patients without a mobile or housebound will be contacted by telephone.
- You can also book by calling the practice on 01539720241, or by visiting reception.

Please see the NHS website for further information on these vaccines or ask a clinician when in practice

### Covid Autumn Booster Eligibility

The Covid Autumn booster will be offered to patients **from 1st October**:

- Aged 75 or over
- 6 months or older and are immunosuppressed
- Residents in a care home for older adults

#### Why should I get the Covid booster?

- Protection from previous doses or infections fades over time. Viruses can also change. Getting this extra dose:
- Reduces your risk of getting very poorly
- Helps you recover faster if you do catch it

**If you are eligible, the COVID-19 vaccine can be administered at the same time as your flu vaccine**

### When are clinics?

- Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October
- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October
- Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October
- Every Thursday evening throughout October



We will also hold additional clinics for Nasal Flu in September and October

**Remember that Flu & Covid can be serious for some people! Getting your winter vaccines if you are eligible means that your symptoms will be milder and you will recover faster, should you run into these viruses over the winter**



# CAPTAIN FRENCH SURGERY

## CHILD FLU VACCINE



Children who are aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2026 (born between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2024) can get the flu vaccine at the surgery and we will send a text invite with a booking link.

The children's flu vaccine is usually given as a quick and painless nasal spray in each nostril. Children who cannot have the nasal spray vaccine and children under the age of 2 years will also be offered a flu vaccine injection.

Children with certain long-term health conditions that put them at higher risk from flu can get a flu vaccine from their:

- school (if they're in Reception to Year 11)
- GP surgery

Most school-aged children (Reception to Year 11) get their flu vaccine at school.



## flu: 5 reasons to vaccinate your child



### 1. Protect your child

The vaccine will help protect your child against flu and serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia

### 2. Protect you, your family and friends

Vaccinating your child will help protect more vulnerable friends and family

### 3. No injection needed

The nasal spray is painless and easy to have

### 4. It's better than having flu

The nasal spray helps protect against flu, has been given to millions of children worldwide and has an excellent safety record

### 5. Avoid costs

If your child gets flu, you may have to take time off work or arrange alternative childcare

For more information visit  
[www.nhs.uk/child-flu](http://www.nhs.uk/child-flu)

## RSV VACCINATIONS

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus that can affect the lungs and airways. In most people, RSV causes mild cold-like symptoms.

Occasionally, RSV can cause severe lung infections. These can include, bronchiolitis (an infection of the small airways in the lungs) and pneumonia

RSV infections peak during late autumn and winter, but can happen all year round.

From 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2026, eligibility for the RSV vaccine will expand to include adults aged 65 to 74 with a Chronic Respiratory condition or who are Immunosuppressed.

In April this year, all patients aged 75 and over also became eligible and we invite anyone who hasn't received their vaccine to book.

Pregnant patients 28 weeks gestation or more are eligible and the vaccine is typically given by Maternity services.

The RSV vaccine must be given 7 days apart from the flu vaccine, so we are holding our RSV clinics in September on Thursdays the 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> to avoid our flu clinics starting in October

We will text all eligible patients to book- but if you have any queries or think you may be eligible, please let us know.



**Adults  
aged 65-74**  
with a lung condition  
or a weakened  
immune system  
can get the

**NHS RSV  
vaccine**

**from 1 September**

**RSV is a once in a lifetime vaccine,  
meaning if you've already one, you  
won't need another!**





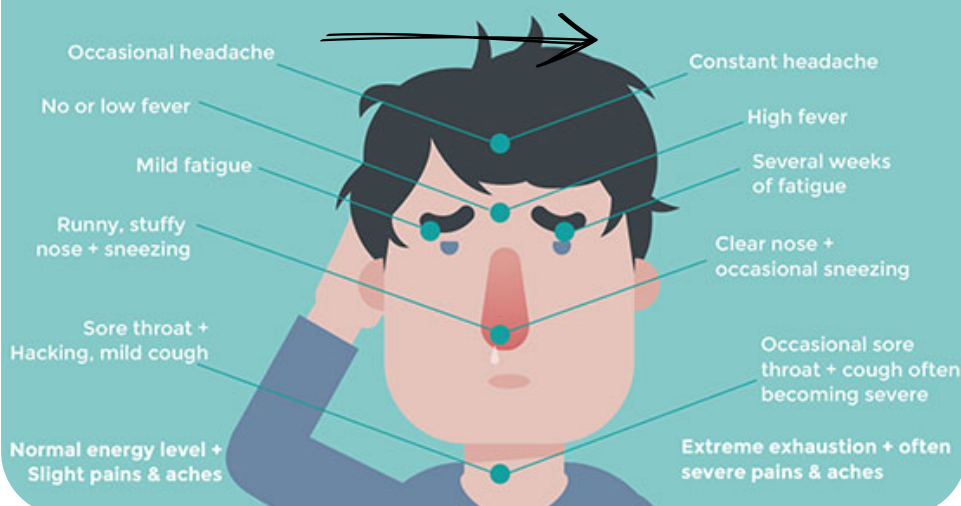
# CAPTAIN FRENCH SURGERY

## IS IT A COLD OR FLU?



### COLD SYMPTOMS

### FLU SYMPTOMS



Colds and flu share some of the same symptoms but are caused by different viruses. The 'flu' can be much more serious than a cold. If you are usually fit and well you can usually manage the symptoms of cold and flu without seeing a GP.

- Make sure you are drinking plenty of water to avoid getting dehydrated.
- Make sure you rest and avoid strenuous exercise.
- Over the counter medications such as paracetamol and ibuprofen can help relieve aches and pains.

## THINK PHARMACY FIRST

Pharmacists can give treatment advice and recommend flu remedies you can buy over the counter. They offer advice on a range of illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, ear infections and aches and pains.

They can also give advice about medicines. This includes how to use your medicine, worries about side effects or any other questions you have. If they cannot help you themselves, they can refer you to a GP or other health professional.

Avoid a wait at the GP for several conditions covered under Pharmacy First where the pharmacist can advise and prescribe for you if necessary



## WHEN TO SEEK HELP FROM YOUR GP

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:

You or your child have symptoms of flu and:

- you're worried about your baby's or child's symptoms
- you're 65 or over
- you're pregnant or have recently given birth
- you have a long-term medical condition – for example, diabetes or a condition that affects your heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, brain or nerves
- you have a weakened immune system – for example, because of chemotherapy or HIV
- you feel very unwell
- you feel short of breath
- your symptoms do not improve after 7 days

You can call 111 or [get help from 111 online](#).

## THINK PHARMACY FIRST

Prescription medicine without seeing a GP for patients in eligible age ranges

**Earache**  
1 to 17 years

**Impetigo**  
1 year and over

**Infected insect bites**  
1 year and over

**Shingles**  
18 years and over

**Sinusitis**  
12 years and over

**Sore throat**  
5 years and over

**Uncomplicated urinary tract infections**  
Women 16-64 years



# CAPTAIN FRENCH SURGERY

## SELF CARE DURING WINTER

Many, otherwise well, people can pick up minor illnesses over the winter period. **There are a few things you can do to prepare and alleviate certain issues:**

- Keep your medicine cabinet stocked with things to help, like pain relief and cough syrup
- You can help others by practicing good hand hygiene and catching coughs and sneezes in your elbow or a tissue – and disposing of it in the bin.
- Cleaning surfaces and children's toys regularly can also help limit the spread of any harmful viruses
- It's really important to look after yourself and to give your immune system the best chance, so stay hydrated and active and get those important vaccines if eligible.

### Hand washing tips

healthdirect



Wet hands with running water.



Apply soap or liquid soap.



Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds.



Wash all areas, including the back of your hands and between fingers.



Rinse hands, making sure you remove all soap.



Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel.

### 'Tis' the season to be prepared!

- ✓ Painkillers
- ✓ Antihistamines
- ✓ Thermometer
- ✓ Plasters
- ✓ Indigestion treatment
- ✓ Cough medication



Health officials in Lancashire and South Cumbria promote the 'Right Person, Right Care' campaign to raise awareness of specialist services offered by GP practices in the region.

Research by the NHS showed an overwhelming majority of people are happy to speak to a health professional other than their GP where appropriate, but nearly half of respondents did not understand all services available to them.

Seeing another expert within general practice, where clinically appropriate, can save time by reducing the number of appointments needed to get the right care. If an appointment with your GP remains the most appropriate choice for your condition, this will be arranged for you.



#### Self Care

Minor ailments should be treated at home

Minor cuts and grazes  
Minor bruises  
Minor sprains  
Coughs and colds



#### Pharmacy

Local expert advice

Minor illnesses  
Headaches  
Stomach upsets  
Bites & stings



#### NHS 111

Non-emergency help

Use NHS 111 online if you're unsure what service you need



#### GP Practice

A skilled team of medical professionals

Lasting symptoms  
Chronic pain  
Long term conditions  
New prescriptions



#### Urgent Care

Urgent Treatment Centres

Breaks & sprains  
x-rays  
Cuts & burns  
Fever & rashes



#### A&E or 999

For emergencies only

Choking  
Chest pain  
Blacking out  
Serious blood loss

For urgent help in a mental health crisis call NHS 111, option 2 for 24 hour support.