

WALNUT TREE HEALTH CENTRE

PPG SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER



EXCITING NEWS – Walnut Tree Health Centre Development

We are delighted to announce that Walnut Tree Health Centre has been awarded a secured grant of £900,000 to support significant improvements to the practice building. It is anticipated that the refurbishment and development work will continue through to Autumn 2027, and the surgery is already planning how best to maintain services throughout the programme of changes. Current plans include the addition of four new clinical rooms, a meeting room, and much-needed improvements to the waiting areas, helping us to enhance both patient care and the overall experience for visitors to the practice.

Unfortunately, the grant funding covers only the building works. Walnut Tree Health Centre, with the support of the Patient Participation Group (PPG), would like to raise additional funds to furnish and equip these new facilities.

We would be grateful for your support and ideas. Please put your thinking caps on and help us come up with fundraising suggestions. Together, we can ensure that these new facilities are fully equipped and ready to benefit our patients and community for years to come.

Hospital Referrals and Follow-Up Information

It is naturally a stressful time when you are referred for further investigations or to a specialist for their opinion. This anxiety can be increased when, after attending an appointment and being advised of the next steps in your care, the relevant reports and/or instructions are not received promptly by your GP practice.

The practice recognises these concerns and has produced guidance for patients. Following the guidance below should help to ensure that important results, recommendations and instructions are communicated effectively and can be acted upon by both patients and practice staff in a timely manner.

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Making an appointment:

We are now asking our patients to request appointments via our On-Line triage tool Engage Consult.

This can be accessed via our website and is available from 8.00 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday.

We do make provision for those patients that are unable to utilise this service so please speak to a member of the practice team for further advice.

The practice also has a facility for patients to be seen outside of normal hours. To receive routine GP care at a network of practices across Milton Keynes, Ask the receptionist to assist you to make an appointment.

Details and a wealth of information can be found on the practice website

www.walnuttreehealthcentre.co.uk

FOLLOW UP AFTER HOSPITAL OR EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS

Have you been seen by a hospital consultant or another healthcare provider?

If you are expecting the GP surgery to take action – for example test results or medication changes, please allow up to 14 days for us to receive and process the correspondence.

What to do if you have not heard from us within 14 days?

- Submit an Admin query via Engage
- Or contact the surgery by phone 01908 691123

PPG Youth - Your Patient Participation Group (PPG) is made up of volunteers who meet regularly with the surgery to represent patients and share their views on the services and facilities provided. It is important that the group reflects the diverse population served by Walnut Tree Health Centre.

While we have worked hard to achieve broad representation within our PPG, one area where we currently lack representation is among younger patients. We have previously approached local schools to encourage involvement, but unfortunately this was not successful.

The views, experiences, and needs of our younger patients are important to us. We recognise that traditional PPG meetings, both in terms of timing and format, may not always appeal to young people and can sometimes feel intimidating. We would therefore like to explore new and more accessible ways for younger patients to get involved and have their voices heard.

If you are a young person who is interested in joining the group, please speak to a member of the surgery team or contact the PPG directly by email at ppgwalnut@btinternet.com. We would love to hear from you.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL YEAR 13/6TH FORM STUDENTS PLANNING TO ATTEND UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE OR START AN APPRENTICESHIP!

Important: Before you start, make sure you are up to date with the following vaccinations:

1. **Men ACWY vaccine** – helps protect against meningitis and septicaemia caused by meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y. First-time university students who missed this vaccine can usually still receive it up to their 25th birthday.
2. **Two doses of the MMR vaccine** – protects against measles, mumps and rubella. Measles and mumps can spread rapidly in university and college settings, so it is important to ensure you have received both doses.
3. **HPV vaccine** – helps protect against HPV-related cancers, including cervical and some head, neck, anal and genital cancers. It also helps protect against genital warts. If you missed the vaccine at school, you may still be eligible to receive it.

If you are unsure whether you have received these vaccinations, please contact us to check.

GET AHEAD OF THE GAME – BOWEL CANCER SCREENING The NHS is urging millions of people in their 50s to complete the lifesaving bowel cancer screening tests sent to them by post. Research has shown that only 65% completed the test. Catching bowel cancer before you are demonstrating symptoms is a life saver. Completing the test involves collecting a tiny poo sample using a plastic stick and sample bottle and sending it back to the NHS. So please do the test and send it back – it could save your life.

WALK AND TALK GROUP – ALL WELCOME

The walk and talk group continue to meet each week on Wednesday at 10:30 am at the surgery. We walk for about an hour and probably talk for every step. The weather has definitely been our enemy this year - if its not been raining, it's too hot but the safety of our walkers is always the top priority.

Surgery Closures – Protected Learning Times

Kindly note that Walnut Tree Health Centre will be closed for protected learning times between 14:30 - 18:30 on 24th September, 20th October and the 26th November 2026 for essential staff training. If you have an urgent need during closure then please contact NHS 111.