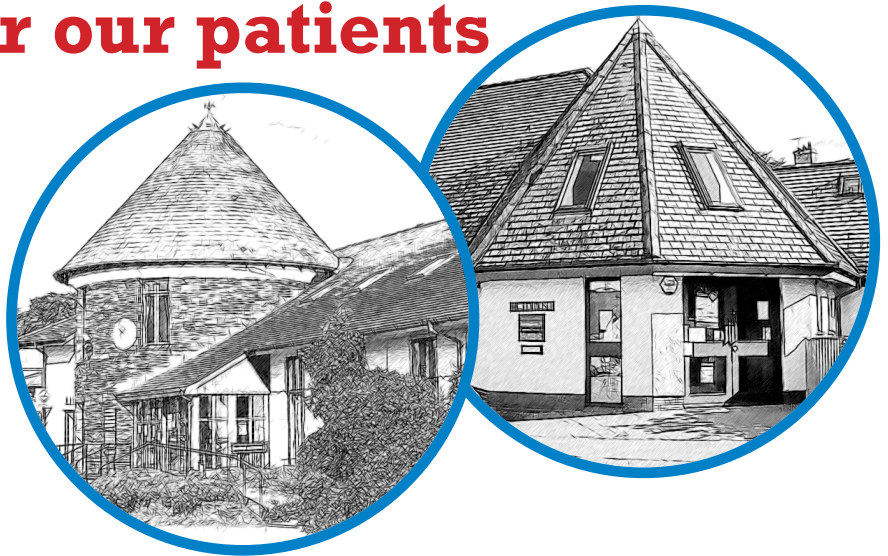


# Newsletter for our patients

July 2024

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Tower House Surgery  
Chudleigh  
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## PPG Annual General Meeting

The 2024 PPG AGM will be held in Bovey Tracey on Monday, 15th July. Riverside Surgery will be open at 6:30 pm, ready for the meeting to begin at 7:00 pm.

The AGM is open to all registered patients and to anyone who is a carer of a registered patient.

There will be a brief report on the activities of the PPG over the past year or so, and an opportunity to discuss the PPG's function.

Officers will be proposed and elected to serve until the next AGM.

If you're interested in joining the PPG, you'll be able to express your interest, have a chat and hear how it works.

## PPG Meetings

In the next Newsletter, we hope to be able to list the venues, dates and times of the PPG meetings which are scheduled to take place over the next few months.

## How our bones age

When we're young, the internal structures of our bones are very strong. As we age, the structures gradually become much more sparse and therefore weaker, making us more susceptible to breaks, particularly from falls.

Many of us know of an elderly person who has broken a hip because of a fall.

## Osteoporosis

If you're diagnosed with osteoporosis (one type of weakness in the bones) you may be put on long-term medication as a continuing measure to help you to avoid broken bones later in life.

If that applies to you, please do continue to take your prescribed medication as set out for you by your consultant or GP.

The problem is that many people stop taking their bone medication because they can't see or feel any benefit from it. It's not like a painkiller which you take and then very soon have relief from the pain.

You won't feel any different when you take medication for osteoporosis, but the benefits **will still be there** even if you can't see or feel them—and your bones will benefit.

**Keep taking the medication—it's important!**

## Health & Wellbeing Coaching

We can help you, through a series of sessions, to make positive, healthy changes to your lifestyle.

Coaching is a non-judgmental support service which will give

you the motivation to make changes in your life at a pace which suits your needs.

Our Health Coach, Joseph (Joey) Milburn will work with you if you're having difficulty in changing habits linked to your health, or if you're feeling 'stuck in a rut', and can't work out how to move forward.

Coaching will enable you to take realistic steps and find ways of overcoming challenges along the way.

Joey is not able to provide counselling, nor specialist support for weight loss. However, he will listen to what is important to you and help you to create a plan to make some great long term changes.

## Good results

We have offered our coaching service for the past four years, and there's been a lot of very positive feedback. Here are some examples:

*"The coach was a huge help to me, helping me to move forward, prioritise what I feel is important and what makes me happy."*

*"It was a huge boost to be allowed a safe neutral place to talk freely, to express my thoughts to a non-judgmental friendly ear."*

*"I realise I did a lot of talking about myself but felt safe in doing so. Another time I would have thought this very selfish, even self-*

*obsessed. I now appreciate it is not so. In fact sometimes it's very necessary to prioritise oneself. I plan to make it part of my life."*

## Coaching appointments

Joey is available from Monday to Thursday and he can see you at Riverside or Tower House.

If you would like to have coaching, please speak to any member of the team at the surgeries. Alternatively, you can contact the Health & Wellbeing Team by email at

[d-icb.nwellbeingteam@nhs.net](mailto:d-icb.nwellbeingteam@nhs.net)

## Using nasal sprays effectively

Many patients are prescribed nasal sprays to relieve various symptoms. Using sprays correctly can improve the results you get and also help avoid some adverse effects.

Nasal sprays have two sorts of actuation methods—a button or lever on the side, or a compression mechanism operated by pressing the nozzle down towards the container.

### How to start

Open the box containing your nasal spray. Take out the spray and shake it well, but not violently, with the cap on, for ten seconds.

### Using the spray

Take off the cap. Hold the spray upright, point the nozzle upwards, away from you. Actuate the pump—press the button on the side or actuate the pump, as appropriate. Repeat this until you see a fine mist of spray coming out at each actuation. Your spray is then ready.

Now, gently blow your nose. Then, shake the nasal spray as before. Take off the cap and hold the spray in the opposite hand to the nostril into which you are aiming the spray.

Tilt your head down a little bit. Place the nozzle just inside

the nostril, pointing it slightly outwards, away from the centre of your nose. This helps the medicine get to the right place and keeps the spray away from your nasal septum (the cartilage separating your two nostrils).

Some brands recommend blocking the other nostril with your finger.

### No sniffing!

Actuate the pump while breathing in very gently through your nose. **Do not sniff hard.**

Take the nozzle out and breathe out through your mouth. If you have been told to use two sprays per nostril, repeat these steps. Then use the spray in the other nostril.

If you're using the correct technique, there should be no drips from your nose or down the back of your throat.

When you've finished, wipe the spray nozzle with a clean tissue and put its cap back on. Store in the cool and out of the reach of children.

### Subsequent doses

When you next use the spray, shake it as before and make a couple of sprays into the air to make sure its working properly before you use it to spray into your nostrils.

### Further guidance

You can see a video of the correct technique at: <https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/inhaler-videos/nasal-spray>

## Eye Screening for Diabetics

In the year 2023, the diabetic screening service invited 741 patients from our practice to have their eyes digitally screened for retinopathy. Nearly 89% of those patients took up the offer and attended an appointment during which their retinas were photographed for later assessment by specialist

staff. (The retina is the light-sensitive area at the back of the eye.)

This take-up of appointments by our patients was very heartening as it was better than the 85% average take-up across the whole of Devon in 2023.

### Do attend for screening

If you're offered an eye screening appointment, please do take it up. We'd like the take-up to be 100% because screening is so important.

Do protect your sight by having regular scans to reveal any changes in your eyes which might suggest the need for treatment to preserve your eyesight

The NHS website has a lot of information on diabetic eye screening. Have a look at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetic-eye-screening/>

## Hygiene for men

Any adult with a penis should make sure that they practise careful cleanliness. If there's a foreskin, it's important to fully retract it and keep the ridge of the head, and the underlying groove, clean and free of any of the whitish substance (smegma) which can accumulate there if hygiene is not regularly practised.

Use very mild skin-friendly soap rather than fancy body washes. Rinse well afterwards, and don't use talc or anything similar.

If convenient, it's a good idea to wash the penis before and after sexual activity.

If the foreskin cannot easily be retracted (this is known as phimosis and will make keeping clean difficult), please think about seeking medical help for the condition. It's not unusual and nothing to be embarrassed about.

Long-term, poor penile hygiene may eventually cause some rare but severe problems.