



**Two Bank Holidays In One Month!**

Let's hope those April frosts are a thing of the past! But it's not yet clear what effect the lack of April Showers will have on May Flowers! Meanwhile there's good news on Covid-19.

	<p><b><u>Next PPG Meeting–JUL 6th; Everyone is Welcome</u></b></p> <p>For full details and how to join the Zoom meeting go to <a href="https://www.maltingssurgery.co.uk/patient-group/">https://www.maltingssurgery.co.uk/patient-group/</a></p>	 <p><b>Is the Pandemic Over? It's good news – but Prof Jim McManus (HCC Director of Public Health) is still cautious!</b></p>
	<p><b><u>May Health Webinar – Women's Health (May 11<sup>th</sup>)</u></b></p> <p>This will be our sixth webinar in the Health Matters series covering <b>What's New In Women's Health?</b> You'll discover the answers to all concerns you may have about the Menopause, Urogynaee – incontinence and prolapse; and much more! The session is free, it's online and it's on February 9<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-8:00 pm. <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/whats-new-in-womens-health-tickets-145981868699">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/whats-new-in-womens-health-tickets-145981868699</a></p>	<p><b><u>Features of the Month</u></b></p> <p><b>"The Pandemic – i.e. the global epidemic – is still going on, as we have seen from India and some parts of Eastern Europe and Brazil" said Prof McManus</b></p> <p>The current Epidemic Phase in the Hertfordshire – by which we mean surging numbers, infections and deaths – is clearly coming towards an end, though there are rises and falls and it will be volatile for some time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The R number has now been below 0.9 for three weeks</li> <li>• Positivity rate of tests is now below 1%</li> <li>• Vaccine uptake is high though we still have gaps and inequalities</li> <li>• Hospital admissions and deaths have dropped to a tenth of what they were in the December-January peak</li> <li>• So far we are controlling spread of South African variants well in Hertfordshire</li> <li>• The consensus of scientific research is that the vaccine is reducing infection and spread, though not by 100% so infections and outbreaks can still happen</li> </ul> <p>If we keep going like this there is every reason why further easing on 17th May and end of June can happen as planned.</p>
	<p><b><u>Impact of Covid-19 on Primary Care</u></b></p> <p>Healthwatch Hertfordshire report that Covid-19 has had a big impact on all Surgeries – for the details go to <a href="https://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/news/2021-04-14/healthwatch-england-investigates-gp-access-during-covid-19">https://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/news/2021-04-14/healthwatch-england-investigates-gp-access-during-covid-19</a></p>	<p>This means we seem to be entering an Endemic phase where the virus remains present in the population, still able to infect people and cause outbreaks, and it will remain at a persistent level for some time until we either eradicate it or it mutates to a lesser degree of harmfulness. We need to keep that level as low as possible until it's eradicated.</p> <p>But that doesn't mean we are out of Covid. It could easily change, as we know from last year. What it does mean is that life returns to some semblance of normality given the fact that we recognise the need for our safety – in other words, "living with covid."</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growing consensus of scientific evidence is that the vaccine is now reducing transmission not just illness</li> <li>• We need to keep ensuring people test and self-isolate if positive</li> <li>• We need to persist with some measures like hands, face, space for now</li> <li>• We are in a hopeful position and if we keep going we will stay that way.</li> </ul> <p>The way out of this is to keep going until we can eradicate the virus. For more information see the new HCC outbreak plan published at <a href="http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/outbreakplan">www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/outbreakplan</a> .</p>
	<p><b><u>Health Matters Webinar Programme</u></b></p> <p>Want to see the whole of the Webinar Programme, or hear the recording of completed webinars? Go to <a href="https://www.maltingssurgery.co.uk/the-maltings-health-matters-programme/">https://www.maltingssurgery.co.uk/the-maltings-health-matters-programme/</a></p>	

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