**Free supply of vitamin D for clinically extremely vulnerable people** People on the Shielded Patient List will be offered free vitamin D supplements for the winter: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/at-risk-groups-to-receive-free-winter-supply-of-vitamin-d>

All care homes will automatically receive a provision for their residents, while eligible individuals will receive a letter inviting them to opt in for a supply to be delivered directly to their homes. Deliveries will be free of charge, starting in January, and will provide four months’ worth of supplements. You do not need to contact us or the pharmacy to access the supplements. The NHS has published guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vitamin-d-supplements-how-to-take-them-safely> on how to take these supplements safely, which you can read before deciding to opt in.

**Accessing your GP animation.** To support general practice, the NHS has created [an animation to help explain to the public how they can continue to access GP services](https://generalpracticebulletin.cmail20.com/t/d-l-chdyhht-juhjjuktyd-d/), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXHPWbEmp5s&feature=youtu.be>

including how to get in contact, the different ways care may be delivered, and how face-to-face appointments have changed. Whilst online consultations are not yet available at Elm Tree Surgery we plan to introduce them early next year.

**Covid vaccine**. The Covid Vaccination Programme is moving very fast at the moment. We have already started our Covid vaccinations, beginning with patients aged over 80. There will be many more clinics and patients will be invited in the groups decided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). We will invite you individually to the appropriate clinic and it is expected that the vaccinations will not start for most age groups until 2021 and it will take some time to vaccinate everyone who is eligible. Our Covid vaccination clinics will be held at the Steam Museum in Swindon as we are unable to meet the strict storage requirements at the surgery. There will be separate arrangements made for those few patients who are medically unfit to travel to Swindon.

Please do not call us about the vaccine unless you have been invited to attend and have a specific question. Everyone will need two doses of the vaccine, with a gap between the 1st and 2nd dose of between 3-4 weeks, depending on the vaccine. The dates and timings will not be negotiable – if you do not accept the invitation you are offered by the surgery you would need to attend one of the mass vaccination clinics to receive your vaccinations. We have not been informed yet as to where the mass vaccination sites will be for our area or when they will start to offer vaccinations. As soon as we have more information that will affect us and our patients, we will announce it on our website – [www.elmtreesurgery.co.uk](http://www.elmtreesurgery.co.uk) – and our Facebook page.

Meanwhile we remain committed to caring for you in the best possible way while keeping you and all of us here at the surgery safe. Please continue to follow the advice on hand washing, social distancing and wearing face masks and we all look forward to the time when we can return to life as normal

**Phone numbers.** We are increasingly using the telephone to contact and communicate with our patients as this is far more efficient than other methods. Please do make sure we have your up to date phone numbers, and especially your mobile phone numbers, and let us know if those numbers change.

**Doctors – goodbyes, adieus and hellos** – we are sad to say good bye to Dr Rachel Dimery who has returned to her hospital training. We are also sorry to lose Dr Suarev GC who leaves in February; to complete his specialist general practice training; they will both be greatly missed. Dr Smith starts her maternity leave in January and we look forward to seeing her back at the surgery later in the year. We also welcome Dr Fleur Cobley who starts in February for one year as our new specialist registrar.