

Great Western Medical Practice

Notification of an abnormal result

We have created these pages to give patients clear information about common abnormal blood test or swab results that may need action. In some cases, this may include a prescription. If a prescription is needed, it will usually be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

We have decided that this is a faster and more reliable way of contacting patients than letters.

Conditions covered

Helicobacter Pylori Infection

High Cholesterol

Low B12

Low Folic Acid/Folate

Low Iron/Ferritin

Iron Deficiency Anaemia

Reduced Vitamin D levels

Very Low Vitamin D Levels

Thrush

Pre-diabetes

CKD

Low Iron/Ferritin

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood test shows that your iron level is low and needs treatment. This is usually treated with an iron tablet, taken once daily, which should help restore your iron levels. Your prescription will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

The medication can cause your stools to turn black, do not be alarmed if this occurs. The tablets are usually well tolerated by patients but can cause diarrhoea or constipation. If you feel the tablets are upsetting you, please let your doctor know.

When the tablets are running low, please call the practice on 0345 337 0540 or the CTAC hub on 01224 550200, Monday to Friday 8:30am–4:30pm, to book a CTAC appointment for a repeat blood test. Your results will be returned to the GP for review.

Please also look at NHS choices for advice on good sources of dietary iron. [Vitamins and minerals – Iron – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthylife/foodanddrink/vitaminsandminerals/iron/)

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.

Iron Deficiency Anaemia

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood test shows iron deficiency anaemia. This means your iron level is low enough to affect your haemoglobin, which is the part of the blood that carries oxygen around the body.

Iron deficiency anaemia is usually treated with iron tablets, but it is also important to look for the reason your iron has become low. This may include checking for possible bleeding, problems with absorbing iron, or other medical conditions. We may need to arrange further investigations, such as repeat blood tests, a coeliac screen, stool testing, or referral for bowel or stomach investigations depending on your age, symptoms, medical history and blood test results.

A prescription for iron tablets will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement. Please take the tablets as prescribed unless a clinician has advised you otherwise.

We will contact you if further tests or referrals are needed. If you develop black or bloody stools, unexplained weight loss, difficulty swallowing, persistent abdominal pain, chest pain, shortness of breath, or feel very unwell, please seek urgent medical advice.

When the tablets are running low, please call the practice on 0345 337 0540 or the CTAC hub on 01224 550200, Monday to Friday 8:30am–4:30pm, to book a CTAC appointment for a repeat blood test. Your results will be returned to the GP for review.

Helicobacter Pylori Infection

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You recently had a stool test taken to check whether you have a particular bacteria present in the lining of your stomach. This test is often performed in people who are experiencing symptoms of indigestion or stomach pain.

Your stool test has confirmed that you do indeed have this bacteria present – it is called “**helicobacter pylori**”.

This is a very common infection and is well proven to be associated with symptoms of indigestion, as well as the development of stomach and duodenal ulcers. Most cases can be cleared with a course of three different medicines — two antibiotics and an acid-reducing tablet. Please read the instructions carefully before starting treatment. It is extremely important that you complete the full course, even if you feel slightly nauseous. The course may be 10 or 14 days, depending on the combination of medicines prescribed. Your prescription will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

If you think you are allergic to any of the tablets we have prescribed or if you feel you cannot tolerate any side effects which they may cause, then please contact the surgery. If you are currently using the oral contraceptive pill, then you must remember to use barrier methods (ie condoms) for the duration of this treatment and for a full seven days afterwards.

We hope that this treatment may alleviate your symptoms completely. If you find you are still experiencing problems, then please make a review appointment with the practice to discuss further management.

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.

Please see the link below.

[Stomach ulcer – Causes – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

High Cholesterol

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood test shows that your cholesterol level is higher than the recommended range, although not at a level where we would usually recommend medication. Higher cholesterol can increase your risk of heart and blood vessel disease, so making some healthy changes to your diet and lifestyle can help lower your cholesterol and improve your overall health.

Please have a look at the link below:

[High cholesterol – How to lower your cholesterol – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) the main things to try and achieve are:

- HAVE AT LEAST five portions, and ideally 7-9 portions, of *a variety of* fruit and vegetables per day.
- THE BULK OF MOST MEALS should be starch-based foods (such as cereals, wholegrain bread, potatoes, rice, pasta), plus fruit and vegetables.
- NOT MUCH fatty food such as fatty meats, cheeses, full-cream milk, fried food, butter, etc. Use low fat, mono-, or poly-unsaturated spreads.
- INCLUDE 2-3 portions of fish per week. At least one of which should be 'oily'.
- LIMIT SALT to no more than 6 g a day (and less for children).
- If you eat meat, it is best to eat lean meat, or poultry such as chicken.
- If you do fry, choose a vegetable oil such as sunflower, rapeseed or olive oil
- Lifestyle changes can also help. Aim for around 150 minutes of exercise per week, although any increase is a great start.
- Stopping smoking or vaping, limiting alcohol, and aiming for a healthy weight can also improve cholesterol - even a small amount of weight loss can make a difference.

We also have some short videos on our YouTube channel which explain more about looking after your heart and blood vessels. These may be helpful if you would like more information: [Aberdeen GWMP – YouTube](#)

Hopefully, with these changes to your diet and lifestyle, your cholesterol will improve. We recommend arranging a repeat cholesterol blood test with the nurses in 6 months' time.

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.

Vitamin B12

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood test shows that your vitamin B12 level is borderline or low. Vitamin B12 is important for healthy blood cells and nerve function. Low levels can happen for different reasons, including low dietary intake, reduced absorption from the stomach or bowel, some medicines, or following certain types of stomach or bowel surgery.

Borderline low vitamin B12 – treatment with supplements

Your B12 result is borderline low. This means it is slightly below the usual range, but not low enough that injections are needed at this stage. A prescription for vitamin B12 supplements has been arranged and will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

Please take the supplements as prescribed. When the tablets are running low, please call the practice on 0345 337 0540 or the CTAC hub on 01224 550200, Monday to Friday 8:30am–4:30pm, to book a CTAC appointment for a repeat blood test. Your results will be returned to the GP for review. If your B12 level has not improved after this trial of treatment, we will contact you to discuss the next steps.

Low vitamin B12 – treatment with injections

Your B12 result is low enough that we recommend treatment with vitamin B12 injections. These are needed when the level is clearly low, or where tablets may not be suitable or enough to correct the deficiency.

The usual starting course is one vitamin B12 injection three times a week for 2 weeks. These first injections will be given at the practice. After this, ongoing vitamin B12 injections are usually given every 12 weeks at the vaccination hub.

The following foods are good sources of vitamin B12. Including these foods regularly in your diet can help to prevent vitamin B12 deficiency:

- Liver/liver pâté (pregnant women should avoid liver/liver pâté).
- Eggs.
- Cheese.
- Milk.
- Meat — for example, beef, lamb and pork.
- Fish.

- Fortified breakfast cereals — check the packet as many breakfast cereals have vitamin B12 added.
- Marmite®.
- Fortified oat, rice and soya milks.
- Fortified soya yoghurts.
- Fortified spreads.
- Fortified yeast extract.

If you follow a vegan diet, try to include foods fortified with vitamin B12 regularly. If you do not eat enough fortified foods, you may need to take a daily vitamin B12 supplement.

How much vitamin B12 do I need?

- Adults aged 19 to 64 need about 1.5 micrograms a day of vitamin B12.
- If you eat meat, fish or dairy foods, you should usually be able to get enough vitamin B12 from your diet.
- Vitamin B12 is not found naturally in foods such as fruit, vegetables and grains, so vegans may not get enough from diet alone.

For more information, please visit the NHS website for advice on vitamins and minerals: www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/

Low Folic Acid/Folate

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood test shows that your folate level is low and needs treatment. This is usually treated with a folic acid tablet, taken once daily, which should help restore your levels after 2–3 months. Your prescription will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

The tablets are usually well tolerated by patients. If you feel the tablets are upsetting you, please let your doctor know.

What does folic acid do?

Folic acid, together with vitamin B12, is necessary to form red blood cells. A deficiency can reduce the ability of red blood cells to carry oxygen, this is called 'macrocytic' (large cell) anaemia. Together, both vitamins also help nerves to function properly. It is especially important for anyone wanting to become pregnant to have good levels of folic acid, as it is vital for the development of a baby's nervous system.

Sources of folic acid

Folate is found naturally in a wide variety of foods, and is also present in foods fortified with folic acid.

Folate dissolves easily in water, so some can be lost from vegetables during cooking. This can be reduced by avoiding over-cooking, and by steaming or microwaving vegetables instead of boiling.

How much folic acid do I need?

Most people should be able to get enough folate by eating a healthy, varied diet.

Folic acid deficiency – what happens if I do not get enough?

Folic acid deficiency can cause symptoms such as tiredness, weakness, diarrhoea, loss of appetite and weight loss.

It can also cause headaches, palpitations, a sore tongue and changes in mood or behaviour.

Deficiency can happen if you are not getting enough folate in your diet, or if your requirements are increased, such as during pregnancy.

Sometimes deficiency can occur if your body is losing or not absorbing folate properly, for example with Crohn's disease, untreated coeliac disease, some medicines, or high alcohol intake.

Good sources of folic acid

- Spinach, kale, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and broccoli.
- Beans and legumes, such as peas and black-eyed beans.
- Yeast and beef extracts.
- Oranges and orange juice.
- Wheat bran and other wholegrain foods.
- Poultry, pork, shellfish and liver.
- Fortified foods, such as some breakfast cereals — check the label.

When the tablets are running low, please call the practice on 0345 337 0540 or the CTAC hub on 01224 550200, Monday to Friday 8:30am–4:30pm, to book a CTAC appointment for a repeat blood test. Your results will be returned to the GP for review.

Please also look at NHS choices for advice on good sources of dietary folate, usually green leafy vegetables. [Vitamins and minerals – B vitamins and folic acid – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health-a-z/vitamins-and-minerals/b-vitamins-and-folic-acid)

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.

Reduced Vitamin D Levels

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood test shows that your vitamin D level is low. However, it is not low enough to need a prescription vitamin D supplement. Low vitamin D is common in the north east of Scotland, especially during the winter months, because the body makes vitamin D when skin is exposed to sunlight. Low vitamin D can be associated with muscle pain and weakness.

It would be a good idea to consider taking 400iu (10 micrograms) of vitamin D daily throughout the year. Alternatively, if you are not keen on daily tablets you could take 800iu of vitamin D daily between October and May every year. Vitamin D tablets can be bought from the chemist and good health stores.

Routine rechecking of this is not usually required.

Further information on Vitamin D can be found on the following website www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/.

Very Low Vitamin D Levels

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because the results of your recent blood test show that your Vitamin D levels are low and needs to be treated.

This is not uncommon in the northeast of Scotland, as vitamin D is produced by the body when the skin is exposed to the sun. Vitamin D deficiency can be associated with muscle pain and weakness.

Due to your very low levels of vitamin D, we would suggest that you take a vitamin D supplement once a week for 6 weeks. Routine rechecking of this is not usually required. Prescriptions will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

Thereafter, it would be a good idea to consider taking 400iu (10 micrograms) of vitamin D daily throughout the year. Alternatively, if you are not keen on daily tablets you could take 800iu of vitamin D daily between October and May every year. These vitamin D tablets can be bought from the chemist and good health stores, and they are not routinely prescribed on the NHS.

Further information on Vitamin D can be found on the following website www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/

Thrush

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because the results of your recent swab show that you have a vaginal thrush (candida) infection. This is a common vaginal infection which you may have experienced before. It can be readily treated with anti-fungal medication. An appropriate prescription to treat it will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy. Please contact reception if you would prefer a different arrangement.

If your symptoms persist following completion of this treatment, please make an appointment for review. In general, it is good to avoid using highly scented soaps, perfumes and bubble baths.

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.

[Thrush in men and women – NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Pre-diabetes

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood tests show that you have pre-diabetes. This means your blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. It is sometimes also called borderline diabetes.

Pre-diabetes means you are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the future. However, there are lots of things you can do to reduce this risk if you take action now, including healthy eating, weight management and regular physical activity.

Education and support

For diabetes education, please look at the Diabetes UK website. This website has helpful information about what diabetes is and how you can manage and prevent it: www.diabetes.org.uk

Please also see the NHS Grampian diabetes website for more helpful information, including support for pre-diabetes locally:
www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk

We also have some short videos on our YouTube channel which explain more about looking after your heart and blood vessels. These may be helpful if you would like more information: [Aberdeen GWMP – YouTube](#)

For one-to-one or group-based advice on pre-diabetes, you can self-refer to Prevent IT by calling 01224 655708 or emailing gram.patientgroupeducation@nhs.scot.

Diet and weight management

Weight loss can really help to improve blood glucose control and reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. If you would like help and advice on weight loss, please look at Healthy Weight Grampian:
www.healthyweightgrampian.scot.nhs.uk

A healthy diet is an important part of reducing your risk of developing diabetes. All newly diagnosed pre-diabetic patients are usually referred automatically to the NHS Dietetic service. If you wish to opt out of this referral, please contact the practice and let us know.

Follow-up and annual review

You will be added to our pre-diabetes recall system. You will be recalled annually through our CDM recall process for blood tests, blood pressure and weight monitoring.

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

You should be reading this webpage if you have received an SMS/text message from Great Western Medical Practice.

You have received this message because your recent blood or urine results suggest chronic kidney disease, often shortened to CKD. CKD means there has been a change in kidney function or kidney structure that has been present for more than 3 months.

CKD is common, especially as people get older or if they have high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease. For many people it remains stable, but regular monitoring is important so that we can check kidney function, urine protein levels, blood pressure and overall cardiovascular risk.

Follow-up and annual review

You will be added to our CKD recall system and will be recalled annually through our CDM recall process. This review will usually include blood tests to check kidney function, a urine test for protein, blood pressure monitoring and weight monitoring.

What you can do to help protect your kidneys

Keeping your blood pressure well controlled is one of the most important ways to protect your kidneys. Other helpful steps include stopping smoking if you smoke, staying active, aiming for a healthy weight, eating a balanced diet and keeping diabetes well controlled if this applies to you.

Please avoid taking anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen or naproxen unless they have been specifically recommended by a clinician, as these can sometimes affect kidney function.

Further information

Further information is available from the NHS website:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease/

If you would like to discuss this further, please book a routine telephone consultation with the practice.