

Patient Newsletter February 2025

Hartlepool and Stockton Health

Menopause Drop-In Cafés

Whether you want to chat about symptoms, find out more about services in the area, or just meet people with similar experiences, our aim is to support people in coming together and talking about Menopause in a safe and relaxed environment.

We won't be offering or recommending treatment but we'll be happy to talk to you about having a conversation with a healthcare professional.



Finkle Street
Stockton
TS18 1AR

Open to **anyone** regardless of which GP practice you're registered at.

First Tuesday of Every Month
6 - 7:30pm

Lyla Belle's

Unit 13
Tees Bay Retail Park
Hartlepool
TS25 1XJ

Open to **anyone** regardless of which GP practice you're registered at.

First Thursday of Every Month
6 - 7:30pm

By Emma Mills, Health & Wellbeing Coach

Menopause Cafes

This month marks a significant milestone for us as we celebrate nearly two years since the inception of our pilot scheme for menopause drop-in cafés in Stockton and Hartlepool. What began as a simple idea—creating a non-clinical environment for women to come together and share their experiences—has blossomed into a vital community resource.

Our menopause cafés have become a safe haven where women can speak openly about the challenges and triumphs of navigating menopause. It's been incredibly heartwarming to see such enthusiasm and openness among attendees, with many returning for ongoing support and many forming friendships.

The turnout and feedback at both locations speaks volumes about the need for this kind of supportive space—a place where women can not only share their stories but also seek guidance and signposting from health professionals.

Within these cafes, we have fostered conversations about options and emphasised the importance of understanding health risks associated with menopause and beyond such as obesity/diabetes/stroke. Attendees leave with valuable literature and the knowledge of where to turn for additional help, making it clear that they are not alone on this journey.

Building on this success, patients with Hartlepool & Stockton Health practices can attend a thirty-minute appointment with a menopause clinician in one of the Menopause Clinics within Enhanced Access. This next step has allowed more tailored support through dedicated consultations with trained clinicians, including our outstanding clinical lead, Dr. Lucy Newton.

The feedback from women who have attended the Menopause Clinics has been overwhelmingly positive. Many express gratitude for the time spent during their consultations, feeling truly heard and validated regarding their feelings and experiences.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding our services and deepening our impact within the community. We believe it's essential for every woman experiencing menopause to have access to reliable information, compassionate care, and a network of support.

By Tracey Hepburn, Nurse Practitioner

Help Us to Keep Antibiotics Working

72% of antibiotics are prescribed in the community and **Antibiotic Resistance** is increasing and we **all** have a responsibility to use them appropriately, using the right antibiotic for the right patient for the right duration, to ensure that they do work when they are needed.

As a Nurse Practitioner working within Kingsway Medical Centre, I along with my colleagues have seen a great deal of patients attending with coughs, colds, sore throats and ear infections over the winter months, many of which are lasting for several weeks at a time.

Nurse Practitioner appointments are usually accessible on the day, five days per week, we are all highly trained and experienced in the management of minor, new acute illness and able to prescribe when appropriate. We follow the same national and local guidelines and targets as the doctors do.

There is often the expectation that antibiotics are required, however the vast majority of these illnesses do not require antibiotics and the body will fight off the infection itself. Simple self-help measures can help such as rest, fluids and paracetamol. Pharmacies can be of great help with advice and treatments. If you do feel that you may need treatment or have any concerns, please book a face-to-face appointment for assessment and not a telephone appointment.

You may notice an increase in the use of patient information leaflets which can help with the shared decision making in managing minor illnesses but also highlight symptoms of concern that require prompt action, known as red-flag symptoms. These can be sent to your phone.

Antibiotics used inappropriately will not only increase resistance, meaning they won't work when you or others need them, but may also have the potential to cause side effects such as rashes, thrush, stomach pains, or other symptoms.

Some people are at higher risk from infections and potential complications: very young, premature babies, elderly, those with co-existing illnesses or are on medication that increases their risks or affects their immune system and should always seek advice and assessment.

We are all following national and local guidelines in relation to antibiotic use so please work with us to help keep them working by using them effectively.

For further information visit www.nhs.uk/keepantibioticsworking

Abdominal aortic aneurysm

Are you a man living in Stockton? Have you heard of abdominal aortic aneurysms?

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms (AAAs) are a weakening in the aorta that can swell and rupture causing fatal internal bleeding. They usually don't have symptoms and are most common in men aged over 65. Thankfully we have a free NHS screening programme for men in the year they turn 65.

However, over 240 men in Stockton did NOT attend their Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening appointment in 2021 -22. Don't be one of the men who miss out.

You will receive your invitation through the post when you're eligible. Please DON'T ignore it. It could save your life!

If you would like to change your appointment, call the screening service on:

0191 445 8747

For more information visit QE Gateshead Website:

<https://www.qegateshead.nhs.uk/services/aaa>

Watch our AAA Video: <https://fb.watch/7tORZvND2n/>

Dr. Gartner

It is with sadness we announce the death of Dr. Gartner who died in January 2025, aged 80.

Dr. Gartner worked at Kingsway Medical Centre for many years.

