

Welcome to the Bervie Bulletin October edition. We hope that you are all safe and well. Here are a few services and information that are changing this month.

1. **Winter Planning**

As we move into the busiest winter months we wanted to request that patients continue to use the eConsult service whenever possible.

It is very difficult to predict what the coming months will be like but there is always an increase in illness across the NHS at this time of year. This year we face an even greater challenge than normal due to the impact of COVID-19 and the way this has affected how we work and the very real risk of having staff shortages at short notice if they require to self-isolate and be tested for any COVID symptoms.

We appreciate that the majority of people do use the eConsult system as their preferred method of contacting the surgery and we are grateful for this. This allows us to ensure that the right person deals with you, but it also reduces incoming calls to the practice, making it easier for those who genuinely can't use the eConsult service to get through on the telephone. By using eConsult, you are not only helping yourself, but also the whole of the local community.

A lot of winter illness is due to mild infections and will improve without any specific treatment. It may be worth looking at self-help advice available through eConsult or NHS Inform or contacting a local chemist before submitting an eConsult form.

We will remain open and available for those patients who need us most this winter (as we have been throughout this pandemic) and the telephone will always remain an option to get in contact with us. We do hope, however, that with patients using eConsult this will help us provide high quality care in the safest way possible and that this will help the whole community this winter.

We appreciate there have been some teething issues with the eConsult form, and that you might not be able to attach photographs to all of the specialities listed, but there will be a few ways around this by picking a slightly different speciality and free-texting any specific issues. Also, if you are in a lot of pain and pick a high pain number then your form will be rejected, so it might be worth lowering the pain threshold number slightly and again free-texting any pertinent information. The other good thing about the eConsult system is that you can submit a form out-with working hours at a time that is more convenient to yourself.

eConsult is available on-line by visiting the Inverbervie website:

www.berviemedical.com

We recently received results from an eConsult survey and it was reassuring to see that a large majority of the people surveyed were happy to recommend the eConsult online service to family and friends and they were very satisfied when using the system for their health assessment.

2. **COVID-19**

We realise that people are now seeing that England have started their immunisation programme, however, this is still not available in Scotland but once we know what is happening we will be in contact with you.



We appreciate your continued support and urge you to keep safe this festive season.



Our website – <https://berviemedical.com/> has useful information about our practice especially a link to our ***Near Me*** (video) consultations **(Clinical Team will ask you to do this)** and ***eConsult*** for you to start using immediately