

GREYSTOKE GAZETTE

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Suspicious Callers

The practice has recently been advised of an incident whereby a person claiming to be working for Morpeth Health Centre was telephoning patients and then trying to sell rosehip seed extract and tries to gain patients bank details.

This has been reported to the Police and NHS Protect (Counter Fraud) but we would encourage patients to be on their guard.

Can the practice assure patients that we do not share your medical records or prescribing details with 3rd parties and would never ask anyone to contact patients on behalf of the practice. We would encourage patients that if they do receive any such calls, to advise the practice and we will report to NHS Protect and the Police.

Keep warm and well this winter

Cold weather can be bad for our health, especially for people aged 65 and older. As we age it takes longer to warm up, which raises the risk of increased blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes. There are easy things you can do to help yourself stay healthy over the winter



1. Keep warm

Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F). You may prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer. Keep your bedroom window closed on a winter's night. Breathing in cold air can increase the risk of chest infections.

2. Get financial support

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. View the Keep Warm Keep Well booklet online to learn more www.gov.uk/phe/keep-warm

3. Look after yourself

- Contact your GP to get your free flu jab if you are aged 65 or over, live in a residential or nursing home, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person.
- Don't delay in getting treatment for minor winter ailments like colds or sore throats. Visit your local pharmacist for advice on treatment before it gets worse so you can recover quicker.
- Layer your clothing whether you are indoors or outside. Wrap a scarf around your mouth to protect your lungs from the cold air.
- Wear shoes with a good grip if you need to go outside.
- When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so. Get up, stretch your legs and make yourself a warm drink.
- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure they are operating safely.
- Contact your water and power suppliers to see if you can be on the Priority Services Register, a service for older and disabled people.

For more information about how to stay warm and well visit www.ageuk.org.uk/winterprep or call 0800 587 0668.

Know what you're buying!

Eight tips from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for buying medicines and medical devices online safely:

1. Look for the distance-selling logo

All online retailers of medicine operating legally must display it. This is the most reliable way to ensure you are buying products from a registered and approved online seller of medicines. Click here for more info, where you can search on the MHRA website to check if a website can legally sell medicines online.

2. Look for the CE mark on medical devices. A manufacturer that displays a CE mark on their medical device is effectively declaring that their product complies with the essential regulatory requirements. These requirements are designed to ensure that the product is safe and works as intended.

3. Read websites carefully. Look for signs of scam websites put together by amateurs in a hurry. Poor design, pop-ups and spelling and grammar - errors that may indicate poor translation should all set off alarm bells. Checking reviews can also help you spot a scam site - but scammers often add fakes. The consumer association Which? have put together a guide on how to spot genuine online reviews.

4. Check the small print. Scam sites often encourage a sign up, committing you to hand over your money for a "trial". In fact, you could be agreeing to schedule large regular payments from your account for useless or dangerous products.

5. Don't trust emails from strangers. Spam is still a huge source of customers for these websites. Avoid responding to unsolicited emails completely. If you think a product is worth checking out, search for it from a reputable retailer. And how do you know which retailers are reputable? See tip one!

6. Check for secure payment options. When entering personal information, look out for a small padlock or unbroken key symbol in the address bar or elsewhere in the frame of your browser (not the webpage itself). This will indicate that the information you enter will be encrypted. If the padlock or unbroken key symbol is not present, do not enter your information.

7. "Herbal" does not mean safe. Products that claim to be 'herbal' or 'all-natural' can actually contain chemical ingredients. MHRA seize thousands of slimming products every year that claim to be herbal but contain sibutramine – a medicine that is now withdrawn due to reported side effects including strokes and heart attacks. People unsure about the legal status of herbal products claiming to be "natural" should check for a PL/THR number or the Traditional Herbal Registration (THR) logo, indicating that they have been assessed by the MHRA for safety. For more information, visit NHS Choices here.

8. Be wise to gimmick marketing. Terms like "detox" and "fat-melting" are meaningless, without any scientific or medical basis. And if a product reads "not for human consumption", that's not there as a nod and a wink. It's because it hasn't been authorised for that purpose.

Visit www.gov.uk/fakemedes for the latest information on the FakeMeds campaign. Follow the campaign on Twitter using the #FakeMeds hashtag



Relaxation Techniques

The Patient Information Centre has recently updated their series of relaxation techniques that can help to relieve stress and gain sense of well-being. The relaxation techniques are now available in a choice of male or female voice overs. Free to download at www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/relax.php

* Floating Visualisation * Yoga Nidra (Yogic Sleep)

* Mindfulness of Breathing * Purification Visualisation

* Progressive Muscle Relaxation * Trataka (Candle Gazing)