



UPDATE

Below is an **UPDATE** list from both Rushbottom Lane Surgeries. This shows the number of wasted appointments last month (February 2026), where patients just **Did Not Attend**.

St Georges Medical Practice February 2026 DNA's				Dr Khan & Partners February 2026 DNA's			
Clinician	Appointment	Minutes	Hours	Clinician	Appointment	Minutes	Hours
GP	19	270	4hr 30min	GP	84	1,225	20hr 25min
ANP	5	90	1hr 30min	ANP	2	30	0hr 30min
Nurse	19	385	6hr 25min	Nurse	48	690	11hr 30min
TOTAL	43	745	12hr 25min	TOTAL	134	1,945	32hr 25min

Combined total number of **Did Not Attend**

WASTED:-	Appointments	Minutes	Hours
February	177	2,690	44hrs 50mins
January	218	3,353	55hrs 53mins

**GP APPOINTMENT?
CAN'T MAKE IT?
DON'T NEED IT?**

CANCEL IT!

Call the surgery number and select option 6

OR

Text CANCEL in response to the appointment text reminder

OR

email: - reception.rushbottomlane@nhs.net

**Rushbottom Lane Surgery received
15,745 Incoming telephone calls during
the month of February 2026**



Here are just three of the awareness events taking place in March 2026

World Hearing Day March 3rd

FROM COMMUNITIES TO CLASSROOMS:
Hearing care for every child

World Hearing Day is an annual global advocacy event for raising awareness regarding hearing loss and promoting ear and hearing care and calling for action to address hearing loss and related issues. The campaign focuses on two imperatives: -

- Preventing avoidable childhood hearing loss. Ensuring early identification of and care for children with ear or hearing problems.
- Schools and communities are natural entry points to reach children, parents, and teachers. By integrating hearing care into school health and child health programmes, we can help children hear, learn, and succeed.

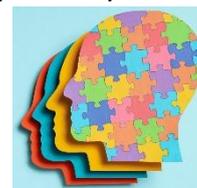
Around 90 million children aged 5-19 years, live with hearing loss. Over 60% of childhood hearing loss is preventable through simple, cost-effective public health measures. Early identification and care are crucial to prevent long-term impacts on development, education, and future opportunities.



**16th - 20th
March
2026**

Neurodiversity Celebration Week. Celebrating different minds.

Founded by Siena Castellon in 2018, Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. It aims to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by providing schools, universities, organisations, and others around the world with the opportunity to recognise the many skills and talents of neurodivergent individuals, while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual. Our purpose is to help the world to understand, value and celebrate the talents of neurodiverse minds.



**National
Nutrition
Month 2026**

As a beacon of wellness, every March is celebrated as **National Nutrition Month**, casting a spotlight on dietary habits, food knowledge, and the joys of wholesome eating. The path to wellness often begins on our plates. National Nutrition Month stands as a testament to the profound impact of making informed food choices and developing sound eating habits. This annual observance not only promotes nutritional knowledge but also emphasises the vitality of a balanced lifestyle. Originally established as a week-long event in 1973, National Nutrition Month expanded to a month-long observance in 1980 due to growing public interest in nutrition. The initiative was driven by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, an organisation committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics. Over the years, it has evolved into a significant annual event promoting the pivotal role nutrition plays in overall health and well-being. Today, National Nutrition Month continues to thrive, educating people on how to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Continued on page 3

National Nutrition Month

Although many people like to set resolutions and try turning over a new leaf around the New Year, March is also a great time for a healthy focus, after the long winter is almost over. At the beginning of springtime, this month is often a time when people feel that the winter is ending, the sun is beginning to shine, and hope is beginning to rise. With this in mind, March has been declared National Nutrition Month—a time for people to start learning and thinking a bit more carefully about what kinds of foods they put into their bodies.

Why is Teaching Children About Nutrition So Important?

Educating children about proper nutrition from an early age is essential to their long-term health and well-being. Research has found that UK adolescents get around two-thirds of their daily calories from ultra-processed foods (UPFs), which isn't good for them!

Scrolling for Health: The Risks Behind Viral Nutrition Fads

Teenagers get nutrition advice from many sources, including family, friends, health professionals and social media. Unfortunately, the quality of this advice varies. This makes it crucial for teens to have the right resources to navigate misinformation and eat healthily.

Do Kids Need Omega-3 Fats?

The good news is that teaching children about proper nutrition can be fun and engaging. When kids understand the benefits of healthy eating, they're more likely to make better food choices and develop habits that support lifelong well-being.

In recent years, omega-3 fatty acids have become something of a nutrition star. But what are they? Omega-3s are essential fatty acids that help feed the brain and keep it healthy. They help the body build new cells and serve key functions in the central nervous and cardiovascular systems. Omega-3 fats are also important for eye function. Additionally, some research has shown omega-3 fats may help manage psychological and behavioural conditions because of their role in neurotransmitter function. Studies in Japanese children have shown fish intake to be inversely related to depressive symptoms. And the anti-inflammatory effects of omega-3 fats have been studied as a potential treatment for conditions ranging from obesity to asthma to upper respiratory infections.

Types of Omega-3 Fats

There are three types of omega-3 fatty acids: eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). EPA and DHA are found mainly in certain fish, although some brands of eggs may be fortified. ALA is found primarily in plant sources including flaxseed, chia seeds and walnuts, but also in some fish and meat. Grass-fed animals tend to have a higher amount of omega-3 fatty acids and produce milk and eggs with more as well.

Healthy Eating Patterns

Instead of restrictive diets, evidence supports balanced eating habits that include a variety of foods. Some well-studied and healthful ways to eat include:

1. [Mediterranean Diet](#): Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seafood and healthy fats.
2. [MIND Diet](#): A mix of the Mediterranean and DASH diets (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) with a focus on brain and overall health.
3. [Vegetarian/Vegan Diets](#): Exclude most or all animal foods. Teens may need guidance from a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to prevent nutrient deficiencies.

**So, this National Nutrition Month remember,
eat well and live healthy. Then carry on for the rest of the year!**



Dark chocolate benefits

Let's face it; We all love chocolate! Well, dark chocolate is often seen as a healthier choice than milk chocolate, because of its higher cocoa solid content.

Cocoa solids are a good source of flavanols, a type of chemical that naturally occurs in plants. Flavanols give dark chocolate its slightly bitter taste, and its potential health benefits such as helping to lower blood pressure and making blood vessels more flexible.

Dark chocolate vs milk and white chocolate

Chocolate is made from beans from the fruit of the cacao tree. These beans are fermented, dried and roasted to make cocoa nibs (small crunchy bits) which are ground to a paste called chocolate 'liquor'. This 'raw' chocolate liquor is separated into two main components: cocoa solids (the non-fat part) and cocoa butter (the fat). Different types of chocolate contain different amounts of these, which is why dark, milk and white chocolate taste and feel so different. Dark chocolate contains more flavanols than milk chocolate, and white chocolate contains no flavanols.

Dark chocolate is made from cocoa solids (35 to 90 per cent cocoa solids), cocoa butter and sugar.

Milk chocolate is made from cocoa solids (generally less than 35 per cent), cocoa butter, sugar and milk powder. Milk chocolate often contains more sugar than dark.

White chocolate is technically not a 'real' chocolate as it contains no cocoa solids, only cocoa butter, sugar and milk powder.



Are the flavanols in dark chocolate good for your heart?

A 2019 review of observational studies showed a link between having chocolate and the reduced risk of heart and circulatory diseases. It suggested that 45g of chocolate per week was linked to the biggest reduction in risk. Eating more chocolate than this was potentially linked to bad health effects. From eating too much sugar.

In a 2025 review of human trials, flavanol-containing foods (including cocoa, tea and some fruits) were seen to potentially reduce the risk of heart and circulatory diseases. Although these studies are promising, commercial chocolate usually contains much lower levels of flavanols than the cocoa bean products used in scientific studies. And while cocoa solids are a natural source of flavanols, a lot are lost during the process of making chocolate.

There is no official agreement about the amount of flavanols you need to eat to see health benefits. However, it is estimated that 400 to 600mg flavanols per day from all food sources (including cocoa, black and green tea, grapes and berries) may help support heart health.

Is dark chocolate good for reducing the risk of diabetes?

Although a few long-term observational studies have suggested moderate amounts of dark chocolate (unlike milk chocolate) may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, still more clinical studies are needed to prove this.

But let's be honest, any excuse to eat chocolate is a good one



"Of the many, MANY different bars of chocolate that I have tried over the years, my favourite dark chocolate is made by HU Kitchen (<https://hukitchen.co.uk/>) and from the various flavours they produce, my absolute favourite is: - 'SALTY'."



Preparing for open heart surgery is nothing like preparing for a race

When you think of Olympic athletes, you picture strength, resilience, and peak physical health.

But heart disease does not discriminate, even against those who have stood on the podium.



Roger Black, who won the Olympic 400m silver medal in Atlanta in 1996, underwent open heart surgery mid 2025 after a routine check-up for his lifelong heart condition.

Roger's story is a reminder that heart surgery can be daunting no matter who you are.

Roger's heart disease journey began at 11 years old. *"I was just a kid who loved sport,"* he recalls.

"I was the fastest in school, playing football and rugby. I felt absolutely fine."

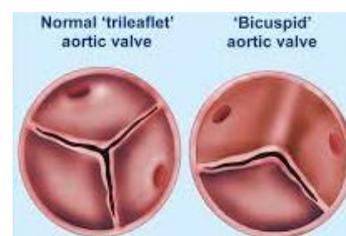
But during a routine school health check, a nurse heard something unusual in his heartbeat.

That led to a referral to Southampton General Hospital, where he was diagnosed with a **bicuspid aortic valve**. This is a congenital heart condition, which is a heart problem that you are born with.

Congenital heart disease affects 1 to 2 per cent of people in the UK.

A bicuspid aortic valve is a heart valve with only 2 leaflets (or cusps) instead of the usual 3.

This can lead to the valve becoming narrowed or leaky over time and often requires ongoing monitoring or treatment.



Roger remembers being told he had to stop doing any competitive sport for the foreseeable future. His doctors eventually cleared him to return to playing sport as long as he had regular check-ups. But despite his diagnosis, Roger's athletic career flourished.

For the next 47 years, Roger attended the hospital once a year. However, in September 2024, during what was supposed to be a routine check-up, Roger's world shifted. He had an echocardiogram, and it took longer than usual. Then he was told: 'Things have changed'.

Roger recalls: *"The next day, my consultant called and said, 'the day has come, we need to get you into surgery'. Even though my underlying heart problem was ever-present, this was a complete shock."*

"I had thought this day would come in my 70s. It came when I was 58." "It's hard to know how to plan for it physically – it's not like preparing for a race that you know how far it will be and how fast you need to run. It's about surrendering control and that's hard."

Open heart surgery is exactly what it sounds like. In Roger's case, surgeons replaced his failing valve and repaired the aorta. Roger said: *"I had to trust the team, and focused on what I could control, my recovery."*

"For anyone going through this, the best moment is getting home," Roger says.

"Suddenly, you're in control again. You can lie in your own bed, eat your own food. And you start walking just a bit further each day."

He credits his recovery at home to the support of his family, *"I'm usually the one looking after everyone else. But sometimes you just have to let go."*

 **Active Essex**
[https://www.activeessex.org/
 find-your-active/time-to-
 move/](https://www.activeessex.org/find-your-active/time-to-move/)



Time To Move

Start small – it's the best way! As another year rolls around, many of us will have made a small pledge to try something new, get a little healthier, and kick off a journey to moving a little more each day.



Doctor Doctor



Doctor, Doctor! I've lost my memory.

When did this happen?

When did what happen?

Doctor, Doctor! I have a strawberry stuck in my ear.

Don't worry, I've got cream for that!

Doctor, Doctor! Will this ointment get rid of my spots?

I never make rash promises...

Doctor, Doctor! There's a colour that I can only see in my head.

Don't worry, it's just a pigment of your imagination

Doctor, Doctor! I've heard exercise kills germs, is that true?

It might be, but how do you get the germs to exercise?



Toothbrushing fun with the help of the Brush Bus!

The **NHS Mid and South Essex Brush Bus** initiative aims to promote good oral health among children (and help set them up for a lifetime of healthy smiles). Also, it includes the **Mid and South Essex Bright Smiles Child Oral Health Improvement Programme**, which started in January 2024 and has reached over 26,000 people, shared over 43,000 toothbrushing packages, and trained around 600 workers, volunteers, and adult students. The Brush Bus visits nurseries and schools to share toothbrushing techniques and encourage children to maintain good oral hygiene.

This program is part of a broader effort to improve children's oral health in the region.

Why is good dental health so important?

Parents and carers may find it difficult to brush their children's teeth. This can be due to lack of time or trouble getting young children to brush their teeth.

Poor oral hygiene in children can affect their overall physical and mental health. Tooth or enamel decay can also lead to dental problems linked to serious health conditions. Good oral habits start early: learn how to care for your child's teeth and gums to prevent problems and build lifelong dental health.

Helping Hands Day Nursery Director Sandra Francis said: *"We were eager to participate in the Brush Bus scheme to actively promote excellent oral health habits from an early age."*

Majority of Crisps and Popcorn Failing 'Healthy' Test

Action on Salt and Sugar based at *Queen Mary University of London*, reveals that most savoury snacks on supermarket shelves fail to meet the government's 'healthier' criteria due in part to excessive salt and sugars. With the upcoming restrictions set to impact companies that fail to reformulate, Action on Salt and Sugar is urging companies to take responsibility and improve the nutritional profile of their products.

- A new report exposes excessive salt and sugars in popular snacks and raises the alarm.
- Majority of products fail to meet government's criteria for healthier food – with missed opportunity for brands who haven't complied to salt and sugar reduction targets.
- Nearly one in three ready-to-eat popcorn products are saltier than a packet of cheese & onion crisps.
- Call for government to 'get tough' on food industry and set new stricter, mandatory salt and sugar reduction targets.

In the analysis of over 1,200 crisps, nuts and popcorn snacks, a staggering 77% of crisps, 56% of nuts, and 88% of popcorn would be scored 'less healthy' under the government's guidelines – justifiably restricting some products from being advertised on TV and online before 9pm from October 2025.

Often regarded as a healthier snack, many **ready-to-eat popcorn** products contain excessive levels of salt and sugar. Shockingly, 27% of all ready-to-eat popcorn products exceed the government's voluntary maximum salt targets – with over one in three saltier than a packet of cheese & onion crisps. Meanwhile, 42% of popcorn surveyed would also receive a red warning label for total sugars, with one pack of Toffee Flavour Popcorn in particular has a shocking 59.1g of sugar per 100g – equivalent to more than 7x teaspoons per serving, far exceeding a child's maximum daily limit.



Some **crisps** also continue to provide excessive levels of salt in our diets, with one in three products requiring a high (**red**) salt warning label on the front of the pack.

Meanwhile, plain **nuts** are naturally low in salt, but many flavoured varieties fail to meet healthier standards. Nearly one in four flavoured nuts exceed salt targets.

A quick reminder that this year's **PPG** AGM (Annual General Meeting) is being held on

Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 19.00hrs
St Georges Church Hall, Rushbottom Lane, Benfleet SS7 4DN

Plus, we have a guest speaker. Surgery manager, Joanne Meadlarkan.

Members are invited to attend to have their say about the group, how it is run and to vote for whom will represent them in the year ahead.

If you wish to put yourself forward for the position of: Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, then please email: RushbottomPPG@gmail.com at least 48hrs before the above date.

Rushbottom Lane Surgery Opening Times

Mon to Fri 08:00 - 18:30* Sat* & Sun Closed

*Out of hours appointments available. Ask at reception.

Appointments can be booked by Telephone from 8.00am Mon-Fri

Appointments can be booked in person by queuing outside from 8.30am Mon-Fri

Online via Accurx from 6.00am Mon-Fri

As a registered patient at the Rushbottom Lane practices, you have access to a range of locally provided additional services through their partner organisations. Visit the surgery's **Attached Services** page on the website to learn more: <https://www.thekhanpractice.nhs.uk/attached-services>



Dr Khan & Partners click here:

<https://accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/F81001>

St Georges Medical Practice click here:

<https://accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/F81142>

Accurx is a digital triage and online consultation platform that is ideal for those unable to make the 8am telephone queue.

Available from 6.00am

Friends & Family Test

Have you completed the Friends & Family Test yet?

It can be accessed via the surgery website.

As you can see, it's a very short questionnaire but you can add your own comments. Regardless of whether they are good or bad, the surgery needs to know what you think of the service you receive.

Just select the surgery that you are registered with.

Take the questionnaire for Dr Khan & Partners

<https://www.mysurgeryintranet.co.uk/FriendsAndFamily/Surveys/TakeOurSurvey?surveyId=27307>

Take the questionnaire for St Georges

<https://www.mysurgeryintranet.co.uk/FriendsAndFamily/Surveys/TakeOurSurvey?surveyId=27308>

Without relevant feedback, nothing will change!

Thinking about your GP practice overall, how was your experience of our service?

- Very Good
- Good
- Neither Good Nor Poor
- Poor
- Very Poor
- Don't Know

Can you tell us why you gave that response?

Tick this box if you consent to us publishing your comment anonymously on our website.

Additional Questions

Please confirm you are registered with the Khan & Partners practice? If not, please complete the other form for St Georges Medical Practice. Dr Khan & Partners

Submit Test