

How to get the help of a doctor or nurse.

What options do I have?

The Practice employs three sorts of staff to provide healthcare: doctors, nurses and healthcare assistants. You can make appointments to see any of these people. If you are uncertain who is the most appropriate person to help you with a particular problem our receptionists can advise you. The purpose of this leaflet is to provide you with some advice on the ways in which you can get the help of these people.

Doctors

There are four ways that you can get the help of the doctor. You can:

- § make an appointment to be seen at the surgery
- § make an appointment for a home visit
- § talk to the doctor on the telephone without an appointment
- § contact a doctor by mail, email, fax or using our online services

To ensure you get help in a timely way we organise our doctors and staff to respond to your requests in one of three ways:

- § immediately in the case of a medical emergency
- § on the same day in the case of a problem you feel to be urgent
- § on a future day if your problem is not urgent.

If you have an emergency... call an ambulance!

If you want to see or speak to a doctor today...

Please telephone us first, ideally at the beginning of the day. Each one of our doctors will be available to take your call for the first hour of their day. As the doctors start work at different times of the morning there will normally be a doctor available to talk to you between 8.30am and 10.30am Monday to Friday. By talking to one of the doctors on the telephone they will be able to find the best way to help you. They can:

- § sort out your problem immediately over the phone
- § arrange for an appointment or home visit with a doctor 'today'
- § arrange for an appointment or home visit on a future day
- § arrange for an appointment with a nurse 'today' or on a future day

Our experience is that as many as 40% of all patient contacts with doctors can be dealt with effectively over the phone. Our experience is also that doctors can deal with problems more quickly when using the phone. By using this system therefore you should not only get your problem dealt with more quickly but help ensure more appointments are available for people who need to be seen here at the surgery.

If you come to the surgery or telephone for help 'today' after 10.30am then our receptionists will

make appropriate arrangements for you to be seen.

Whilst we will always ensure you are able to speak to, or see, one of our doctors 'today', we are not able to guarantee you will be able to make an appointment with your own doctor 'today'. We hope that the new direct lines to the doctors will overcome this by allowing you to speak to your doctor even if they personally do not have an appointment available on that day.

If you want to see a doctor on a future day...

You have a number of options for making an appointment: using our online service; telephoning the surgery and speaking to a receptionist at any time; or visiting the surgery and making an appointment.

Nurses

You can see a nurse here at the surgery; at home; speak to a nurse over the phone; or contact a nurse by email or fax. As with the doctors many of the problems nurses help with can be dealt with safely over the phone, so we are setting up a direct line for patients to talk to a nurse between 8.30am and 10.30am each morning without an appointment.

To make an appointment to see a nurse at the surgery 'today' or on any future day please contact reception by phone or in person. If you need the help of a nurse at home please discuss this with your doctor or contact our District Nursing team on 860301.

Who else is available to help me at the surgery?

There are a number of other staff who can be contacted directly to help you with certain things. They are:

- § Health Visitors who principally provide a service to young children and their families who can be contacted on 860303
- § Midwives who can be contacted on 860302
- § Administrators who deal with appointments for chronic disease clinics such as Diabetes, Asthma and Heart Disease who can be contacted on 860312 between 9.00am and 10.00am
- § Secretaries who can help with regard to hospital appointments or the completion of medical reports for insurance purposes and so on can be contacted on 860313 between 10.00 and 11.00am.

Finally, if you are in any doubt who is the best person to help you, please contact reception on our main surgery number 862671.

What sort of problems can doctors and nurses deal with over the phone?

We are very keen that as many people as possible will try to use the new systems we are creating. To help you decide whether or not you have a problem that can be dealt with in this way we have listed below some of the areas that are appropriate.

The doctors can deal with:

- § recurrent infections such as cystitis and thrush
- § minor, short term illnesses such as coughs, colds, sore throats, diarrhoea and vomiting,

and many childhood illnesses

§ enquiries regarding prescriptions including unexpected side effects of new medication

§ repeat prescription reviews

§ enquiries about contraception

§ administrative matters such as the issuing of sick notes

Our nurses can deal with:

§ travel, childhood and other immunisation and vaccination advice

§ general advice on healthy living

§ enquiries about contraception