

July 2021

KEY MESSAGES FOR OUR PATIENTS

Regarding access to our practice



Harambee Surgery

www.harambeesurgery.co.uk

Practice Newsletter

Access to GP Practices

GP practices have been providing GP services safely and effectively throughout COVID-19 using online and telephone consultations and face to face appointments where necessary.

Staff have also been extremely busy helping to vaccinate patients against Covid-19

Your GP practice is still here for you and continues to provide services. Half of all general practice appointments during the pandemic have been delivered in person.

Your NHS services have a range of measures in place to keep you safe from COVID-19 including regular cleaning of patient areas and social distancing. Please ensure you wear a face covering to your appointment.

Face-to-face appointments are available to *all* patients where there is a clinical need. You will be asked to first discuss your conditions over the phone or online with a member of the healthcare team to assess what would be most appropriate for you and which practice member would best provide it. This is called triage and will help you get the right support quickly.

Triage (making an assessment of your condition and prioritising care accordingly) is an important part of how GP practices work. This has always been in place but has been vitally important during the pandemic.

Most GP practices are also offering online consultations and video consultations, as well as telephone consultations. These can be convenient and flexible ways to receive healthcare. Where patients need to be seen by a health professional face-to-face, this will be arranged. If you have a preference about how to access care you can discuss it with your practice.

Please continue to contact your practice by phone or online to begin with. You will be assessed and offered a phone or video appointment, or a face to face appointment if you need one.

The majority of common conditions can be assessed and diagnosed by your doctor by telephone or video consultation. They are experienced and skilled in doing this. Using technology like this will help to protect you, your family and loved ones - and GP practice staff from the potential risk of the virus.

The use of these digital technologies has been shown to improve patient experiences thanks to the convenience and increased access that they provide.

If you are asked to attend for an appointment, please remember to put on your face covering before entering your GP practice – unless you're exempt. Staff will be wearing masks or visors, or they may be sitting behind a screen. please follow the measures in place e.g. using hand gel, observing social distancing.

When your practice is closed you can call 111 or go to <https://111.nhs.uk/> for help and advice.

When contacting your GP Practice you will be asked for more information about what help you need.

Appointments can be either telephone, video consultation or face to face appointments.
If you are visiting your GP Practice for an appointment or other reason

The majority of common conditions can be assessed and diagnosed by your doctor by telephone or video consultation. They are experienced and skilled in doing this. Using technology like this will help to protect you, your family and loved ones - and GP practice staff from the potential risk of the virus. It can also often be more convenient for you.

Primary care staff have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic not only in delivering primary care in rapidly changing circumstances, but also in the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine and we want patients to treat practice staff with kindness and respect.

Your community pharmacy can support you with a wide range of minor ailments.

To maintain social distancing in waiting areas, please do not arrive earlier than five minutes before your appointment. If you do arrive too early you may be asked to come back closer to your appointment time.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 please do not attend your appointment. Please contact your GP practice to advise them and follow national COVID-19 guidance which can be found on www.nhs.uk.

What you can expect when contacting your GP

When you call your GP practice to book an appointment, you may be asked by the reception staff why you are calling. Please provide as much information as possible to make sure you get the most appropriate help for your needs.

You may be offered a telephone appointment with a clinician, such as a GP or practice nurse. During this appointment the clinician will assess what type of help or care you need.

If you need to be seen face-to-face you will be offered an appointment to go into the practice.

On arrival at your GP practice, measures may still be in place to control the number of people within the building. This could be a queue system or an intercom. This is to make sure you and our staff are as safe as possible from the spread of disease.

Please treat GP practice staff with kindness and respect. Primary Care colleagues like all NHS staff, have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and now in the roll out of the vaccine. Please be patient and kind when speaking to your local practice staff

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my GP practice open?

Yes, your GP practice is open.

You can access GP services from your GP practice. Some of the 'traditional' ways of working have been adapted to protect you and staff from the potential risk of coronavirus. For example, how you access your GP practice building or how your appointment is undertaken might be different.

I would like a face-to-face appointment, when can I get this?

Not all conditions need to be seen by your GP in a face-to-face appointment.

When contacting your GP, you will undergo an assessment (called triaging) of your needs and to determine whether you may or may not have COVID-19 symptoms.

Based on this assessment your doctor or clinician will determine if you need a face-to-face appointment.

If safe and appropriate to do so a member of your practice clinical team may undertake your consultation via telephone or through a video consultation. This will help to reduce the risk of coronavirus infection to you and the practice staff.

How can my condition be properly diagnosed via telephone or video?

Lots of common conditions can be diagnosed using mobile devices, telephone or video thanks to the experience of your GPs and their ability to recognise the signs and symptoms of conditions from the information you provide. However, if they judge that it is safer and more appropriate to organise a face-to-face appointment for you then this will be arranged.

What if I can't or don't want to use video technology for an appointment?

If for a number of reasons, you aren't able to have an appointment via video technology then your GP will arrange an alternative option – either a phone call, or a face-to-face appointment for you.

appointment for you.

Can I still access other services from my surgery, such as ante-natal appointments for example?

Services such as ante-natal clinics, all vaccination programmes for example child and baby immunisations, and hormone injections for patients with prostate cancer have remained in place throughout the pandemic. If you are unsure what the arrangements are, please contact the service directly.

Before you attend your appointment, you will be assessed to see if you have any symptoms of covid-19. This helps keep you, other patients and practice staff safe.

Where else can I get help?

Your community pharmacy can support you with a wide range of minor ailments.

The majority of conditions can be assessed and diagnosed by your doctor by telephone or video consultation. They are experienced and skilled in doing this. Using technology like this will help to protect you, your family and loved ones - and GP practice staff from the potential risk of the virus.

If you need urgent help, use the 111 service either by telephone or online at [NHS 111 online](#). Trained professionals are on hand to direct you to the best service for your needs and will be spoken to by a clinician if needed.

If it is a life-threatening emergency, you should call 999.