



Dr Chalmers & Partners

PATIENT NEWSLETTER

September 2020

The global pandemic has affected how we all live our daily lives and it has also had a significant impact on how we are able to operate in the practice.

We thought it would be helpful to update you on how you can continue to access our services in the coming months.

The following questions are the most common which we are asked on a daily basis.

Demand has increased significantly but please be assured we will continue to strive to provide the best possible service to all patients, while ensuring safety is paramount.

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IS THE HEALTH CENTRE CLOSED?

No! We have been open and working continuously throughout the pandemic, but the ways in which we are working are slightly different from before.

All initial contact with the practice (appointments, prescriptions, fitnotes, forms) MUST be by telephone first.

It is very important that we continue to minimise infection risk including reducing non-essential footfall within the health centre and therefore we are still requesting that you **DO NOT ATTEND** without prior invitation.

This means **ONLY** entering the waiting room if you have an appointment and following strict social distancing and hygiene measures while there.

HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT?

DOCTOR

We are not offering pre-bookable GP appointments as before. If you need to see or speak to a doctor you must call at 8am to request a call back. There will be a cap on the number of calls the doctors can manage in a day so please call early to book a slot (similar to previous 'on the day' appointments). If all slots have gone you will be asked to call back the next day.

If the doctor is unable to deal with your problem over the phone and needs to see you, they may arrange a video consultation or bring you in for a 'face to face' appointment after screening you for covid symptoms. House visits will also continue to be arranged for patients who are too unwell to attend.

NURSE/HEALTHCARE ASSISTANT

You can pre-book an appointment for a smear test with the practice nurse if you have had a reminder from the screening department. Please ensure you are fit to attend on the day, ensuring neither you, nor anyone in your household, is showing signs of temperature, cough or loss/change of taste or smell.

You can also book **urgent** and **essential** blood and blood pressure checks in this way, again, we ask that you are fit to attend. We are currently not able to offer the usual routine annual health checks in person. If you have any concerns about your long-term condition or a change in symptoms, please call to speak to someone first for further advice.

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Our practice physiotherapist continues to consult on Tuesdays and Fridays. These appointments are strictly by telephone first. You will be invited in for examination by the physiotherapist if she needs to see you.

I THINK I'VE GOT A URINE INFECTION – CAN I HAND IN A SAMPLE?

We cannot accept any samples which have not been specifically requested by the doctor. If you suspect you have a urine infection, please call to book a telephone consultation. If you are female and aged 18-64 you may be eligible for antibiotic treatment directly from the pharmacy.

HOW DO I GET A PRESCRIPTION?

You can still order all prescription requests via our dedicated 24 hour phone line. Call 0141 531 6383. It is best to avoid this on a Monday morning as this is the busiest period and the line can only cope with a limited number of calls at the one time.

You can call at ANY other time and these will be picked up as soon as we open, and throughout the day. Alternatively, you can order your requests online via our website or Patient Access.

Please do not come into the practice to order or collect your prescription in person. All prescriptions will be sent directly to your nominated pharmacy so allow at least 3 days from ordering before you collect from them (some pharmacies ask for 7 days' notice).

I'M DUE FOR MY ANNUAL REVIEW WITH THE NURSE – CAN I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR THIS?

Due to social distancing measures and the time taken to change PPE and clean down the room after each patient has been seen we are currently unable to offer the hundreds of routine face-to-face annual review appointments in the same way as before. This is being reviewed and it is likely most reviews will now be done by telephone where it is appropriate. We will contact you personally about this if you are affected.

I HAVE A TEMPERATURE AND A BIT OF A COUGH BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S CORONAVIRUS – CAN I COME IN TO GET CHECKED?

No! While covid-19 remains circulating in the community you cannot be sure you do not have it until you have been tested and we therefore do not want you to bring any potential infection into the health centre. If you have any of the known symptoms (new persistent cough, fever, loss of smell/taste) please call NHS24 for advice on 111 or check online at **www.nhsinform.scot**. You should arrange a test if appropriate and self isolate as per national guidance.

I NEED A FITNOTE – HOW DO I ARRANGE THIS?

Please telephone reception and they will put a message in for the doctor to check. The doctor may call you to clarify any problems, or may issue it from information in your medical record. This will then be posted to you.

If you need a fitnote due to coronavirus symptoms or self isolation, this should be downloaded directly from the nhsinform website. The GP will not issue fitnotes in relation to this.

COULD I SEND A PHOTO OF MY RASH/MOLE/LUMP FOR THE DOCTOR TO LOOK AT?

It might be useful for the doctor to view your skin problem without having to come in, however, for data protection and patient safety we can only accept these if they have been requested directly by the GP. We will give you instructions on how to submit pictures if it is appropriate.

I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT IN THE PRACTICE, IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO COME IN?

Throughout the pandemic we have adapted and changed our working processes using latest government guidance and regular risk assessments to ensure the safety of all patients and staff.

Patients with suspected covid symptoms will be seen in the local assessment centres, however, it is possible someone could be unaware they are carrying the virus. We therefore ask that all patients wear a face covering or mask when in the health centre and hand sanitiser is available at the doors and in each wing.

We allow a maximum of 6 patients in the waiting area and chairs are spaced apart to ensure social distancing. When you see the doctor or nurse, they will wear full PPE and clean down the room after you leave. Please only come at your appointed time and alone unless you need assistance.

HOW WILL I GET MY FLU JAG?

The delivery of the flu programme this year will be a bit more challenging while we are following social distancing within the health centre. This makes it more difficult to vaccinate large numbers in our usual way. There are currently lots of planning discussions at local and government levels to work out how we will be able to deliver this safely. Final details will be announced soon and vaccinations are on track to be started at the normal time.

HOW DO I GET A COVID VACCINE?

Again, this is being organised by the government but, rest assured, there are plans in place to roll this out to all eligible patients as soon as it is available.

WHAT IS THE PHARMACY FIRST SCHEME?

Since the end of July all local community pharmacies are now offering the new 'Pharmacy First' scheme (previously Minor Ailments). This means that anyone can see a local pharmacist for assessment and receive free advice and treatment for a large number of common problems such as allergies, stomach upsets, impetigo, nappy rash, cystitis, sore throats, pain. Please check with your local pharmacy for more information.