

## COMMON PATIENT QUESTIONS (April 2021)

### I NEED AN APPOINTMENT

All GP appointments are currently by **telephone consultation**.

#### **\*\*\*THIS IS STILL AN APPOINTMENT\*\*\***

If you need further assessment, the GP will arrange a face-to-face or video consultation, or may ask you to send in images if this is appropriate.

Due to indoor restrictions, the practice can only accommodate **six patients** in the waiting area at any time so we have to ensure those who attend have a clinical need and are not potentially carrying coronavirus. If an infected patient did come in we could be forced to temporarily close until the space is deep cleaned.

### BUT I CAN GO TO THE PUB, WHY CAN'T I COME INTO THE HEALTH CENTRE?

Most patients who come into the health centre have already been assessed as being unwell and possibly very vulnerable. While social distancing restrictions remain we must ensure that those invited into the health centre remain protected from further infection.

### WHEN I PHONE ALL THE APPOINTMENTS ARE GONE!

There has to be a limit to the number of telephone consultations we can put on in one clinic so when these are booked we cannot add more on. In an average week, our GPs are carrying out:

#### **480 telephone consultations and 120 face-to-face appointments**

The number of patients we deal with has not changed throughout the pandemic, in fact, the demand for appointments has **significantly increased** so each request needs to be prioritised according to need. If your problem is less urgent it is likely you may have to wait longer to be seen.

A telephone appointment takes the same amount of time (if not more) than previously pre-booked clinics. Face-to-face appointments also take longer as each room has to be cleaned down after every patient, so we do not have any further capacity to add in extra appointments.

There is always an on call doctor available for immediately urgent issues but if your problem can reasonably wait until the next day and there are no slots left that day, *you will need to call back*.

### CAN I BOOK IN ADVANCE?

While we continue to assess problems by clinical need, the bulk of our appointments will remain bookable 'on the day'. However, we will introduce a small number of pre-bookable telephone consultations from 10<sup>th</sup> May. These are to allow patients to book a follow-up appointment with a particular doctor.

If you request one of these appointments, please be aware the doctor may call you at any time on that date as they still have to prioritise the appointments which come in that day.

These appointments are likely to be some weeks away so you should still call at 8am as normal for new problems or those which cannot wait.