

# Practice Matters

## June 2019

### Changes to online services

Patients may have found recently that when trying to use the online facilities there has been a problem, and they have not been able to log on.

We are currently in the process of changing to a completely new computer system, and this unfortunately has meant some disruption to our normal services.



Once the switchover has taken place, patients will be directed to use [www.patientaccess.com](http://www.patientaccess.com), which is very similar to Patient Services; however, you will need a new log in and password to be able to use the new website. Patients will be emailed with new log in details, you will not need to return to the Surgery to provide any identification if you have already done this.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, but this should hopefully be for a short period of time until we get back up and running.

### Which service is best for you?

	Choking. Chest pain. Blacking out. Blood loss.	<b>A&amp;E or 999</b> Emergencies only
	Unwell? Unsure? Confused? Need help?	<b>Call 111</b> out of hours
	Vomiting. Ear pain. Stomach ache. Back ache.	<b>GP Surgery</b>
	Diarrhoea. Runny nose. Painful cough. Headache.	<b>Pharmacy</b>

There is more and more demand for GP appointments throughout the country, and it is important that people are using the service that is most appropriate for their needs if they need medical advice.

Not every illness requires an appointment with a GP straight away. Coughs, colds and upset stomachs can usually be dealt with using simple over the counter medicines – a pharmacist can provide plenty of advice for common illnesses and ailments.

Accident and emergency is for life threatening conditions such as broken bones, chest pain and serious injuries. It has recently been reported that patients are attending A&E because they cannot get a GP appointment; obviously this can take time away from more serious issues being dealt with and is not what this department is for.

Before making a call for a GP appointment, think if this is something that can be dealt with at home first. Many appointments could be saved each month by thinking carefully before making an appointment that may not be required.

## Nurse Appointments with Cath Povall

We would like to remind patients that when booking appointments online for Cath Povall, please check before confirming that she is able to deal with your problem. Cath is NOT able to do:

- Blood tests
- Sick notes
- See pregnant ladies (other than to confirm a pregnancy)
- Repeat Prescriptions
- Mental Health Problems

If you are in any doubt, please contact reception and they can advise you further.

## Canceling appointments

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



As we are becoming an increasingly busy Practice, it is extremely important that our appointments with the GP and Nurses are used effectively by all our patients.

If you find that you either do not need, or cannot make, the appointment time you have made, please let us know as soon as you are able to, so we can then offer your slot to another patient who needs to be seen. Unfortunately there are still a large number of people who are not attending appointments and they are being wasted.

Whilst we do not have the facility to offer a waiting list for cancelled appointments, these will show as available online and in Surgery for anyone who wishes to book these at any time. There is now more demand than ever for appointments with the Doctors and Nurses, so it is essential that our community of patients works together to make sure those that need to be seen have the chance to do so.

Appointments with the Practice Nurse can often last more than 30 minutes, for example, annual health checks or travel vaccinations, and not attending for these appointments is a huge waste of Nurses time. One 30 minute appointment is the equivalent of 3 blood tests, so this time could be used to provide care for several other patients.

To cancel an unwanted appointment you can go online at [www.patientaccess.com](http://www.patientaccess.com) (if you are registered for online services), call the Surgery on the usual number, use the app that you have downloaded from your app store, or you can reply with 'cancel' to the text message reminder service and this will remove your appointment from the system. If you wish to cancel by replying to your reminder text, please only respond with the word 'Cancel' and nothing else, as the system will not recognise a sentence and your appointment will still stand.

## Are you pregnant?



Have you recently found out that you are pregnant? If so, you may not realise that now you no longer have to see the Doctor to be referred to the midwives for your antenatal care.

If you have done a home test and this is positive, you can contact the midwives directly on 01204 334992, where they will make you an appointment to book in and arrange your care. You are very welcome to come and speak to the Doctor if you wish; you may have some health concerns or worries you would like to chat over first. However, if you do not feel you need to, you can go straight to the midwives without a referral.

The midwives are based at the Oldham Children's Centre and at Royal Bolton Hospital. If you would like any advice or to talk more about your pregnancy, please feel free to make an appointment with the Doctor.

## Long Term Conditions – Annual Health Checks

Do you suffer with a long term health condition? If so, your annual health check is now being carried out in the month in which you were born, so patients find it easier to remember when their annual health check is due.

We can make appointments up to 12 weeks in advance, so if you have a health check due in April or May, please contact us to make an appointment with the Doctor or Nurse.



If you have any of the following:

- Diabetes
- Asthma
- COPD
- Dementia
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Hypertension
- Kidney Disease
- Epilepsy

you will be recalled annually for a health check with the Practice Nurse or Doctor. This is completely separate to any out-patient appointments you may have elsewhere, and allows the Doctors/Nurses here to monitor your overall health and give you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may have.

Please bear in mind, it might not be a full 12 months since your last review before you are asked to attend again. We can book appointments up to 12 weeks in advance, so if you know you fall into any of these categories, and your health check is due in the next few months, please give us a call to arrange this for you.

## Staff/Patient Car Parks



Unfortunately the issue of the health centre car park is still ongoing, where parents are using our car park to collect their children from the school across the road, despite numerous requests asking them not to.

The staff car park is for use only by the staff and Doctors who are working at the health centre. Anyone who is not a staff member who is found to be parking on the staff car park will be asked to move their vehicle, and may have photos taken of their registration number so this can be reported.

Both Doctors and Nurses require access throughout the day when carrying out home visits and so need to be able to get on and off the car park easily so as to prevent long waiting times for patients who are already in the building waiting to be seen.

Unfortunately, there has been a rise in the number of incidences of abuse towards health centre staff who have asked non-staff members to remove their vehicles. We would like to remind patients that we operate a zero tolerance policy towards anyone who verbally or physically abuses any staff member. If any of our patients are found to be acting in this manner, you may be removed from the patient register. Please be considerate to the needs of staff members.

## Prescriptions for over the counter medicines

The NHS has been spending around £136 million a year on prescriptions for medicines that can be bought from a pharmacy or supermarket, such as paracetamol, for a small amount.

By reducing the amount the NHS spends on over the counter medicines, we can direct costs towards more serious health conditions and other resources that are essential for patient care.



NHS England has said that the new prescribing guidance will free up almost £100m annually in funding that could be spent on frontline care. It said that the NHS spends £22.8m on treating constipation, £7.5m on treating heartburn and indigestion and £4.5m on dandruff shampoos every year, all of which can be treated with simple over the counter medicines.

The GP, or Nurse, will not generally give you a prescription for certain medicines that are available to buy, even if you qualify for free prescriptions. This applies to treatment for some of these conditions:

Coughs, colds and nasal congestion	Diarrhoea (adults)	Haemorrhoids
Head Lice	Threadworms	Mild acne
Insect bites and stings	Earwax	Mouth Ulcers
Oral thrush	Sunburn	Travel Sickness
Ringworm	Minor pain, discomfort and fever (eg, aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)	Mild dry skin
Mild cystitis	Infrequent cold sores of the lip	Indigestion and heartburn
Dandruff	Nappy rash	Mild to moderate hayfever

As you will not need to see a Doctor to obtain these medicine items, it will free up appointments for people who need these for more serious conditions. There are still occasions where these items may be prescribed – for more information you can check at reception or you can go online at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2017/03/guidance-on-low-value-prescription-items/> for a detailed explanation of the guidelines.

You can view this newsletter and find lots of other information on our practice website  
[www.egertonanddunscarhealthcentre.nhs.uk](http://www.egertonanddunscarhealthcentre.nhs.uk)

You can also book, cancel and view appointments at  
[www.patientservices.co.uk](http://www.patientservices.co.uk)

