

PENKRIDGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

Dear Patient

We know that you are very worried about the coronavirus outbreak and will have been watching the news and be aware that the UK is preparing for a significant increase in numbers .

Community spread of coronavirus is accelerating and there is now official guidance regarding self-isolation if you have a fever (over 37.8)and a new persistent cough – however mild.

Social distancing , minimising social contact and where appropriate social isolating is an effort to delay further spread and to flatten the curve of new cases needing hospital admission allowing the NHS more time to prepare.

This means that everyone has a duty to adopt good hygiene measures and minimise social contact with others in order to prevent the spread of infection.

Accordingly following government advice we are moving to a telephone based service to minimise the need for face to face contact. If we do need to see you this can be in a controlled manner, to minimise the risk of infection and protect other vulnerable patients, our staff and ourselves. Please therefore do not turn up at the front desk requesting an appointment. You will be turned away. Please always ring us first. This is for your safety.

In order to help you manage this dramatic change in how we work please look at the FAQ document.

It is likely that in the very near future, health services are going to be extremely busy and we would therefore ask for your understanding at this time. We have not closed our doors to you but ask that you consider whether you do really need to seek advice from us, before you phone or whether your care could be managed by other means, such as self-care.

The information from the government is constantly changing and we would always advise looking on line

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Many thanks for your understanding at this difficult time

FAQs

[Why can't we book a face to face appointment anymore?](#)

Due to the current outbreak the government has asked us to conduct telephone or video consultations wherever possible to reduce the spread of coronavirus. Having lots of sick and or vulnerable patients sitting in a waiting room will increase the risk of transmission.

Please do not come to the reception desk to try and book an appointment. All requests for doctors or nursing appointments will be dealt with over the phone. (If you have a severe hearing difficulty please text a friend/ family member and ask them to phone us on your behalf with some basic details of your concerns.)

Please do not turn up at the reception desk to ask for an appointment you will be asked to go home and to phone in. The reception will then ask you some screening questions to ensure you are given the correct pathway for your problem.

We have now switched off online booking of appointments as we cannot screen patients before the appointment is booked .

[What is to stop me lying about my symptoms to get an appointment](#)

We know that this has happened around the country, leading to GP practices having to close completely. Please be aware that by being dishonest about your symptoms, denying that you have a temperature or a cough, not only are you putting our clinicians and our staff at risk but you are now also breaking the law under "The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

[But I might have coronavirus and I just want checking out ?](#)

There is no specific treatment for coronavirus as it is a virus and antibiotics don't help and we do not have any access to testing. The correct thing to do is to follow the government advice and self- isolate.

Some things cant de dealt with by telephone though ?

This is correct. There are a small proportion of problems that cannot be dealt with over the phone. We will assess you over the phone first and if necessary we may suggest either a video consultation or a face to face consultation.

Face to face consultations will be offered if we feel you may come to significant harm if you are not seen promptly or might delay the diagnosis of a serious problem eg suspected cancer.

For all other routine or longstanding problems we will ask that you wait until the current outbreak is under control and systems return to normal. The NHS has declared coronavirus pandemic as a level 4 incident, which is the highest level and therefore we are not able to operate business as normal.

Will my pre-booked face to face consultation go ahead?

We are gradually converting appointments to telephone consultations. If you feel your consultation could wait until the pandemic is over we ask you to be considerate to our staff and cancel your appointment (this can be done 24/7 using our telephone cancellation line) and then wait until the situation has recovered before re booking.

Please do not attend A & E unless you have a genuine emergency or accident that cannot be managed at home. All parts of the NHS are gearing up to be able to manage this pandemic and we ask you to bear with us at this time.

What about my long term condition or medication review or baby checks ?

In accordance with national guidance we will be postponing all routine face to face work this includes long term condition reviews, baby checks, medication reviews. This is partly because as yet we do not know how stretched our services will become and we may try to carry out some of these reviews over the phone. Also it is likely that if you are in a vulnerable group it is probably best for you to stay away from GP practices as it may be exposing yourself to more risk of transmission of the virus. Please be reassured that If we feel a review is due to a clinical need rather than the fact it is overdue in terms of timing than we will do our best to address that need.

What about my repeat prescriptions ?

Please put all prescription requests into the box. We will not accept requests handed over at reception or by phone. We will also be asking all patients to nominate a pharmacy of their choice in order that prescriptions can be sent electronically and minimise the number of people in our waiting room waiting to speak to reception.

Can I still drop off or collect forms at reception?

We would prefer it if you posted us the forms (either by royal mail or in the Practice post box) or spoke to reception first beforehand by phone.

We are hoping to move to a system where we can email you any forms such as fit notes when completed. Please make sure you enclose an email address that you wish us to use.

NHS 111 is likely to take over fit notes for self- isolation shortly . “The service will be integrated into NHS 111 online, which can be reached at 111.nhs.uk or through the NHS App. You do not have to be registered or logged in on the NHS App to access the 111 online service.”

What about my smear test ?

Many services are nursing staff offer can realistically be postponed. In terms of smear tests its important to understand it's a screening test for women who don't have any symptoms which is routinely done every 3-5 years and so postponing it is unlikely to have any adverse outcomes. Remember smear tests are not during pregnancy, so please do not panic.

However if you have recently had treatment for an abnormal smear and are having smear test at a 6month or 12 monthly interval, we will continue to carry out smears for this subgroup as we feel the risk of an adverse outcome would be higher.

What about my baby's immunisations ?

We feel that immunisations are very important and should not be postponed unless you or your family are unwell or self-isolating, we are looking to schedule these at times when the surgery and the waiting room is likely to be empty in order to minimise the risk .

The following is a list of nursing procedures that at the moment we will still carry out as face to face but the situation may change and we will update you as this happens:

Face to Face Nursing procedures

Baby immunisations including pre-school

Depo injections for contraception

Dressings

INR

Urgent blood tests

B12 injections

Prostap injections

Nebido injections

Smear tests in at risk group (6-12 month recalls only)

Removal of sutures

Procedures that may be conducted by telephone

Pill reviews

BP reviews if own machine

Diabetic queries and reviews

Asthma reviews

Procedures postponed for now

Ear syringing

Travel vaccines

Annual chronic disease reviews

Spirometry

Coil checks

Routine smear recall

Shingles injections

Non urgent swabs

Simple dressings

[I cant get any paracetamol/calpol from the supermarkets ?](#)

Unfortunately prescribing paracetamol or calpol is not likely to help as pharmacists as well as supermarkets have supply chain issues due to such an increased demand. Many supermarkets are now rationing supplies but packets are available. We are in the same situation as you are for this I'm afraid.

[NSAIDS AND COVID \(Ibuprofen ,naproxen\)](#)

There is no published data on the effects of nsaid's in covid19 infection but the Committee of Human Medicines has suggested that in the interim patients who have confirmed COVID 19 or believe they have covid19 should use paracetamol in preference to nsaid's .

Those currently on nsaid's for other medical reasons (eg arthritis) should NOT stop them.

[Advice about ACE inhibitors and ARBS \(ramipril , losartan etc\)](#)

Please do not believe everything you read in social media or in the press. There have been a lot of reports which have no evidence base whatsoever and are simply speculation which has been blown out of all proportion.

The European Society of Cardiology has been quick to reassure patients that there is no scientific basis to the claim or evidence to support it.

“Patients could be put at risk by stopping these drugs, which are effective treatments for their current condition, without medical supervision, and until further evidence is available should be encouraged to continue their current treatment.”

Do NOT STOP YOUR ACEi or ARB – the last thing we need is for there to be an increase in strokes or heart attacks

We will endeavour to keep our website updated as things develop, we remain committed to deliver high quality care but we ask you to bear with us at this difficult time and accept that it cannot be “business as usual” until this outbreak is under control. Please keep up to date using the government website and remember for most people it is a mild illness. Remember hand washing, social distancing and social isolation where appropriate are key to us beating this together.