Patient Guide to the Practice Appointment System

Produced in association with our

Sponsored by

www.charnwoodcommunitymedicalgroup.co.uk
About this Guide

This guide is designed to help you understand our appointment system and get the help you need.

If you have any suggestions or feedback, please let us know by writing to Mr Paul Hanlon.

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The Practice Commitment to you

We aim to provide high-quality care which is safe and fair to all our patients. Our systems are designed to deliver five commitments:

1. We offer pre-booked appointments (booked in advance) with a named doctor.

2. When you contact the surgery, we will offer you an appointment with a doctor within 24 hours.

3. We will give prompt emergency advice for problems which cannot wait for a 24 hour appointment.

4. Whenever possible, if a doctor asks to see you for follow-up, we will book this with the same doctor.

5. We will offer home visits where necessary to patients who are genuinely housebound.

We offer telephone and face to face consultations.
We are happy to deal with problems over the telephone. Think about asking for a phone appointment if you do not think the doctor will need to do a physical examination.
How You Can Help Us

Using self-help for minor illnesses (including coughs, colds, sore throats, ear-ache).

Our practice follows national guidance and does not routinely give antibiotics for these symptoms.

Speaking to your pharmacist

Local pharmacies can offer advice about minor illnesses; and treatment for conditions such as conjunctivitis, hayfever, constipation, thrush, piles, warts and verrucas, mild eczema, aches and pains. Medicines for these common conditions are often cheaper over-the-counter.

Not requesting a home visit unless you are housebound and unable to travel to surgery by car, bus or taxi for medical reasons.

Remember that the doctors can see up to six patients at the surgery in the time it takes for one visit.

Ordering repeat prescriptions online or via your local pharmacy

It is not usually necessary to speak to your doctor for repeat medication.
Organising your repeat prescriptions so that you do not run out

Do not let your repeat prescriptions run out. Order 48 hours in advance as they need to be carefully prepared and checked by the doctor.

Using local services to improve your health

A range of services are available locally to help with smoking, alcohol, diet, exercise and lifestyle advice, drug use and psychological difficulties. The Patient Participation Group have rolled out a Social Prescribing pilot. Sessions are held every 2 weeks at Rosebery Medical Centre between 10-12am. The scheme is supported by Voluntary Actions Leicestershire. The pilot focuses on patients who attend the surgery on a regular basis due to low level mental health needs, social isolation or loneliness. Patients can be referred by all Clinical Staff. Social Prescribing has the potential to help people to manage their own health and wellbeing, reduce isolation and help develop community cohesion.

Requesting a longer appointment if you think your problem will take longer than 10 minutes.

This gives the doctor time to deal with your problem and avoids other patients having to wait.

Avoiding storing up multiple medical problems for one visit.

Time is needed for the doctor to deal with each problem: it is best to avoid storing up problems for a single appointment.
Cancel any appointments that you cannot attend.

Each week, we lose many appointments through non-attendance. We send SMS messages to remind you about your appointment. Let us know if you can’t make it.

Make a separate appointment for each person wishing to be seen.

Do not expect the doctor to see multiple family members in a single appointment. This is not fair to the doctor or to other patients waiting.

The NHS has limited resources.

By using it responsibly we can ensure that it is available for everyone when they need it.

For more information on self-help and self-care, visit the NHS Choose Better website

www.choosebetter.org.uk
Booking an Appointment

Telephone the surgery on

01509 324115

Lines open at 8:00am Monday to Friday.
The surgery is closed at weekends and bank holidays.

**Our phones are often very busy first thing.** If you are calling about a non-urgent matter, consider waiting until later in the day.

When you contact the surgery, our automated system will ask you to choose which branch you require. **You should choose the branch where you are registered.**

**Our receptionists will usually ask two questions to help you get the right appointment:**

- Is it a pre-booked appointment or an appointment to be seen within the next 24 hours?
- Do you want to be seen at the surgery or is it something that the doctor could help with over the telephone?
Pre-booked appointments

Pre-Booked appointments are available for patients who wish to **book in advance or with a specific doctor**. Appointments are available up to eight weeks ahead and can also be booked online. This includes early morning appointments for patients who do not wish to take time off work.

24 hour appointments

We guarantee to see patients within 24 hours. To do this, we run a ‘**pool clinic**’ each day.

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that you will see a specific doctor in the pool clinic but we will accommodate requests for a male or female doctor whenever possible.

We also run a ‘**sit and wait**’ clinic at 4pm each day. You will be given an appointment in the ‘sit and wait’ clinic if all available appointments for today have been taken. We guarantee that you will see a doctor to deal with your problem but there may be a wait.

The receptionist may ask for some brief details about the problem to pass on to the doctor in confidence. This helps us ensure that emergency calls are prioritized. **You are not obliged to share any information with our receptionists, but please be assured that they are bound by strict rules of confidentiality.**
Follow-up

If the doctor needs to see you again, they will arrange this with our reception team before you leave the surgery.

If the doctor needs to see you after receiving results of blood tests, X-rays, scans or letters from the hospital, we will contact you to arrange this.

**Whenever possible, you will be followed-up by the same doctor as started dealing with the problem.**

Nurse, Healthcare Assistant and Blood Test Appointments

Appointments with our practice nurses, healthcare assistants and phlebotomists can be booked by contacting our reception team.

**Blood tests must be done in the morning** so that samples arrive at the laboratory in Leicester for testing in the afternoon.

Home visits

We offer home visits to patients who **need to be seen by a doctor** and are **genuinely housebound** (unable to travel to the surgery by car, bus or taxi). If you request a home visit, the doctor will usually telephone you first.
Emergencies

In emergencies, the NHS provides a range of services. 999 is for immediately life-threatening conditions (stroke, heart attack, significant bleeding, severe pain, serious injuries). **Do not dial 999 unless it is an emergency.**

A&E departments provide care for significant injuries and emergency medical problems. Other local services are available for minor injuries.

**If you contact the surgery in an emergency,** our receptionists will ask you for your name, date of birth and location. They will also ask you for some brief details. Depending on the situation, they may advise you to dial 999, stay on the line while they speak to the doctor or call you back after they have spoken to the doctor.
Frequently Asked Questions

Why am I being given an appointment in the sit and wait clinic?

It is impossible to predict how many patients will want to see a doctor on a particular day. If no appointment times are left, we run the sit and wait surgery to ensure that our patients can still see a GP. If there is a wait, please remember that it is not the fault of the reception team or the doctors. You will be seen and your problem will be dealt with.

Does it matter what time I telephone the surgery?

Our telephones are busiest between 8.00am and 10.00am. Wherever possible we ask you to leave the lines free between these times for patients who are calling to arrange urgent appointments and call later in the day for pre-booked appointments, test results, medication and other queries.

How do you know that you have enough appointments?

Each day, we ensure minimum staffing levels are met to deal with demand and we continually monitor the number of doctor and nurse appointments that the practice offers and benchmark this against national averages. When appointment slots are fully booked, we offer a ‘sit and wait’ surgery so that patients are not turned away.
What do your doctors do with their time?

The doctors typically see over 40 patients each day and also offer telephone consultations. Between morning and afternoon surgery, they do home visits to housebound patients, deal with test results, letters, repeat prescriptions, teaching medical students and junior doctors, completing medical reports and handling queries from colleagues (such as hospital doctors and community nurses). They also spend time on running the practice and keeping their professional knowledge and skills up-to-date.

Why do you not have more appointments at evenings and weekends so that I do not need to take time off work?

At present, the demands on GP services are such that we cannot expand surgery opening hours without compromising the care offered to our patients in our core working hours. We recognize that this presents difficulties for some of our patients.

- We are happy to provide appointment confirmation slips to prove that you were absent from work due to a healthcare appointment.

- Most employees are contractually entitled to time off work for health appointments; and you are entitled to sick leave if you are too unwell to attend work. The Citizen’s Advice Bureau offers information about your legal rights, which is available online.
• We offer pre-bookable early morning appointments so that patients can see a doctor before work.

• We can arrange telephone consultations for patients to take a call at work.

Can I request a specific doctor?

• We offer pre-booked appointments which can be arranged with a preferred doctor. The earliest pre-bookable appointment for some doctors will be later than others.

• If the doctor needs to see you again for follow-up, we will try to arrange this with the same doctor as you saw initially.

• For 24 hour appointments and in emergencies, we cannot guarantee that a specific doctor will be available. The doctor that you see will have access to your medical records.