

Helping patients to use the appointment system

It was decided a guide would be put together to help patients understand how to make an Appointment at the Surgery. The following guide has been published within the surgery on the Patient Information Screen:

It's really difficult to come up with an appointments system that works well for everybody, every time. We've tried many different systems over the years without finding a perfect solution. We also have the problem of trying to provide enough appointments with the staff we have available at times, during sickness and holidays particularly. The Patient Participation Group have been discussing this with the surgery and the following is some information about how appointments are made and how to use the system to best advantage when making an appointment.

Not all appointments at the surgery are reserved for 'on the day' bookings. Appointments can be booked for up to 4 weeks in advance for non-urgent matters or follow up appointments. We have appointments available from 7 am in the morning and until 6.45 pm in the evening on some days. If you don't need an appointment the same day (or for any other non-urgent matter) it is best to phone the surgery after 11 am when the biggest demand on the surgery phone lines has diminished and you can get through more easily. Some appointments are now available to book on line via the surgery website. In order to be able to take advantage of this system you will need to register as an on-line user. Repeat medication can also be requested in this way.

Several appointments are reserved for 'on the day use'. These will generally be with only some doctors including the on call doctor and are intended for problems that cannot wait until the next available routine appointment. Not every doctor is available every day for a same day appointment. We are aware that getting through in the morning is sometimes difficult. We have every available receptionist and manager answering phones first thing in the morning on all the lines we can open but it is still busy. Phoning later in the day whenever possible will generally get you through much more quickly.

Our nurses are very experienced and have a wide expertise in managing many conditions and minor illnesses. Complaints such as sore throats, ear problems, urine infections and rashes are often dealt with by the nurse who will refer on to the on call doctor if necessary, so reception may offer a nurse appointment in these situations.

We realise that making an appointment can be frustrating on occasion. All our staff will do their best to help you but are instructed not to continue the rare calls that subject them to verbal aggression or bad language.