

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can I request my repeat medication and/or ask for more than my usual supply?**
Any repeat medication can be requested up to 7-10 days in advance. We cannot issue any sooner or issue extra quantities as this would create additional pressures on pharmacies and potentially create dangerous medication shortages. **Please be aware that pharmacies are experiencing unprecedented levels of requests for medication so these are taking slightly longer than usual to get through.**
- **I normally buy paracetamol (including calpol)/cetirizine over the counter but can't find any in the shops - can I have it on prescription?**
Our local guidance is not to prescribe for items that can be routinely be bought over the counter. Whilst we are aware of the shortages locally we understand that many smaller shops and pharmacies do still have stocks and you should continue to try these.
- **I had an inhaler a few years ago when I had a cough and I've heard it might be useful to have one 'just in case'**
Inhalers, and a lot of other medications, are currently in high demand and whilst we appreciate this is a very difficult time and patients are understandably keen to ensure they are prepared, we cannot issue medications just in case. If you need an inhaler and haven't had one for a while we can arrange for one of our nurses to call you and complete a telephone review, they will then issue if it is clinically required.
- **Why can't I bring my prescription request in to the practice and collect from you like I normally do?**
To minimise the risk of infection we need to reduce the number of patients coming in to the practice on a daily basis. Requests should be submitted online wherever possible, if you are unable to use this method you can speak to one of our reception team. All requests wherever possible need to be sent directly to the pharmacy so if you don't already have a nominated pharmacy please let us know your preference.
- **I'm currently pregnant/have an underlying medical condition which puts me in a higher risk category can you advise me what to do?**
We would strongly advise all patients to follow the advice issued by Public Health which is available to view on the [111 website](#) This guidance is subject to change and will be updated regularly – unfortunately we cannot advise individual patients due to the large numbers involved. Pregnant ladies can contact the their midwife
- **Can I still book an appointment to see the doctor?**
All requests for GP appointments will be added to a list by our reception team. Please be ready if asked to give them a brief reason for your request. This will be added to a telephone triage list and you will receive a call back as soon as we can -currently within 2-3 hours. The majority of consultations will be completed over the phone. If absolutely necessary you may be asked to attend the surgery for a face to face appointment, you will be advised of this during the telephone call. Please arrive at the allocated time and not before to avoid having to sit in the waiting room.
- **Can I still book an appointment to see the nurse?**
As with our doctors appointments our nurses are trying to do telephone consultations where possible, e.g. asthma and diabetic reviews or pill checks. Other appointments need to, for obvious reasons, be face to face e.g. smears, injections, bloods. As with doctor appointments please arrive only at the time of your appointment and not before to minimise the time in practice. If you develop a cough or fever before your appointment please do not attend.

- **Can I have a sick note (Med 3) if I am self-isolating?**

Patients do not need a Med 3 if they are self-isolating. Self-isolation is a government directive. Employers have discretion as to the requirement for a Med 3 for any period of absence over 7 days and we hope that at this time they will waive the need for Med3's. If you are unwell with COVID-19 you can ask 111 for an isolation note. Please do not contact the practice as we cannot issue these. Our Website has a link to a self print note for you to use for your employer

- **I have been off work for over 7 days with a non COVID-19 related health issue – can I still request a Med 3 extension**

Yes – please contact the surgery as usual and we will arrange to send it to you by post

- **I am waiting for a copy of my medical records/insurance report/letter for my gym that I requested a few weeks ago – do you know when I might receive it?**

At this time our priority has to be dealing with the pandemic so all non-essential activity has been suspended. The Information Commissioners Office has supported this decision and is allowing up to 3 months extension for completion of some reports.

- **Why is it taking so long to get through on the phone?**

As you can imagine we are experiencing extremely high volumes of calls and our team are answering them as quickly as they can. Please bear with us as all calls are dealt with in order of their queue position. This website has a lot of information which will be updated regularly so please check for updates before you call us. There is also the NHS App which can be downloaded on any smartphone or device with App functions and this is the quickest and easiest way to order repeat medications and cancel appointments.

- **Will the practice be staying open indefinitely?**

We very much hope that the practice will remain open throughout the pandemic however, as with any organisation we rely on our staff. We have had to make the decision to lock the front door to protect patients and staff so if you are attending an appointment you will need to use the door bell and one of our team will let you in.

Our staff are all still in work and we are continuing to deliver the essential services. Sadly, we expect that, like many others, we will have staff who need to self-isolate or develop symptoms over the coming days/weeks and our ability to stay open will depend on how many staff are affected not just in our own practice but across our locality.

We are working closely with our local CCG to develop plans to ensure continuity of patient care and we will keep patients updated via the website and/or text messaging.

We are very grateful to our patients for your understanding at this difficult time and we would like to assure you that we are committed to providing essential services for as long as we can.