

April 2021 Newsletter

Moving forwards...

NHSE has stated that from April 1st all leeway with our contractual work will cease and we will be expected to work as normal, in addition to vaccinating the local population. As a practice we are committed to complete the work we signed up to last November – that is to fully vaccinate those aged 50 and above and those at increased risk from 18-50. This will mean for the next three months at least we will still be expected to staff the stadium in addition to the 'day job'. We have opted out of the extension of the vaccination service for those aged 18-50, but vaccinations will continue at Saints both in the GP run service downstairs and the Mass Vaccination Site run by the Trust upstairs. If you book through government letter you go upstairs. If you book through a link sent by the practice, it is downstairs.

In order to be able to meet our contractual requirements whilst doing the additional vaccination work we need your help. Please be mindful of the following:

1. Do not contact the practice over dental issues – if you do not have a dentist, please phone 0161 476 9651, the emergency dental line. You will then be put in touch with a local dentist for emergency treatment.
2. For acute eye conditions please contact CUES – COVID Urgent Eye Service. This can be found at primaryeyecare.co.uk/find-a-practice. Most local opticians are taking part in this service and can refer patients directly into hospital if required. If your optician offers to refer you for cataract surgery, please let them rather than ask the GP practice to do this as cataract surgery referrals now follow this pathway.
3. For minor self-limiting illnesses, please consider whether assessment by the pharmacist is a more appropriate first line step (if assessment is indeed needed). The pharmacist is trained to advise and manage many conditions and will always refer you back to the practice if necessary.
4. For antenatal referrals there are two options, self referral (if wanting to book at Whiston) or book directly into the Thursday afternoon antenatal clinic currently being run fortnightly at the practice. All antenatal care is due to be moved to Lowe House in April but all has gone quiet on that front and I suspect the move is delayed by the pandemic.

We seem to have launched a tsunami of clinical requests in the last 12 months as we have all embraced technology (some more willingly than others) to reduce footfall into the practice. Whilst this has resulted in same or next day completion for many, the sheer volume of work triggered by this is not sustainable moving forward. We are still answering e-consults late at night for example and with the resumption of all contract work from April, we need to come up with a solution.

Might I suggest:

1. If you know you need to speak to a doctor, book a telephone triage appointment directly rather than complete an e-consult. Then please answer your phone.
2. Only requests sick note extensions on the day they are due.
3. Do not request sick notes for illnesses about which we have no knowledge – book a telephone appointment to discuss.
4. For anything you consider to be urgent for that day, please phone and speak to reception so you can be fitted in. We often only get to such written requests late on in the working day.
5. If you feel you need a home visit, phone and speak directly to reception.
6. Please collect blood forms/ referral letters promptly from the porch so they don't build up.
7. If requesting medication early, please state why at the time of the request or it might be rejected.

8. If a script is urgent for that day, please speak to reception so we can do our best to accommodate you.

Chronic Disease Management

Certain reviews have continued throughout the last 12 months eg diabetes. Others have been partially done as we are still not allowed to perform spirometry – this affects the asthma and COPD reviews.

Moving forward, we will be conducting some or part of some reviews over the telephone to reduce the time spent in the practice. Expect more telephone assessment and we will then get you into the practice safely.

Screening

Cancer screening is extremely important and has continued throughout the pandemic albeit at a slower pace to allow for social distancing. It is extremely important to attend for smears, mammograms, bowel screening when asked to do so. If you have declined this screening in the last 12 months but now wish to take this up, you can do this by contacting the practice or via the NHS screening website.

Medical Students

In May we welcome for a week two foundation year medical students from Edge Hill University. We will be trying to 'sell' general practice to them. Please don't put them off! 😊😊😊

Surgery Upgrade

For those who have not visited the practice in the last four months, you will notice some big changes brought about by the pandemic. We have new flooring and new sinks in clinical areas and have done all we can to reduce infection risk. Our nurse Jane has a whole new room - she's worth it! The patient toilet remains locked with a key available at reception if you are desperate, so we know when it needs cleaning after each use.

Finally, wishing you all a Happy Easter and let's look forward to better times ahead.