



Patient Newsletter

The Stephenson Medical Practice will be implementing a new appointment system, starting **Wednesday 2nd April 2025**. All GP/ANP appointment requests will be done via eConsult.

What is eConsult?

eConsult is an online form that allows you to seek self-help information from the NHS, through your own GP practice, self-referral services, local pharmacies if appropriate. eConsult allows you to seek advice online from your own GP or if you need general administrative advice.

How does it work?

eConsult will ask you questions about your symptoms or existing condition; this only takes a few minutes. You will need to fill in details to verify who you are. The eConsult form will then be automatically sent to your practice so the GP can help you. By having this information upfront, your GP can decide on the best course of action for helping you manage your symptoms and condition.

The system has been built with clinical knowledge to know that you may need help more quickly than your practice can provide, in this situation your eConsult will be stopped. You will be advised to seek advice from relevant urgent care services e.g. A&E, NHS 111. Or you could be advised to contact your GP Practice directly.

Why use eConsult?

Some key benefits of eConsult are that it is available from 8am -3pm Monday to Friday. Meaning you can submit a form without having to wait in a phone queue at 8am or wait weeks for an appointment that you may not need. You can complete eConsult from your home, on a break at work or even on a train.

The eConsult service can be trusted, it was built for NHS GPs by NHS GPs and is the leading online consultation provider across the UK.

Who can use eConsult?

The service is available for anyone aged 6 months+. Parents or guardians can complete eConsult's for children aged 6mth up to 18yrs, although 16 to 18yrs can also complete eConsult's themselves. There is no upper age limit for eConsult.

What can I use eConsult for?

eConsult can provide you with the best self-help information, access to local services. eConsult can be used for either administrative or medical needs. eConsult allows you to tell the practice what you need help or treatment for in private. You can also request a preferred clinician and the GP will look to accommodate your request within a timely manner.



How do I access eConsult?

eConsult is available on our practice website from any device between 8am-3pm Monday to Friday. Depending on the type of request you need, you will be presented with different options and questions.

If you don't have access to the internet or a device that would allow you to use this service. Please contact the practice and a member of the reception team will help you. If you require help submitting an eConsult our reception team can submit a Econsult Lite form on your behalf.

What happens next?

Once you have submitted your form, you will be asked if you would like to receive a copy of your eConsult report via email/text. The practice will confirm receiving your eConsult via email/text, we aim to respond to your request by the end of the next working day or sooner.

Once the GP has triaged your eConsult you may be offered an appointment, either for the same day or later. This could be with a GP or ANP/NP, face to face or via telephone depending on your query.

You could be directed to another more appropriate healthcare professional outside of the practice; this could include local pharmacy or physiotherapy.

A member of our reception team will contact you with the outcome from your eConsult. If we don't manage to reach you straight away, we will try again over the course of the day, leaving a voice message or text to let you know we have tried to contact you.

How will you benefit from using eConsult?

You will not have to queue on the phone from the busier period of 8am, trying to get an appointment.

You can request a preferred clinician although this depends on availability and cannot be guaranteed.

You may not need to come into the practice, meaning no longer having to take unnecessary time out from work.

Instead, the GP may call to discuss the best options for you, sending you for tests before you need an appointment or send a prescription straight to your nominated pharmacy.

Why are we making these changes?

Patients with the most urgent issues will be identified quickly and offered an appointment earlier than the current appointment system.

As the NHS continues to face challenges, we are doing all we can to modernise the way we work to continue to help provide the best care to all patients. We believe eConsult will allow us to offer more convenient access by allowing the GPs to prioritise patients who require more urgent care, whilst still providing a high-quality service to patients who have less urgent needs.