

At the time of writing this newsletter the healthcare system in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire continues to be under severe pressure and remains in a '**critical incident status**'. Sadly, this is now a common event and here at the surgery we find ourselves similarly buffeted at times. You will be aware that we may now reach a point each morning when our triage must be declared 'full' a situation I discussed in last month's newsletter. Here are some top tips to help both us and wider NHS services.

1. Only call 999 or attend A&E departments for serious accidents and for genuine emergencies.
2. If you are unsure where you should go, NHS 111 can help – search online for "NHS 111" or dial 111 from any phone. This will make sure you are seen in the right place and by the right person.
3. Consider using Urgent Treatment Centres. They can treat injuries including sprains, strains, suspected fractures, bites, cuts, scalds, and other non-life-threatening conditions. Waiting times are usually much shorter than A&E. We have UTCs at:
 - Nottingham – The NHS Urgent Care Centre (next to the BBC building) is open every day from 7am-7pm. You don't need an appointment to attend. Seaton House, London Road, Nottingham, NG2 4LA Tel: 0115 883 8500
 - Newark – Newark Hospital is open 9am-10pm (last patient admitted at 9.30pm). It can be found on Boundary Road, NG24 4DE
 - You may be booked into these services via 111.

For other non-urgent cases, when you need medical advice and it's not an emergency, please also consider speaking to a pharmacist.

1. Use the NHS App for access to a wide range of services and information, such as accessing medical records, booking and managing appointments, reviewing medication and ordering prescriptions as well as checking symptoms.
2. Flu and Covid-19 are currently circulating in the community, so stay at home if you have a symptom and get your jabs if you are eligible. More details about how to get your flu and Covid-19 jab can be found here – Flu vaccine – NHS (www.nhs.uk) and here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/how-to-get-a-coronavirus-vaccine/>
3. Members of the public can also help ease pressures by using their local pharmacy. Pharmacies can help with allergies, constipation, headaches, earache and many other ailments.
4. Anyone who is in mental health distress can call the Mental Health Crisis Line: 0808 196 3779 – the helpline is open 24 hours a day.

Added to this we have the problem of ongoing potential strike action across NHS services. It feels that challenging times remain ahead. As always, many thanks to all of you for your support.

Phil Rayner