

Last month I reported on how the surgery was reverting to a more 'normal' appointment system as we learn to live with Covid 19 and with levels of Covid generally falling. Pleasingly our new more relaxed appointment system appears to be being well received, the numbers of patients in our same day triage appointments are down and whilst advanced appointments are getting booked up, some slots are available (though not necessarily with a specific named GP) in a week or two. What we do need though to make this work going forward is for every appointment booked to be recognised for what it is i.e., a use of a precious NHS resource which if used by one person is inherently not available for someone else who might also need it. All problems are important but many we find could have been dealt with in other ways. As a result, I thought a reminder of other places for care might be helpful.

This includes: -

Self-care – many minor ailments will get better on their own and initially self-managing more minor aches and pains, coughs and colds etc is sensible. NHS Choices is a great website for self-care information.

- Pharmacist advice – increasingly medicines are available directly from a pharmacy and pharmacists are trained to advise on a wide variety of ailments, rashes etc. Some patients will be eligible for free treatments via the Pharmacy First scheme (check which pharmacies locally offer this service)
- 111 – is useful particularly when other options are closed, it is appropriate when 999 is not and can advise on dental as well as medical problems. (Please remember a GP is not trained to advise on dental matters and your registered dentist should be your first port of call for dental problems)
- The Urgent Treatment (or walk in centre -our nearest is by the BBC studios in town) may be a better option than A&E for sprains, minor fractures, burns or scalds and skin infections. If appropriate they can do X-rays and arrange follow ups as needed.
- The Mental Health crisis line – 0808 196 3779 is available 24/7 and can help with mental health problems or crises.
- 999 – is available for true emergencies (serious illness, injury and where a life might be at risk). This should be rung rarely and 111 may now be a better option when in doubt.

Also, just to be aware, we will be closed for training purposes on Thursday afternoon June 16th (though the GP out of hours service will provide cover), we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Phil Rayner