

NORTH END MEDICAL CENTRE

CHANGES TO APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

The way appointments work at North End Medical Centre, and many NHS GP surgeries in North West London, is changing.

From 2nd April 2024, everyone who contacts us will get a response from our Triage Team that same day – which will mean we can deal with urgent medical issues faster.

To make this possible, our team have worked hard to develop a new telephone triage system to work alongside our PATCHs (online) tool. So when you call the surgery from 2nd April onwards, you will be asked if you wish to book an appointment with a GP. If you select “yes”, you will be put through to a member of our Triage Team.

Our Triage Team is composed of our reception staff, working directly with an on-call doctor. Our receptionist will ask you a number of simple questions, and then the answers will be shown to the doctor, who will allocate an appointment to you based on how urgently you need to be seen. Our reception team will then communicate that decision to you.

This new system will allow us to see our most unwell patients as quickly as possible - but we know any new system takes some getting used to.

So we would ask for your patience during the first few months of April. We have had to change our way of working and train our staff over a very short time period, so there may be some teething issues - for which we apologise in advance. But we are confident the new system will be better for everyone in the long run.

If you would like to be involved more involved in practice development, please speak to our Operations Manager about joining our Patient Participation Group.

Frequently asked questions:

Why do I have to answer these questions about my problem?

In order for our triage team to safely review your request for an appointment, we need to understand about your problem. We ask that you answer our triage questions as accurately as you can. The member of staff asking you these questions might not be a doctor, but the Triage Team is directly supervised by a doctor, who will be responsible for assigning the urgency of the appointment we offer you. If we do not have the answers to these questions, it is possible that you could be offered the wrong type of appointment. If you don't want to do this over the phone, you can also use PATCHs or complete the triage form at reception

Why can't I get a same-day appointment if I call or attend the practice early enough?

We appreciate that under our old system, if you called the surgery or came into the practice at 8am, you could almost be guaranteed a same day appointment. We apologise that this will no longer be the case. However, our new system will enable us to see patients on the same day who are acutely unwell, or at high risk of deterioration. For example, we may ask a patient with an ongoing social issue (for example a problem with their housing) to wait for a routine telephone appointment, whereas we would want to see an asthmatic patient with shortness of breath on the same day for a face-to-face appointment. The new system should also mean that you won't have to beat the 8am rush, and it will be easier for you to contact the surgery when it suits you to do so.

I've been given a routine appointment and I want to be seen sooner – what should I do?

We are sorry if you are unhappy with any triage decision made by our team. If you provided us with enough information when answering the triage questions, it may be that the decision to offer a routine appointment was appropriate, as our doctors are looking at the clinical urgency of your problem; unfortunately, we cannot allocate urgent appointments by patient request. However, if your symptoms have changed in severity/frequency, or you have developed any new symptoms, we would ask that you get back in touch, and we can re-triage your problem.

Can I still use Patchs (eConsultation) via your website?

Yes – our eConsultation system remains unchanged and your Patchs requests will be handled exactly the same way.

What if I have more than one problem?

We appreciate that some patients have several problems they would like to discuss. Our Triage Team will need to ask you the same questions about each problem – it may be that one of your symptoms requires urgent review, but another could be dealt with routinely.

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