

A Guide to your GP practice



Your GP Practice is here for you

Your GP practice is home to a team of healthcare professionals.

Of course, there's your doctor, but there may also be a clinical pharmacist, physiotherapist or a health and wellbeing coach. There are also social prescribers, who can signpost you to a range of support services in your local community.

The different roles are experts in different areas, which helps ensure you are seen by the person best suited to your needs.

How are appointments made?

All appointments are triaged over the phone. This means you are asked to describe what is wrong, so that we can make sure you have an appointment with the most appropriate person.

What is triage?

A trained member of the GP practice team assesses you over the phone and decides which type of appointment is most suitable.

Sometimes, our receptionists need to ask personal questions to help make sure you speak to the right person. GP reception staff are a vital part of the GP practice team. They are skilled in assisting with triage and treat all information confidentially.

What kind of appointments are there?

Face-to-face

You see a healthcare professional in person.

Video and telephone consultations

You speak with a healthcare professional over the phone or on a video call from your mobile phone, tablet or computer. On video calls you can see your healthcare professional from the comfort of your own home.

E-consultations

Many GP practice websites have forms that you can fill in with your medical concerns. The forms are reviewed by a GP. Advice is given or a member of the practice team calls you back to discuss the issue further.

You may need to see a healthcare professional in person following a video or telephone call or an e-consultation. Your healthcare professional will discuss this with you.

Who might I see or speak to?

GP practices, or networks of GP practices are now home to a range of health professionals who can diagnose and treat you.

If it is most appropriate for you to see a doctor, you will be offered an appointment with a GP. However, a GP is not always the best person for you to see.

Following your triage, you may be referred to one of the following healthcare professionals or services:

General Practice Nurse (GPNs) and Nurse Practitioners

Practice Nurses are qualified nurses. They do almost every kind of patient care and treatment. They look after patients with long-term conditions such as asthma and diabetes and offer health screening. They hold clinics such as travel vaccinations, baby vaccinations, wound care, and women's health for cervical screening and contraceptive advice.

Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists are experts in muscle and joint conditions. You may be referred to a Physiotherapist working in or with your practice to provide you with a diagnosis and treatment if you have these types of conditions.

Health Care Assistants (HCAs)

Health Care Assistants (HCAs) work alongside the Practice Nurse to help with things such as blood pressure and new patient checks, weight and height recording and taking blood samples. You may also see a HCA for certain vaccines - for example your flu vaccination.

Physician Associates (PAs)

A Physician Associate (PA) is not a doctor but works under the supervision of a doctor to deliver care and treatment. This means they can diagnose and treat adults and children with a range of health problems.

GP Registrars

GP Registrars are fully qualified doctors. They are doing advanced general practice training under the supervision of a GP.

Social Prescribers

Social Prescribers connect people to community support groups and services. These services might be run by the council or a charity. For example, they could put someone with dementia in touch with a local dementia support group. Or someone who is lonely could be put in touch with a coffee morning or gardening club.





Care-coordinators

Care-coordinators work with GPs and other members of the team. They help people understand which services they need. They also help with personal health budgets.

You will always be referred to a GP, or another health professional if there is a need.

Health and Wellbeing Coaches

Health and Wellbeing Coaches work alongside GPs and other health professionals to help people make positive changes to lifestyle and diet. This is based on what matters to the person and their goals for better health and wellbeing.

Clinical Pharmacists

A Clinical Pharmacist provides expert advice on medicines.

Pharmacists are highly trained. They can diagnose and treat common illnesses like colds, hay fever, diarrhoea or eye infections. They may be able to prescribe medicines to treat your condition.

Pharmacists advise on side effects of medication. They can talk through how medicines react with each other to make sure that medicines work well for you.



What happens if I need GP services outside of practice opening times?

To make it easier to access GP services, practices can offer appointments in the evenings and at weekends at times to suit you. We call this our extended access service.

Extended access appointments take place at 'hub' practices, so whilst you may not always see your usual GP at your usual practice, you will see an appropriate clinician at a place local to you. To make an extended access appointment, just contact your practice in the usual way.

Outside normal surgery hours you can still phone your GP practice, but you'll usually be directed to an out-of-hours service and phone number. You can also call 111 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What should I do in an emergency?

Always dial 999 in a life-threatening emergency. If you need help with minor injuries at any time or urgent care when your GP practice or community pharmacy is closed visit [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or dial 111 if you do not have internet access.



Please continue to be kind to our staff, socially distance where possible and wear a face mask when asked to do so.





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