

## **ATTLEBOROUGH SURGERIES GUIDE TO APPOINTMENTS**

To ensure that we are able to meet our patient's needs we actively manage our appointments to provide both routine and urgent appointments. To ensure you are able to get the most out of our services please take note of the following information regarding our appointment system.

### **Same day appointments**

Each day at 8.30am a few urgent for the day GP appointments are made available for booking.

### **Next day appointments**

Each day at 8.30am some routine next day GP appointments are made available for booking.

You are more likely to obtain an appointment by telephoning the surgery early on in the day.

## **To meet your routine needs:**

### **Routine book in advance appointments**

In addition to the appointments that are made available for each day it is possible to book an appointment with the GP of your choice up to three weeks in advance. Please be prepared to wait for a routine book in advance appointment. It is common at most practices to sometimes have to wait more than two weeks for such an appointment. However, please do bear in mind that several further appointments are made available each day.

### **Follow-up appointments**

If following your consultation your clinician feels they would like to see you again to follow up your condition they will ask you to book an appointment at Reception. This helps ensure continuity of care for our patients.

### **Extended hours appointments**

We currently offer routine GP appointments between 07:00 and 08:00 on Tuesday mornings, 18:30 and 20:00 on Wednesday evenings and 07:30 and 08:00 on Friday mornings. These appointments are mostly for patients who work full-time.

### **Being on time for your appointment**

Please arrive **before** your appointment time to ensure you don't lose your place. The doctor or nurse may not be able to see you for your appointment if you are late. This ensures that our clinicians have time to provide patients with the quality of service that they deserve and ensures that other patients are not kept waiting unnecessarily.

## **To meet your urgent needs:**

Remember, we do NOT offer a “walk in” service. You must have an appointment to be seen.

If you have an urgent problem that needs to be seen on the same day we can offer you an appointment with either the Nurse Practitioner or GP. Receptionists are able to book you with either health care professional depending on your medical condition, so they may ask the reason for your visit. An urgent same day appointment is only for your most urgent medical need. **We will not discuss routine matters.** These can wait for a routine appointment. When booking an urgent same day appointment you may be asked to provide a brief explanation of your symptoms. This is to ensure that you are booked appropriately.

Please be prepared to wait to see the GP or Nurse Practitioner. The clinicians must prioritise their list should a patient with a potentially critical condition present. The same day clinic GP may also be called out on an urgent visit and you must be prepared to wait for their return.

The following are not “urgent”: medical certificates; discussion of test results unless called by the doctor; medical reports for insurance, banks and employers; requests for letters or completion of forms; follow-up GP appointments; repeat medication requests; telephone triage advice; requesting advice on minor or self limiting illness, sore throat, earache, cough.

## **Telephone Appointments**

### **Telephone advice**

If you wish to speak to a doctor please call 01953 453166 and reception will arrange a time for the GP to call you back. Please be available at that time with your phone switched on.

### **Nurse Practitioner**

Sarah and Julia are our Advanced Nurse Practitioners at Attleborough Surgeries. You may be offered an appointment with Sarah or Julia as an alternative to seeing the GP. A Nurse Practitioner is a nurse who has undertaken Masters Degree Level training. They can help you with everyday common illnesses and provide health advice. They can also diagnose and treat common problems experienced by most people from time to time including:

Minor injuries, asthma, COPD, diabetes, contraception, back pain, chest infection, fever, indigestion, sprains, skin infections, earache, worms, abdominal pains, sinusitis, headaches, head injuries, acne, constipation, rashes, eczema, eye problems, piles, vaginal discharge, diarrhoea, vomiting and urinary tract infections.

Sarah and Julia are also able to prescribe and make referrals.

## **When we are closed**

When the surgery is closed please call 01953 453166 to access an emergency doctor. You will be redirected to the out of hours service. Alternatively you can call **NHS 111** direct.

The NHS 111 service is staffed by a team of fully trained advisers, supported by experience nurses. They will ask you questions to assess your symptoms, then give you the healthcare advice you need or direct you straight away to the local service that can help you best. That could be A & E, an out-of-hours doctor, a walk-in centre, a community nurse, an emergency dentist or a late-opening chemist.

If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

## **When to use NHS 111**

You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice, but it's not a life-threatening situation outside surgery hours.

Call 111 if:

- You need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- You think you need to go to A & E or need another NHS urgent care service
- You don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- You need health information or reassurance about what to do next
- For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way

**For immediate life threatening emergencies, continue to call 999**

## **NHS Walk-in Centres**

Timber Hill Health Centre,  
Level 4,  
115-117 The Castle Mall,  
Norwich,  
NR1 3DD  
Open 7am – 9pm 7 days a week  
Telephone 01603 611786

## **Get the Right Treatment**

**Every year, millions of people visit their GP with minor health problems that can be easily resolved without a doctor's appointment**

It is estimated that every year, 50 million visits to the GP are made for minor ailments such as coughs and colds, mild eczema, and athlete's foot. By visiting your pharmacy instead, you could save yourself time and trouble.

### **Self-Care**

Keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home can help you treat many minor ailments. Colds, coughs, indigestion and many other minor complaints can all be treated with medicines that are available over the counter.

Your pharmacist can advise on what you might find useful to keep in your medicine cabinet. Always follow the instruction on the medicine label and consult your doctor if the illness continues or becomes more severe.

### **Your Local Pharmacist**

Pharmacists offer professional free health advice at any time – you don't need an appointment. From coughs and colds to aches and pains, they can give you expert help on everyday illnesses. They can answer questions about prescribed and over-the-counter medicines. Your local Pharmacist can also advise on healthy eating and carry out some health checks such as BP checks, blood sugar tests etc.

Pharmacists can also advise on healthy eating, obesity and giving up smoking. Some pharmacists have private areas where you can talk in confidence. They may suggest you visit your GP for more serious symptoms. It is possible to purchase many medicines from the chemist without a prescription.

Several pharmacies now open late regularly.

### **NHS Walk-In Centres**

NHS Walk-In Centres offer convenient access to a range of NHS services. You can receive treatment for many ailments including:

- infection and rashes
- fractures and lacerations
- emergency contraception and advice
- stomach upsets
- cuts and bruises, or
- burns and strains

NHS Walk-In Centres treat around 3m patients a year and have proved to be a successful complementary service to traditional GP and A & E services. Some centres offer access to doctors as well as nurses. However, they are not designed for treating long-term conditions or immediate life-threatening problems.

## **Accident & Emergency (A & E)**

Major A & E departments assess and treat patients who have serious injuries or illnesses. Generally, you should visit A & E or call 999 for emergencies, such as:

- loss of consciousness
- pain that is not relieved by simple analgesia
- acute confused state
- persistent, severe chest pain, or
- breathing difficulties

If you're injured or seriously ill, you should go, or be taken, to A & E. If an ambulance is needed you can call 999, the emergency phone number in the UK. You can also dial 112, which is the equivalent for the European Union.

Major A & E departments offer access 365 days a year and usually open 24 hours a day. Be aware that not all hospitals have an A & E department.