

NOTON MEDICAL CENTRE
DOCTOR FIRST APPOINTMENT SYSTEM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why is the surgery offering telephone appointments?

You have told us that sometimes you find it difficult to get the appointment you need, when you need it. By offering telephone appointments and giving advice this way we can make sure that everyone is able speak to, or see, their doctor on the day that they call or on the day that they choose.

Many people don't need to come into the surgery to be seen at all; their problem can be dealt with by telephone. This gives your doctor more time to see those people that need appointment in the surgery. And, because your doctor is the one making the appointments, he or she can judge how much time you might need and give you a long or a short appointment. This helps appointments to run to time and means you're more likely to be seen on time. We also know that when people make an appointment close to the date that they call, they are more likely to keep the appointment.

2. What if I do not have a telephone?

If you are unable to access a telephone can come down to the surgery and wait to be seen. The Receptionist will add your name to the GP call back list and add a note to say that you are in the surgery.

3. I am hard of hearing and unable to communicate using the telephone.

If you are hard of hearing you are welcome to come down to the surgery to access their GP. You may have to wait a little while but the GP will endeavour to see you as soon as possible.

4. How do I access my GP of choice?

Please let the Receptionist know if you wish to access a particular GP and if possible you will be added to that GP's call-back list. Clearly, all GPs have leave, including half-days but if you would prefer to wait until a particular GP is available rather than speak to another GP on the same day just let the Receptionist know and they will make the necessary arrangements. For ongoing problems that do not require urgent follow up we would advise that you wait and speak to the same GP where possible. Please let the receptionist know if you have previously seen a particular GP for your problem.

5. What if I do not wish to share brief details of my problem with the Receptionist?

Any information provided to our Reception team is confidential but we understand that some patients may not wish to share even the briefest details. This will not prevent you from accessing your GP. Just tell the receptionist that you do not wish to give this information and your name will be added to the call-back list. The only reason we ask for brief details is to assist the GP in identifying any calls that may need to take priority for example a small child with a fever and a rash that could potentially be meningitis as opposed to an adult with flu like symptoms.

6. What if I am unable to wait in for a call-back?

Please let the Receptionist know if you are genuinely unable to wait around for a call-back and you will be offered the option of waiting on the line until the GP finishes the call they are on. Alternatively, the receptionist can add a note for the GP asking them to call you back at a particular time. We are happy to call you on your mobile if that is more convenient for you.

7. What if I am unable to take private calls?

If you are able to take a private call at some point in the day let the Receptionist know what time that is so the doctor can ring you then. If you are unable to take private calls at all just tell let your doctor know and they will book you a mutually convenient face to face appointment. Remember you can choose to hold the line and wait for your doctor to become available rather than book a call-back with the Receptionist.

8. Are telephone appointments safe?

During your call with the doctor, he or she will ask questions to help them make a decision about whether you need to be seen in person or not. For example, if your doctor needs to look at something or examine you, you will be asked to come into the surgery for the appointment. If your doctor thinks you need to be seen, he or she will always ask you to come in to the surgery.

9. What if the doctor doesn't offer me a face to face consultation but I am dissatisfied with this outcome?

If you are not happy with the type of appointment that is offered please let your GP know and they will reconsider. Similarly, if you put the telephone down but feel you have unanswered questions or generally feel unhappy with the outcome please ring back and ask to speak to your doctor again.

10. What if I am unable to attend a face to face consultation during normal opening hours?

Unfortunately, the Practice does not normally offer appointments outside of normal opening hours. However, because you are booking your appointment direct with the GP you can agree a mutually convenient date and time for your appointment and may be offered more flexibility than the Receptionist would be able to offer.

11. Can I still book an appointment for next week or next month?

You can still book your appointments in advance. When speaking to the GP you can book your appointment at a mutually convenient date and time.

12. Will I be seen quicker if I come into the surgery?

Unless your problem is an emergency, you won't be seen more quickly if you come into the surgery to make an appointment. The receptionist will ask for your contact details and add your name to the doctor's call-back list. The doctor will then call you back in order of clinical priority. You will also be given the option to sit and wait for the doctor to see you. However, your wait may be very lengthy as the doctor will still see patients in the order that they feel is most clinically urgent. Receptionists will be unable to advise you how long your wait will be as this completely depends upon how many patients are on the doctor's call-back list, and the nature of their presenting complaint.

13. What do I do if I need an emergency appointment?

Telephone the main surgery number and tell the receptionist that your health problem is urgent. He or she will put you straight through to a doctor if one is free. If all of the doctors are busy, the receptionist will make sure that a doctor calls you back as soon as they can.