

Dear Patient,

Over the last few months you are likely to have noticed a difference in the way things are being done in general practice as we manage coronavirus (Covid-19).

We want to start off by saying "thank you".

Thank you for adapting so quickly to these new ways of working – it has been the drastic, yet fundamental change needed to ensure the safety of you and our staff.

To slow down the spread of coronavirus, we have worked to reduce the number of people coming into the practice by using online consultation systems like e-Consult (on our website), telephone appointments and video consultations.

Our top priority is, and has always been, to keep you and our staff safe whilst ensuring you get the care you need.

This is why we ask you to continue what you have been doing to access your GP service.

Please do not visit the GP practice without an appointment.

Instead, call the practice or go to our practice website. You can speak to a GP or nurse over the phone, email or have a video consultation. This will often mean getting to see the right person to help you is much quicker.

If a doctor or nurse needs to see you in person then you will be given an appointment to attend the practice.

Only coming into the surgery when you have an appointment means:

- you will get seen promptly
- you are reducing your risk of catching/spreading coronavirus by avoiding a waiting room
- you are helping to keep staff healthy and safe
- the Practice can maintain a clean environment and protect you from the virus

Please also remember that if you are offered an appointment then it might be at either of our Forest Gate or Totton Health Centre surgeries. Whilst we realise this could be inconvenient, we think it is important to keep people safe, reduce the spread of coronavirus and get the maximum benefit from the healthcare resources which are available.

Your records are accessible securely at both New Horizons sites, ensuring you are provided with the best possible care. A home visiting service, for patients who are unable to leave their home will be provided.

If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, then please do get in touch to let us know how we can support you. Thank you once again for your support and understanding as we all adapt to a new way of working.

Best wishes.

Iris Pilgrim
Managing Partner
On behalf of All Partners at
New Horizons Medical Partnership

GP Appointments & Bookings

The way we all access GP services has changed.

Below are some frequently asked questions that may help you understand these changes:

Why can't I walk into my GP practice?

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has forced us all to work differently to help slow down the spread of the virus. All healthcare settings are taking special measures to protect you, the public and their staff. GP practices are working as hard as ever, but differently.

Where possible we want to avoid people having to wait inside a waiting room together, as we know this increases the risk of the virus spreading. Like hospitals and dentists, we have also had to change how we offer our services to you.

If you do need to come in, then we can ensure there are a minimal number of people in the practice, we can maintain social distancing and keep patients and staff safe.

How do I get an appointment?

The easiest and most effective method is to use eConsult through the practice website, or you can telephone. You will then be contacted by a clinician to talk through your symptoms either over the phone, via email, or if needed and you have the available technology, through a video consultation.

Why can't I book a face-to-face appointment?

We have adapted the way in which you can get an appointment quickly and safely. Most patients' health concerns can be managed over the phone or via video consultation. We are, therefore, providing you with either an initial phone call or video consultation to decide what would be the best way to help. If we can support you without needing you to visit the practice then we reduce the need for you to travel and reduce the risk of the virus spreading.

If you do need a face-to-face appointment, you will be invited to attend the practice.

If we can ensure there are a minimal number of people in the practice, we can maintain social distancing and keep patients and staff safe.

What is eConsult?

You can access eConsult via the practice website at www.newhorizonsmedicalpartnership.nhs.uk

eConsult lets patients consult with their own NHS GP online by completing a quick form which is reviewed by the practice.

After reviewing your query, you will then be directed towards the most appropriate help. This might be some advice on self-help, pharmacy advice, an appointment with one of the practice clinical team or another service. Your data is always secure – including during a video consultation or telephone call.

What if I do not have access to a smartphone or web camera?

Whilst technology has evolved and supports us all in many ways in our day-to-day lives, we appreciate not everyone will have access to a smartphone or web camera for a video consultation.

We can still talk to you on your mobile phone or landline.

Will I need to wear a face mask if I come into my practice for an appointment?

To help limit the spread of the virus, we are asking for all patients aged 12 and over to wear a face covering when they come to the practice. This does not have to be a face mask, but a cloth covering which covers your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head.

You can find additional information by visiting

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

How do I get a repeat prescription?

Please do this online or via your local pharmacy. If you would like online access instructions then please email us whccg.nhmp@nhs.net

How do I see a GP during the evening and weekends?

For evening and weekend access to GPs please either visit 111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111.

What do I do if I think I have coronavirus (Covid-19)?

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.
- If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms, then DO NOT visit your GP practice. You should visit 111.nhs.uk/covid-19 or call NHS 111 if you cannot get help online.
- You must self-isolate for seven days from when your symptoms started. Anyone you live with, or in your support bubble, who does not have symptoms must self-isolate for 14 days from when the first person started having symptoms.
- You must also ask for a test as soon as you start showing symptoms. You can do this online – visit www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test