

Using the Practice Safely and Effectively During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

(Updated 1/04/2020. Next planned update 07/04/2020)

This document has been prepared by your GP surgery in order to help you manage your health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is vitally important that;

YOU

Follow the government advice on how to keep yourself, your family and your community safe and reduce the spread of the virus, and

WE

Keep our medical and administrative staff safe and at work so that we are able to provide care when you need it

The advice laid out below spells out how to get the help you need without putting yourself and others at risk.

Be aware of the latest guidance from the NHS at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

To all patients; please help us to keep the surgery open by following these seven steps;

- Do not enter the practice if you have a cough or a fever. If you need to enter the building, your temperature will be checked before you do so.
- If you are told to come to the surgery by a clinician, please listen to the instructions carefully as you may be asked to wait in the car or use a different entrance to protect yourself and others
- Download the NHS App via the App Store or Google Play to be able to order repeat prescriptions, look at test results, access the latest guidance and use the symptoms checker
- Limit all visits to the practice to when strictly necessary
- Nominate a pharmacy so your prescription can be sent electronically.
- Look out for your friends, family and neighbours especially if they are elderly, and adhere without fail to the guidance on self-isolation, social distancing and the national lockdown announced on the 23/03/2020.
- Follow the guidelines below to get the medical care you need...

REMEMBER

If you are unwell with a significant illness, such as finding a breast lump or developing chest pain you should still ask for help. Please don't ignore important symptoms.

HOWEVER

If you think your issue can safely be postponed for now, please don't call or attend the surgery, and let us get on with dealing with the impact of the Coronavirus. Thank you to all of our patients who have made this decision already.

WE WILL

- Aim to respond to any eConsult we receive within 2 working days
- Answer our telephones as quickly as we can with the staff that we have available
- Keep you safely at home and give you advice and treat you over the telephone, on a video call or via email/text wherever possible
- Only invite you to leave home for an appointment if there is no other choice
- Invite you to an appointment at a location that is the most appropriate for you based on how unwell you are and the assessment that you need.
- Ask you to travel to
Centre Practice
Gudgeheath Lane Surgery, 187 Gudge Heath Lane Fareham Hampshire PO15 6QA
Porchester health Centre, Portchester Health Centre/West St, Fareham PO16 9TU
Westlands medical centre, 20B Westlands Grove, Portchester, Fareham PO16 9AE
- Ask you to follow a set of instructions when you arrive at the location for your appointment e.g. wait in your car, wear a mask, take your temperature
- Sometimes have to tell you that we are unable to treat you in the way we would normally and instead we may ask you to self-care at home instead

- Aim to keep you regular medicines supplied and respond to your request within 5 working days

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I (or my child) have a new cough or a fever, BUT I think I can look after it myself

- Don't call the practice and don't call 111
- If you live alone, however mild your symptoms, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started
- If you live with others, and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days, which will greatly reduce the chance of passing the infection to others in the community
- If anyone else in the household on 14 day isolation starts displaying symptoms, they will need to stay at home for 7 days from when their own symptoms began, regardless of which day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period
- Follow the official advice and guidance on how to do this at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

I (or my child) have a new cough or a fever, AND I'm unwell and need medical advice

- Don't call the practice
- Follow the guidance laid out above, but also;
- Get medical advice and guidance via NHS111 online at <https://111.nhs.uk/>
- Only phone 111 if you don't have internet access available

I (or my child) have a new cough or a fever, AND I have a medical emergency and I need to call an ambulance

- Dial 999 and inform the call-handler that you have been self-isolating because of a cough or a fever
- Follow their instructions

I (or my child) have an urgent medical problem, BUT I don't have a cough or a fever, AND I don't think it is related to COVID-19

- Phone the practice in the usual way, the receptionist will add you to the triage list and a GP will call you.
- Discuss your urgent problem with the doctor and they will give advice on the best way to get it solved for you. Bear in mind that we will be trying to complete as much of the assessment and treatment as possible without a face to face appointment, where it is safe to do so.

I (or my child) have a non-urgent medical issue, a medication issue, an administrative issue or any other problem

- For the foreseeable future be aware that our services are extremely strained, and that we will be prioritising urgent medical issues which will mean it will take longer to address non-urgent issues
- Consider whether your non-urgent issue can be postponed given the COVID-19 situation, but if not;
- We plan to solve as many of these issues as possible without you having to visit the practice
- Submit an eConsult (online) request for advice, found on our website at <https://www.farehamcentrepractice.co.uk/>
- If you do not have internet access, please ask a friend or family member to help you submit an eConsult
- If you do not have internet access telephone the surgery and ask to go on the triage list

I have never done an eConsult before. How do I start?

- Press on the eConsult button on our website or navigate to <https://www.farehamcentrepractice.co.uk/> and follow the simple instructions
- There is lots of advice on self-care available, so use that if possible
- Choose 'administrative advice', if that is what you are after
- Choose the medical topic that matches your problem, or choose 'general advice' if you can't find one
- Give us as much information as possible to help us to help you effectively

What will happen to my eConsult?

- Your eConsult will be reviewed within two working days
- The outcome will depend on your problem but could include one or more of the following; advice via a text message, a prescription, a blood test, ECG or other investigation, a telephone consultation or a video call consultation

- You may be asked to come in for a face to face consultation **IF** this is appropriate **AND** you don't have a new cough or a fever

I am concerned about COVID-19 and running out of medication. Do I need to put in my repeat prescription early?

- Please do not request medications early as it will put additional strain on our workforce as well as disrupting the regular medication supply chain
- We will do everything we can to process prescriptions as efficiently as we can
- We will be issuing all prescription electronically directly to your chemist.
- Where possible prescriptions will be on repeat dispensing so you only have to go to your chemist each time its due.

I am self-isolating and off work, do I need a 'sick note'?

- You do not need a medical certificate for the 7 day isolation period
- If your symptoms are no better after 7 days, contact NHS 111 online at <http://111.nhs.uk>
- Evidence required for your work that you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 is now available through the NHS111 website, so please do not contact the surgery for a medical certificate for that reason
- Please do not contact the surgery for a medical certificate related to COVID-19

I have reached the end of my 'stay at home' period and feel fit and well with no symptoms. Do I need a 'sick note' to return to work?

- No, you do not required a medical certificate to return to work under these circumstances
- However, as things stand you will only return to work if you are a designated key worker

I have a holiday booked; do I need a GP letter to support cancelling my travel?

- We are caring for more sick patients than usual and so we are not a position to write letters for patients with holiday plans at present
- Insurers and travel companies should be basing their decisions on advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

I am over 70 and worried about having to self-isolate

- Please follow the government's guidance without fail
- We know that this is an uncertain time. Please be assured that we will do our best to support you.
- Please see the following link with advice on how to stay at home successfully <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

I have received a text or a letter from the NHS stating that I am in a vulnerable group. What do I do next?

- You have been identified as a person who must (even more than the general public) adhere strictly to the guidance to shield yourself from other people for the next 12 weeks.
- Further advice on this is at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

At present (April 1st) we have not received confirmation from NHS England regarding which of our patients have received/will receive a text or a letter

ARE YOU VULNERABLE, SELF-ISOLATING OR NEEDING HELP

VISIT FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL FOR CONTACT DETAILS OF PEOPLE THAT COULD HELP

<https://www.fareham.gov.uk/coronavirus/otherhelp.aspx>