

Eaglescliffe Medical Practice Spring/Summer Newsletter

WELCOME

Welcome to the spring/summer edition of the newsletter. If you have not previously read one of our newsletters, this has been created to keep you informed of updates in the practice and general info on taking care of yourself around this time of year.



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The dragon is leaving the den

We have a sad announcement that our office manager Lynda is now retiring. I can certainly speak for all of the staff when I say she will be missed incredibly. Lynda has been devoted to helping her staff and patients for the past number of years and we are all grateful for her kindness, compassion and knowledge that she has shared. She is one in a million!

Now a few words from the lady herself.....

After many happy years of working at Eaglescliffe Medical Practice I have now decided to retire from my full time position. I have been very lucky and working here has been a pleasure due to the GP's and the team of staff I work with.

Having been here for a few years you get to know the patients and it has been really nice to have the rapport and friendliness from a lot of you.



I was lucky enough to be involved in the building of our new surgery and it was certainly a very interesting year - moving in to Portacabins and then this fabulous building. It gave us the best working conditions you could ask for.

So I would like to say thank you to everyone in my working life, it has been brilliant!!!!

Lynda x

We would really like to express our sincere thanks for the energetic commitment and dedication given to all patients and the practice over the years.

You have been amazing! How will we manage without you?!

Best wishes in your future endeavours from all the doctors x.

Going away???

When you have booked a holiday please remember to collect a travel questionnaire to check advised immunisations.

Update in technology



New online service

What is Patient Access?

Patient access is a service provided by our clinical system supplier, EMIS that allows you on line access to booking and cancelling appointments , a list of your current medications and the option to order your repeat medication on line as well as a list of your recorded immunisations and any recorded allergies or adverse reaction.

How does patient access work?

Patient Access is simply a web site that connects to your practices Emis clinical system where your details are stored. Think of it as a window into your practice services. For Patient Access to work, your practice must set it up to allow patients to sign in and access their clinical system.

Can I use Patient Access?

Yes. As a practice we now offer the Patient Access. To register and get signed up to this system you would need to bring some photo ID in to the reception desk and we will be able to print out your details to get you started. As a safety measure the access code and password that is unique to every individual is only valid for a short period of time. So once you receive your details you will need to log on and set up your account. If the date runs out you will need to collect another form from reception.

Much awaited new system for testing INR bloods

For patients who have regular INR blood tests

The Practice is very pleased to inform you from 1st April 2015 that we will be providing a full in house service. At the moment you attend the practice for a blood test and the test is sent off the University Hospital of North Tees & Hartlepool laboratory where the sample is processed and the result is sent electronically to the practice. Once we have the test result our clinical staff interpret the result and then we contact you via telephone to inform you of the reading and your dosing schedule, as well as the next test interval. This process usually takes a day or two before we are able to give you your result.

In April 2015 this process will be streamlined and we will be in a position to offer you a different type of test, instead of having to have a venous sample of blood we will be able to take a finger prick sample. The Practice will have analysers and testing sticks on site to process the sample and in addition the Practice will have available a computer software package accessible to our full clinical team, which enables the result to be interpreted so that the dosing and testing interval will be available on the same day the sample is taken.

Just a reminder about the Friends and Family Test.

To give us your opinions on the practice please collect a survey from the reception desk or see the website for further details

Patient participation group

Just a reminder about our patient participation group.

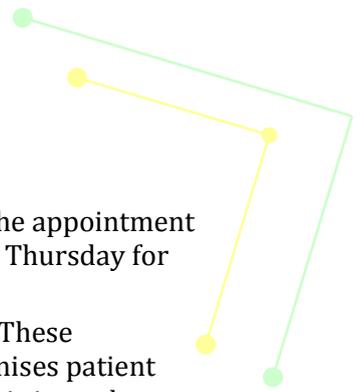
This is a group of volunteer patients who are involved in making sure the surgery provides the services its patients need

You can find more information on our website www.eaglescliffmedical.co.uk or alternatively ask at the reception desk and we will be happy to provide you with the correct forms you need to join.

You can also view the outcomes of the recent PPG meeting on the website.

We will look forward to hearing your opinions.

How the appointments system works



Making appointments

Morning appointments to see a doctor are released at 8.30am 48hours prior to the appointment for e.g. Monday for Wednesday - Tuesday for Thursday - Wednesday for Friday - Thursday for Monday and so on.

Afternoon appointments for the doctors are bookable up to 4 weeks in advance. These appointments can be booked after 8.30am Monday to Friday. The practice recognises patient choice with regard to requests for an appointment with a specific GP, however this is on the understanding that the 48 hours access rights for routine appointments are waived.

We also have unscheduled appointments daily for the Nurse Practitioner who can prescribe and with the doctors where urgent care is needed.

We have five GP partners, two male and three female and they are a mixture of part time and full time GP's. In addition to the partners we have a GP registrar and our newest member to the team Dr Y. Smith who is also a female doctor and also works part time.

The Practice also offers extended hours on alternate Monday & Thursday evenings for those who cannot make it during work hours.

The appointment interval for doctors is 10mins. If you need longer e.g. to discuss a number of problems then please ask the receptionist for a longer allocation.

If you arrive late for your appointment by more than 10minutes the doctors have the right to ask you to rebook. Being late to an appointment has a knock on effect with the clinic and to peoples appointments who have arrived on time.

We now have the Patient Access system which also allows you to log on and book appointments with the doctors.

Remember for Summer.

Sun damage doesn't just happen when you're on holiday in the sun. It can happen when you're not expecting it, for example when you go for a walk or sit in your garden. You can protect yourself by following the SunSmart messages,

- Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm.
- Make sure you never burn.
- Aim to cover up with a T-shirt, hat and sunglasses.
- Remember to take extra care with children.
- Then use factor 15+ sunscreen.

Report mole changes or unusual skin growths to your GP.

Always take special care of children's skin. The best way to do this is to cover them up and keep them in the shade.

If you do have hayfever make sure that you order your medication in plenty of time to keep on top of your symptoms.

The same with asthma. Always make sure that you have your inhaler to hand in case of an emergency.

Remember to keep hydrated especially on warm days, its generally recommended that you drink up to 8 glasses a day.

Day in the life of a doctors surgery receptionist

Ok so what are our main roles as doctors receptionists?? to answer telephones? Make appointments? paint our nails and drink tea???

Unfortunately we are not that lucky! Many people don't actually realise what our roles entail. So I am going to tell you step by step the day I have had today and answer some common questions.

Just an average Monday.

7.55am - I arrive at work to open up the reception and log on to the system ready for opening at 8am. There are two receptionist's on the desk till 8.30.

8am - We already have people waiting outside and the emergency calls have started ringing. The doctor has already been through and brought us dictation, scripts, notes and letters for us to distribute throughout the practice as we all have different roles and admin jobs. The 24hr BP machine needs to be set up for the patient to arrive at 9am. The hospital discharges and out of hours letters need to be printed.

8.30am - Its time to brave the phones. We have two girls on the phones until 10am and three phone lines coming in. So it starts..... The first call I take is from the coroners office informing us of a death of one of our patients. Not a great start to the day! Fortunately despite being known as "Dragons" we are not "Dragons" nor are we robots and we do try get to know our patients and this patient was one that would come in and like to take time to talk to us even if it was 'how are you today?' 'weathers getting better' or ' how was your weekend?' or even just a big smile. So to be told that patient has passed, hurts.

9.30am - It has been an hour since we opened the phone lines and between us both 120 calls later, lots of appointments made/cancelled,/re-arranged, general enquiry's, dealing with hospitals/care homes/pharmacies etc. putting messages and queries through to the doctors as part of our vetting system and once we have had a reply we then need to call the patient back with advice. I don't think I could actually list everything we deal with on the telephones or else I would be here all day!

10am - Yes!! Its break time. Although most of that is spent dealing with all of the messages, enquiry's and things we need to fax to various places.

10.30am - Time to open all of the internal and external post. Sort the letters according to doctors and put them in their files ready to be scanned on to the system and send through to them.

11.00am- 12.30pm - Reception. During this time of day it can be a lot quieter due to the doctors coming to the end of morning surgery and getting ready for the number of home visits they have aquired. This gives us time to file the hundreds of prescriptions (no exaggeration.....yes hundreds!) as well as dealing with patients, giving out scripts, putting calls on hold for our telephone room if they are busy, making sure all of the forms/supplies and letters are up to date, completing tasks that the doctors send to inform patients of results or send letters to make routine appointments. Printing the blood forms out ready for the next days phlebotomy clinic. Once all of them jobs are done, we get to squeeze some admin time in.

12.30pm - Lunch timeeeee. Time to eat and take a breather from this mornings hectic rush. In this time I am actually doing a BTEC Diploma in Business Administration so any free time is spent doing this.

1.30pm - Back to the rota. Half an hour admin time. In this time we all have different admin areas that we cover. For my admin I have six areas. I send for shingles vaccs, pneumonia vaccs, B12 and annual bloods appointments, change of addresses, the newsletter and more recently the patient participation group. As well as any other jobs the office manager or practice managers delegate to me.

2pm - Scanning for an hour. In that time all of the letters that have been put in to the GP folders are then scanned on to the computer system. Once they have been scanned we have to file each one individually in to the right departments to sent electronically through a system called Docman.

3pm - Time for a quick break

3.20pm - 10 minutes to sort the post out in to envelopes.

3.30pm - Last stint on the telephones for the day which is basically just a repeat of this morning (making appointments, answering queries, playing Sherlock Homes and doing detective work)

4.30 pm - Home time.

Although this is my Monday morning ,we work from a rota so each receptionists day is different.

Commonly asked questions

Can you check my

Midwife/Podiatry/Physio appointment?

No. We cannot check on any of the above appointments as it is a completely separate service and we do not have access to their systems.

The telephone number is 01642 781281.

Why Cant I have information on my husband/wife/daughter/sons appointments or medication?

For anyone over the age of 16 we are not allowed by the data protection act to disclose any information unless we have written consent from the patient stating they give full permission to that individual to discuss their medical records or specific to what information they are limited to access.

What is an emergency appointment?

As receptionists we can guide you but we cannot decide if it is an emergency for you. This needs to be your decision as to whether you feel you need immediate care that day for your problem.

If there are appointments being released at 8.30am in the morning cant I book one now?

No. The computer system is set up to automatically release the appointments for a morning at 8.30 48hrs prior to the appointment. We are unable to override this system unless we have strict instructions from the doctor to do so.

When booking an urgent appointment, why do you ask for a reason?

No we are not doctors or nurses but we do have several years of experience and training when it comes to booking appointments. We have been trained as to which questions to ask, what symptoms to look out for and who to book appointments with. Also the doctors like to have a brief description as to the problem they will be seeing you with. This also helps us isolate anything that could be deemed contagious for the protection of the patient and others in the waiting room.

If you would prefer not to disclose a brief description of the problem please just say its personal.

Why don't we take prescriptions over the phone?

We do not offer this service as it is a Medicine management safety issue.

A number of years ago we did offer that service and we found that there were to many admin/patient errors being made to justify this system.

Unless you are genuinely a housebound patient in which case we do allow patients to order over the telephone.

Alternate methods include requesting via email/internet, fax, bringing the right side of your script in, filling out a request form at the reception desk or in some cases pharmacies can order them for you.



Further Notices

A Big Thank you.

- We would like to say a big thank you to all of the patients that sent Christmas cards and presents in for the doctors, nurses and administration staff. We were overwhelmed with the kindness and were touched with some of the lovely messages.

Parking

- We know that the car park can sometimes be very busy but we request that you please do not park on the block paving at the car park entrance. This is not a parking space and is primarily earmarked for parking for ambulances needed in emergency situations. Also we allow our samples collection van to use this for delivery and collection of items that are important to the practice—which can often be bulky and heavy.

Reception desk

- **At times the reception can be very busy and a queue may occur. We ask that you please respect the privacy of other patients and keep a distance until the reception desk is free. Patients often feel intimidated and rushed by other people standing immediately next to them whilst discussing medical issues, booking appointments or making enquiries**

Out of area registration

- New arrangements introduced from January 2015 give people greater choice when choosing a GP practice. Patients may approach any GP practice, even if they live outside the practice area, to see if they will be accepted on to the patient list. The new arrangements mean GP practices now have the option to register patients who live outside the practice area but without any obligation to provide home visits.



If you are due to order your medication near any of the bank holidays please ensure that you order it in advance to guarantee that it will be ready to collect before we close.

Bank Holiday Closures

3rd April	Good Friday
6th April	Easter Monday
4th May	Early May Bank Holiday
25th May	Spring Bank Holiday
31st August	Summer Bank Holiday
25th December	Christmas Day
28th December	Boxing Day

On training days we will be closed from 12pm to the following day when we will re open at 8am. Please check in the surgery closer to the day for collection times.

Training Days

Thursday	16th April 2015
Wednesday	3rd June 2015
Wednesday	9th September 2015
Wednesday	25th November 2015