

St Andrew's Newsletter

February 2021

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www.standrewsmedicalpractice.nhs.uk

The Practice is open

The surgery has been open throughout lockdown and the Tier restrictions. Because Covid-19 is still present in the community, the surgery continues to operate on a 'total triage' model, in line with NHS guidelines. Therefore, for the time being, you **cannot** book an appointment online or to come to the surgery without an appointment.

Making an appointment

If you need an appointment, you are encouraged to fill out the **eConsult** form on the Practice website. **eConsult** is an online triage site. The form you complete will be sent to the surgery and will provide the Practice with information about your problem so that they can arrange appropriate help as quickly as possible. However, in some cases eConsult might give you self-help or other advice, or tell you to phone the surgery instead.

By using eConsult, you will help the surgery free up the phone lines for patients who do not have access to a computer or are unable to use eConsult. Those patients are welcome to ring the surgery. The person answering your telephone call will take you through the questions on the form and you will be contacted by a clinician.

If you submit an e-Consult before 1 p.m. Monday–Friday, the surgery will aim to get back to you within 48 hours by text message or telephone. This might give you the information you need or be used to arrange a video consultation or face-to-face appointment.

Video consultations

When you are invited to have a video consultation with a clinician, it will be arranged through a secure link to protect your privacy.

Face-to-face appointments

If you are invited to the surgery for a consultation in person, please tell them if you will be accompanied by a carer or other person for support.

Please keep to the following rules to reduce the risks and ensure the safety of all staff and patients:

- **Do not** come to the surgery if you have any Covid-19 symptoms, such as a high temperature, new or continuous cough, or a loss of the sense of taste or smell. Follow the latest guidance on self-isolation on <http://www.nhs.uk/>, and ring the surgery to reschedule the appointment.
- **Do not** enter the surgery until the clinician has called to say they are ready for you.
- **Wear a face mask** when you enter the surgery.
- **Wash your hands** at the facility provided or use the hand sanitiser provided when you enter the surgery.
- The clinician you see will be wearing PPE.

See next page for information about the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

New telephone system

The surgery has installed a new telephone system. It will inform callers of their place in the queue, a very welcome improvement. There have been some teething problems. If you encounter one, report it politely.

Opening hours

The surgery and the telephone lines are open **Monday to Friday, 8.30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.**

Evening, weekend and bank holiday appointments are available at St Andrew's and other hub services in Barnet

Monday–Friday 6.30–8 p.m.

Weekends and bank holidays 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

Telephone 020 3948 6809 during Barnet hub opening hours.

Out-of-hours help

For medical help or advice when the surgery and hub are closed, ring **111**. It is available 24/7, 365 days a year, and all calls are free. Ring **999 only** for real medical emergencies.

Online services

There are two online services that enable you to access health advice, see test results and order repeat prescriptions.

The NHS App

You can download the app only onto a smart phone or tablet directly from App Store and Google Play. If you are unable to self-verify when setting up the app or to see the results or comments, please contact reception.

Patient Access

This service can be used on a **desktop or laptop**. Please contact reception for instructions on how to register.

Information via Text/SMS

The Practice can manage your care more effectively if you let them send you texts to remind you of appointments, urgent results and other matters. Please speak to a member of staff to authorise this means of contact. It is **vital** that people who sign up for this service inform the Practice of a change to their mobile number.

Covid-19 vaccination programme

Vaccinations are being given at various locations throughout the borough. Please do not ring the surgery asking when and where you can get the vaccination. Here's what will happen when it is your turn.

1 You might receive a letter inviting you to make an appointment online. When you go online, you will be given a choice of locations and dates and times.

2 You might receive a phone call and/or text from the surgery to arrange a vaccination. You might subsequently receive a letter too, which tells you to ignore it if you have already made an appointment or had your first vaccination.

The vaccination centres are operating very efficiently. There are no long queues. If you receive the Pfizer vaccine, you will be asked to sit and wait for 15 minutes after the injection. If you receive the AstraZeneca vaccine, you can leave immediately.

Cervical screening

The Practice is restarting delayed and urgent tests immediately. Routine national screening invitation letters will begin to be sent out in August. A nurse from the Practice will contact you prior to your appointment to ask you some questions, which will reduce the time you need to be in the surgery and reduce the risks to you and the staff.

Follow the procedures for attending an appointment described above. Please consider what clothes to wear to make the procedure as quick as possible.

Please see the following website for information on the importance of continuing to have your screening: <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/cervical-screening-awareness-week>

Blood tests

Finchley Memorial and Barnet General hospitals are open for routine blood tests. You can use the Admin menu on eConsult to find out whether you need a blood test. Forms can be sent to you. If you need help, please contact the surgery.

Becoming greener

Thank you for helping the Practice reduce its use of paper. Now 90% of prescriptions are paperless. If you do not have access to the Internet, simply register with the chemist of your choice to receive your prescriptions electronically, then tell the surgery.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG meets at every other month for 60–90 minutes. While restrictions are in force, we will continue to meet remotely. All registered patients are welcome to join the group, and we would particularly welcome people aged 20–50 to our meetings. Please see our page on this website and the minutes of our last meeting.

The PPG represents patients' concerns to the Practice. If you want to raise an issue for discussion, provide feedback or suggest an improvement or change in how the Practice works for you, please e-mail us at standrewsppg@gmail.com.

Practice Health Champions (PHCs)

PHCs help support the Practice and the patients, but have had to suspend their normal activities during the current restrictions.

POhWER: an advocacy service

POhWER is a free, nationwide service that provides advocacy in a number of ways. Its focus on independent health advocacy is explained in the leaflet and the PowerPoint slides elsewhere on this site.