



# DOWNLAND PRACTICE

## **Patient Info Sheet Issue No: 010 (November 2020)**

Welcome to the Downland Practice patient info sheet. This edition will concentrate on the following issues:

1. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update
2. Patient Appointments
3. GP Appointments
4. Flu Clinics 2020
5. Shielding Patients

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

The current COVID situation is still very unpredictable, the surgery is constantly monitoring this issue and will adjust the service according to the severity of the COVID-19 spread of infection. The current situation is being managed as best as we can, all patients must wear a face mask when attending the surgery (unless they are exempt). Updates on the Downland Practice can be found at the practice website news section [www.downlandpractice.nhs.uk](http://www.downlandpractice.nhs.uk).

### **Patient Appointments**

Nationally it has been reported that hospital waiting times are at their highest level since 2008, this is a direct result of the COVID situation. The standard wait for a patient to be seen at a hospital is 18 weeks, it has been reported that in September 2020, close to 140,000 patients have been waiting over a year to be seen at a hospital. This is up from 1,600 patients waiting longer than one year in February 2020. Currently there are 4.35 million people waiting for a hospital appointment in the UK. What this means in real terms is that patients waiting to be seen at the hospital are suffering longer from their conditions and need more support from their GP/Nurse at the GP practice. As this situation is no closer to ending, the demand for patient appointments is increasing at all GP practices UK wide. In addition, the practice staff both clinical and administrative who work at the practice are not immune to being infected by COVID. GP/Nurse clinics have had to be cancelled in the last few months as staff have been absent due to COVID testing for themselves or their families. The last thing the practice wants to do is cancel appointments for patients who may have been waiting for a few weeks to be seen by their GP but safety must come first. Patients will be waiting slightly longer to see their GP in the coming months, we are offering as many appointments as we are able to and practice staff are working very hard to ensure that patients are seen appropriately according to their needs. The biggest concern we have at the practice is the demand for appointments during the COVID national crisis that we are all dealing with.



## GP Appointments

Please ring the surgery before 12.30 if you require a telephone consultation with a GP on the day. Calls received from patients in the afternoon may have a GP telephone call booked for the next working day. The way that appointments are requested is changing, we now ask that patients go to our website and submit requests via the ask the GP a question. These requests are then processed by the reception team and actioned as required. As this system develops then there will be less reception staff answering the telephones as some reception staff will be dealing with the patients who have submitted their request on line. The Downland Practice will be having their computer system updated in the next few months, this will allow for patients to use the practice website for submitting requests for GP appointments to run smoother. Once the new system is about to go live the surgery will issue a patient update to inform patient how best to use this system. Patients registered at the Downland Practice are offered face to face appointments when this is appropriate for their care. The GP's are only routinely seeing the patients who are on their list, this is to provide continuity for the care of the patient, patient's may feel frustrated that they may need to wait longer than normal to be seen by their GP. We do have a duty doctor on every day who deals with urgent on the day medical issues.

## Flu Clinics 2020

Thank you to all of the patients who have given the practice good feedback on this year's flu clinics. The staff booking these appointments do so in to a timed clinic and will book the next available appointment. This may be slightly inconvenient for some of our patients but we need to operate a system that is safe and effective so that we can vaccinate the patients for their flu. We did have an error occur on a flu clinic a few weeks ago. This error was caused by a number of reasons, staff unplanned absences did contribute to this error and the delivery of the flu vaccinations had not been checked. By the time the error was discovered it was the day of the clinic and patients had their flu vaccination cancelled at very short notice. The Downland Practice apologises to all of our patients who were affected by this error and we have rebooked a new flu clinic for those patients who had their flu vaccination cancelled. This year we have seen a huge increase in those patients who wish to have their flu vaccination.

## Shielding Patients

All of the practice patients who are deemed to be '**CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE**' have been sent a letter advising them on COVID related issues and given advice on the different methods that they can arrange for their medications to be collected for them or delivered where appropriate.