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NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2024



With the days growing longer, we can hope the weather becomes warmer and sunnier, after what has been a pretty miserable winter.

We are aware how difficult it has been for many of you to get appointments. We are very sorry for this, but we have delivered over 10% more appointments in January and February this year than we did last year. We completely understand how frustrating it must be to wait on the phones only to be disappointed.

However, I regret that we have had an increase in unkindness being shown to our reception team. They all work exceptionally hard doing a very difficult role, and they are almost never responsible for not being able to give you an appointment. They will almost certainly have done everything they can do.

We have analysed what is happening and the increase in appointment requests is due entirely to the very long waits people are experiencing get care from our Hospitals. People, I am afraid, are often waiting a year or more for a routine appointment. These people will still need supporting whilst waiting and we are dealing with between 50-100 appointments a week directly helping these people, which is completely understandable. Unfortunately when appointments are being used, quite reasonably, for these people, there are less appointments available for new or urgent appointments. I wish I could solve this problem but it is quite outside anything we can control, but we will always do the very best we can, with the resources we have. However please can you remember that however upset and irritated you may be, that you are kind to our reception team.

Dr Martin Writer

Our New Telephone System



We are going to introduce a call back facility on our telephones as well as increasing the capacity of the system to allow more patients to gain access. ***This will go live on the 29th of March 2024.***

Following this, for a trial period of 6-8 weeks, we will be working hard to improve telephone access to the Practice. If this is successful, we will then not be booking doctor or Advance Care Practitioner appointments for patients who choose to attend the reception desk at the surgery in person to make an appointment, before 9am. This will enable our staff the time to support more people booking on the phone.

New Pharmacy First Service

The new Pharmacy First Service will enable community pharmacists to complete episodes of care for patients without the need for the patient to visit their general practice.

When requesting an appointment to be seen at the surgery, our receptionists may direct you to see the pharmacist if appropriate.

This, alongside expansions to the pharmacy, blood pressure checking and contraception services, will save up to 10 million general practice team appointments a year and help patients access quicker and more convenient care, including the supply of appropriate medicines for minor illness.



No Need to Queue to Check In – Just Use Our QR Code!

If you have a mobile device, there is now no need to queue to use the check-in machine, for your appointment at the surgery.

There are posters near the check-in machine in reception and also in our lobby, displaying the QR Code. You will need to ensure your mobile device has internet connectivity and location settings turned on.

The check-in machine is still in use, if you prefer to check-in, in this way.

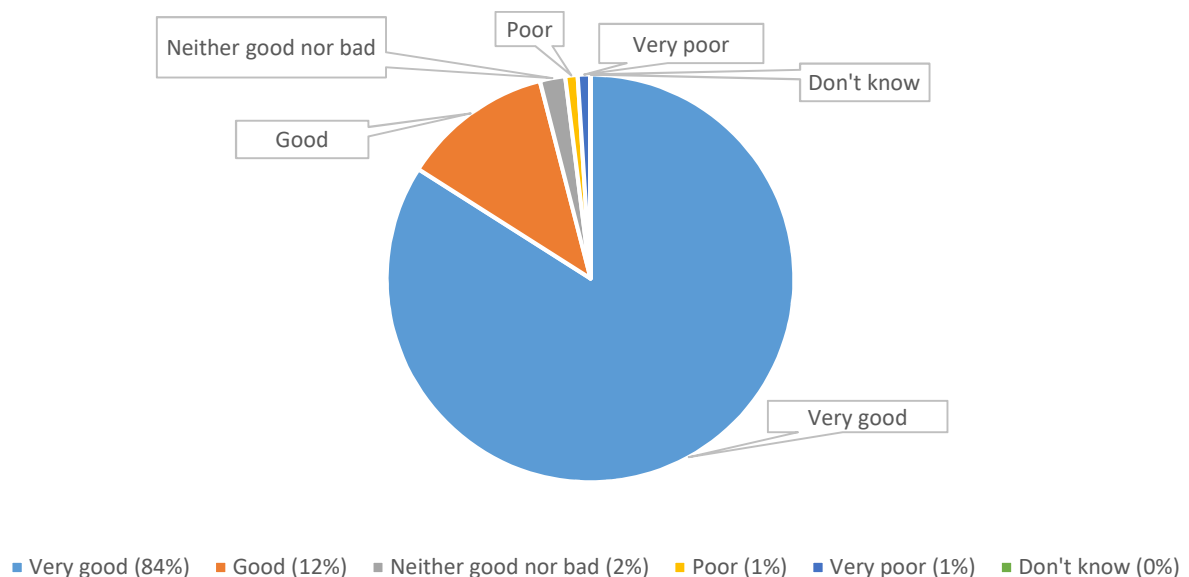
The Friends and Family Test – We need your feedback!

Thank you to everyone who completes the Friends and Family Test on-line, after seeing a clinician or nurse at our Surgery.

If you prefer, you can write your review of your experiences at the surgery, on the Friends and Family Test form, which is available in the waiting room. There is a letter box next to the blank forms, for the responses.

We read all the comments, which helps us to identify what is working well and what can be improved. *Please be aware all responses are anonymous*, so we are unable to reply to comments such as “contact me about this”.

February’s results are below:-



Some of the comments were:-

- ❖ “I was seen on time and everybody was very kind and listened”
- ❖ “I was listened to and given sound advice”
- ❖ “The nurse was very kind and reassuring”
- ❖ “I have been seen on the same day when I called”
- ❖ “Surgery is always clean, easy to check in”

Other comments and our responses:-

“Went in late for my appointment”

Our Response:

Sometimes in times of sickness, other clinicians/nursing staff will see extra patients during their clinic session. Unfortunately this does sometimes cause a longer waiting time, but we feel this is preferable to the patient’s appointment being postponed.

“I can not book a blood test at the surgery for my child who is under 8 years of age”

Our Response:

All children under the age of 8, need to have their blood tests done at Eastbourne District General Hospital. This is because taking blood from young children provides challenges that are unique and distinct to those involved in taking bloods from adults.

“Very busy waiting room. Try separating sick, noisy children from poorly adults”

Our Response:

Unfortunately we only have one waiting room. Masks are available from the reception desk if patients would like to wear one.

We have noticed over the past few months how much busier our waiting room has become. We understand that some patients prefer a face to face appointment and for some there isn't a choice as they need an examination.

However, we would like to minimise exposure to infection and we would like to encourage more patients to have their appointment via telephone where appropriate. When requesting a telephone appointment, please ensure we have your up-to-date contact details.

Monthly Appointment Breakdown



Below is a breakdown of the number of patients seen, had a telephone consultation, those who have cancelled their appointments, as well as patients who have not attended. If you can not attend your appointment, please contact the surgery so your slot can be given to someone else.

January 2024

Telephone appointments – 4,446 patients
Face to Face appointments – 4,257 patients
Cancelled appointments – 168 patients
Did not attend – 213 patients

February 2024

Telephone appointments – 4,088 patients
Face to face appointments – 3,943 patients
Cancelled appointments – 172 patients
Did not attend – 191 patients

Blood Test Results on My Health And Care Record

From the first week of February, East Sussex Healthcare Trust (ESHT) will release blood test results to patients as soon as they are available via My Health and Care Record. Patients have the potential to receive their blood test results on the same day. Patients previously received their routine blood test results after three days at ESHT and received results for tests for other diagnostics monitoring after 28 days.

Although patients can see their results more quickly, please be aware that as they are receiving these results at the same time as our GPs, they still need time to review results and add comments in line with our Test Results Policy.

Patients **should not take any action** regarding booking appointments to discuss the results on receipt – they should await the comment added by our GP and follow this guidance (eg. book a routine telephone call, repeat in 1 month etc). At Park Practice, we have a 'proactive' system where GPs will call for more urgent results without the patient needing to make an appointment and so allowing the GP the time to review, process and advise regarding results will provide a more satisfactory patient journey.



What is My Health and Care Record?

The platform, which is powered by Patients Know Best, is both an interactive online health record and Patient Engagement Portal that is available on a smartphone, tablet, or desktop to adults in Sussex. Health information is available to users and their healthcare team, including test results, appointments, discharge letters, care plans, and medications as well as Patient Initiated Follow Up pathways including direct messaging. A journal, symptom tracker and resource library also encourage users to take an increased role in monitoring their own health and wellbeing.

Adults can access the platform using an NHS login or directly via a login page.

Can these results also be accessed via the NHS App?

Yes, patients can access their My Health and Care Record account through the NHS App.

What do patients do if they are concerned about their results?

They can contact their healthcare provider or clinician if they are concerned about their results. If the clinician is concerned about the result, they will contact the patient.

Why are blood test results released to patients?

Providing access to blood test results empowers patients to take control of their health, enables deeper understanding and alleviates anxiety from delayed results. Patients also gain a breakdown of their results that helps to inform them to make decisions about their health, particularly for those facing chronic or long-term conditions.

What do patients do if they don't understand their results?

Patients can access Lab Tests Online on the My Health and Care Record interface, by clicking on the "About test - common questions & test result guide" at the top of each blood test result page. This provides explanatory information about the test results.

Travel Vaccinations



To allow us time to undertake a travel assessment for the recommended NHS vaccinations, book an appointment and allow time for the vaccination to take effect (some vaccinations may require a course over several weeks.

Please contact us at least **6 weeks** before departure to obtain and submit your travel questionnaire.

If your departure date is **within 4 weeks AND you are travelling for less than 4 weeks**, unfortunately, we will not have enough time to provide travel vaccinations and you would need to contact a private travel clinic. A list of any vaccinations you have received is available on the NHS app, or alternatively you can attend the surgery to complete a form to request your vaccination history. Please bring ID with you when you attend.

Further information about travel vaccinations can be found on our website under Services/Travel Health.

Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)

Measles, mumps and rubella are highly infectious conditions that can easily spread between unvaccinated people. Getting vaccinated is important, as these conditions can also lead to serious problems including meningitis, hearing loss and problems during pregnancy. Two doses of the MMR vaccine provide the best protection against measles, mumps and rubella.

Anyone who has not had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine should contact us for a vaccination appointment.

It is important to check you have had both doses if you:-

- are about to start college or university
- are going to travel abroad
- are planning a pregnancy
- are a frontline health or social care worker
- were born between 1970 and 1979, as you may have only been vaccinated against measles
- were born between 1980 and 1990, as you may not be protected against mumps

You can access your vaccination record online through the NHS App. Read about [how to access your health records](#). If your vaccination records are not available or do not exist, it will not harm you to have the MMR vaccine again.

If you think you or your child have missed any vaccinations, please contact the surgery.

For further information:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mmr-for-all-general-leaflet>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-expect-after-vaccinations>

March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Ovarian cancer can be difficult to detect in its early stages, due to many of its symptoms being associated with other, much less serious illnesses such as irritable bowel syndrome. If left undiagnosed and untreated, however, ovarian cancer can become more serious over time.

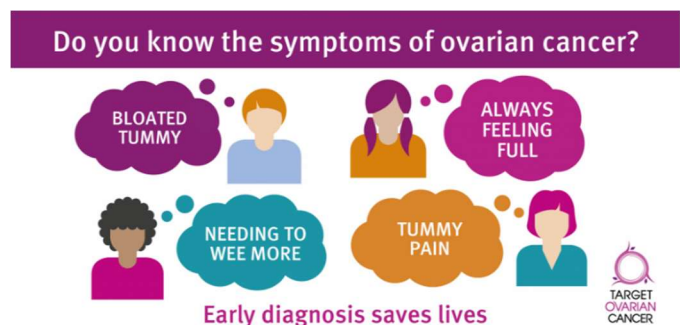
It mostly affects women over the age of 50.

You can still get ovarian cancer if you have had your ovaries removed because it can also affect your fallopian tubes or the lining inside your tummy.

These can also be symptoms of other, less serious, conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, ovarian cysts and polycystic ovary syndrome. If you are experiencing these symptoms it doesn't necessarily mean you have ovarian cancer.

If your symptoms are: persistent, severe, frequent or out of the ordinary, then make an appointment to see a clinician at the surgery. Keep a record of the symptoms you are experiencing and have them to hand when you speak to a clinician, to help them make a diagnosis. The clinician may refer you for more tests or to see a specialist at the hospital if they think you have a condition which needs to be investigated.

To find out more information, please click on this link [Ovarian cancer - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) or go to www.nhs.uk/conditions/ovarian-cancer



Closing dates for Easter

Please be aware we will be closed on Friday 29th of March 2024 for Easter and re-opening on Tuesday 2nd of April 2024.

Whilst we are closed, if you have a medical emergency, please call 111 and they can direct you to the best place to get help. **Only** attend Accident & Emergency if you have a life-threatening emergency.

Remember to order your prescriptions in plenty of time before we close for Easter.

