

University of Reading Medical Practice

www.readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Newsletter | April 2013

Appointment Booking at the Medical Practice

We appreciate that some patients have been experiencing difficulties in obtaining an appointment over the last few months. This has largely been due to an unusual amount of staff sickness which was unforeseeable and hence very difficult to manage. Unfortunately there is a knock on effect whenever we lose clinical time which can take a little time to recover from.



Over the last month we have added another surgery to help address this problem, but we have also undertaken a full review to see what we can do differently to help patients.

In general we endeavour to provide sufficient appointments to ensure that any patient with a need to see a doctor within 48 hours is able to do so. To help us to achieve this we embargo a number of appointments which are released 'on the day'. This is why Reception may ask you to call back the next day. However it was never intended to work in that way and we appreciate that having to make two calls is very annoying and inconvenient.

We have therefore reviewed the current profile of patient demand for access. We look at this from time to time but the latest figures show that 52% of patients book appointments within 48 hours of contacting us. It is possible that this figure could be higher should there be more available appointments.

Currently we embargo about 30-35% of our appointments for release on the day but given the findings we intend to increase these to 50% for a trial period which we will run from the 22nd April for 8 weeks. We will monitor the availability carefully during this time and can make any necessary adjustments at any time as required. However patients wishing to book on the day should experience an improved response. We must remember that almost as many of our patients wish to book ahead and hence must manage the balance carefully

At the end of the trial period we will ask patients to see whether they have found it easier to book 'on the day' and will again re-evaluate the way in which we provide appointment bookings.

'Did Not Attend' (DNA) – Text Message Reminder



By not phoning in and cancelling unwanted appointments we are not able to offer these appointments to another patient. On average 44 appointments per month are lost due to patients failing to attend.

Patients who do not attend their appointment are now sent a text message as a reminder of how important it is to advise the practice beforehand.

Please ensure you cancel your appointment in good time if you know you cannot attend.



Tips to ensure you are getting the most out of our appointment system

- ☺ You can access on line appointments 7 days a week, 24 hours a day – ask at Reception if you do not have access yet
- ☺ Routine appointments can be booked up to 6 weeks in advance
- ☺ The telephone is busiest between 8am to 10am. If your call is not urgent you will get through more easily later in the day.
- ☺ Reception is available for calls or visits from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. We do not close for lunch.
- ☺ Embargoed appointments are released in two batches – first on the afternoon of the day before, and second on the morning of the day itself
- ☺ We have a daily Duty Doctor who is not pre booked and is available for urgent requirements. It is best to contact Reception to make a phone appointment for the duty doctor as they may well be able to help on the phone and if you just arrive at the practice you could experience some delay

Getting patients into the right appointment

We are committed to getting you to see the right person, so our reception team will ask for a little more information when they book your appointment.

The right person may not always be a doctor; we have trained nurses who specialise in:

- Asthma
- NHS health checks
- Travel vaccinations
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease reviews
- Sexual Health

Our Health Care Assistant can help with:

- Blood tests
- Blood pressure checks
- ECGs



Our reception team are trained and experienced in dealing with various requests from patients. They are able to:

- Check that your test results are back & have been reviewed by a GP
- Arrange repeat prescriptions if available

Minor Illness Clinics

Did you know that these clinics are run daily by our nurses for advice and treatment for the following conditions:

- Earache
- Sore throats
- Cystitis/Urinary Tract infection
- Sinusitis
- Chest infection/cough/cold
- Skin infection rash
- Emergency contraception
- Eye infection/conjunctivitis
- Acne & Eczema
- Hay fever