

Bloxham and Hook Norton Surgery Patients

As you are all aware we (as a country, town and community) are facing a challenging and unprecedented situation relating to a new virus now known as COVID-19. The circumstances are rapidly changing and because of this the guidelines and plans being issued by Public Health England and the government are also being developed and are evolving quickly; you will all have seen this on the news. In response to this we (and GP surgeries everywhere) are changing systems at the surgery for the short to medium-term. The changes are needed to manage more people than usual who are unwell as well as to help prevent spread.

Currently one of the biggest challenges in providing healthcare for you is ensuring that you (particularly those of you in the 'at risk' categories) are not exposed to the virus when you are in the surgery. In order to keep you as well cared for as we can during this difficult time we are therefore asking for you to bear with us and be aware of the following changes and advice

1. All requests for appointments are going to be triaged over the telephone. This means if you think you need an appointment you should phone the surgery as usual and a clinician will phone you back and ask you questions to assess over the phone the best course of action. If we can give advice or deal with the problem by telephone (or video consultation when this is available) we will. We will only bring individuals to the surgery if absolutely necessary. This is to protect you and other patients and is in-line with social distancing advice being given by the government.
2. Please be honest about your symptoms. We are asking screening questions to ensure that we keep you, us and other patients safe therefore please answer these honestly so we can effectively manage your problem.
3. We are restricting any possible infected patients to one consulting room to try to reduce risks to patients who are accessing care, therefore please listen to the instructions issued to you by the GP for what you **MUST** do when you arrive at the surgery.
4. Any routine problems that can wait will need to wait until this situation is more stable. We are expecting to have a huge increase in demand in the next few weeks and months and to cope with this (in-line with other surgeries) we are temporarily stopping / postponing anything that we can so that we can

manage as best as possible. If you aren't sure if a problem is urgent or needs assessment then please phone into the medical centre and the team will be able to offer advice.

5. Keep up-to-date with government advice and follow this wherever possible. If you have been advised to self-isolate - do this. The advice is being given to try to help protect individuals, the community and to help support the NHS to cope with this pandemic.
6. Please keep the positive Bloxham and Hook Norton community spirit going. This is going to be a particularly difficult time for a lot of people. Please offer help to neighbours, phone / FaceTime/ WhatsApp those self-isolating and the elderly, be polite and respectful to everyone and remember that **we are all in this together**.
7. We are now requesting 3 working days between ordering your medication and collection as we are experiencing problems obtaining some stock items from our suppliers.
8. As from Monday 23 March 2020 we will not be accepting cash payments for prescriptions until further notice. We will only be accepting card payments until further notice. This is in line with guidance supplied to businesses to reduce the risk of cross infection.

As the situation evolves these plans may well need to be altered; we will endeavour to keep you informed as things develop.

Remember, we are here to do our best for you but we need your help to do it!

Best wishes.

The Partners and staff at Bloxham and Hook Norton Surgery