



Tayview Medical Practice Autumn 2021 Newsletter

AUTUMN HAS ARRIVED

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. As Autumn approaches, we would usually start our preparations for flu season. At this time, we do not have any confirmed information from NHS Fife regarding how this year's flu season will run or whether practices within NHS Fife will be involved with administering flu immunisations. Please monitor our webpage (www.tayviewmp.org.uk) or our Facebook group where we will provide the latest information to our patient population as soon as we are able to.

The NHS has been extremely busy during the Covid-19 pandemic and, at the time of writing, we continue to see both primary and secondary care becoming increasingly busy. It really is important that patients seek medical attention from the most appropriate healthcare professional regarding any illness they have. We have provided more information regarding this topic within our newsletter and would ask our patients to use that information as a guide when seeking medical assistance.

At this time, our GP appointments continue to operate on a telephone triage basis. This means all requests for a GP appointment involve a GP contacting the patient by telephone first to discuss their symptoms / concerns. If a GP determines that you need to be seen face to face, you will be invited down to the practice to see the doctor at a time most suitable to you and the GP. Again, within this newsletter, we have given an update as to how our practice systems are currently running.

As you will be aware, Scotland has now exited all levels of restrictions regarding the pandemic. However, it is important that all of us continue to act carefully, remain cautious and protect ourselves and others. There has been a lot of information recently regarding the exiting of restrictions and we have attempted to make that information as clear as possible for our patients within this newsletter.

Lastly, we are extremely sad to announce that Dr Brown will be retiring from the practice and hanging up her stethoscope. Dr Brown has provided over 20 years of dedication and service to our patients and our practice. She will be sadly missed by all at the practice and, I am sure, our patients too. Further information regarding staff changes can be found within this newsletter.

I do hope that you all enjoy the last of the Summer weather whilst continuing to stay safe, protecting yourself and protecting others whilst the Covid-19 pandemic continues.

With kind regards.

David Ramsay
Business Manager

APPOINTMENTS (UPDATES)



As a practice, we continue to be disheartened when we read comments on social media or hear comments made daily regarding, what can only be described as, fake news. There is a misconception that doctor surgeries have been closed during the pandemic or that practices are making it as difficult as possible to arrange face to face appointments with a doctor. Such comments can be no farther from the truth. General practice has been opened throughout this pandemic. We have worked through the challenge of protecting our patients and staff whilst still providing a service to our patient population. We have listened to feedback and adapted our systems as far as we reasonably can whilst still adhering to government guidelines. Below, you will find anonymous comments made to the practice which, hopefully, will provide you with answers to some questions you may have thought of yourself.

"Pubs, restaurants, cinemas etc are all opened now. Why are you not providing face to face appointments?"

Firstly, general practice has to follow government guidelines. Those guidelines, at this present time, continue to state that patients requesting a GP appointment should be triaged by telephone call in the first instance with a face to face appointment being provided if a GP feels further clinical assessment is required. Those guidelines also state that social distancing, at 2 meters, must continue within general practice which means we continue to be limited regarding the space available within the practice for patients. General practice, like all other patient areas within the NHS, have to adhere to infection control policies whilst protecting patients and staff. This means we have to ensure infection control is maintained with the risk of Covid-19 transfer from patient to patient (or staff) being reduced as far as is reasonably possible. Unlike the entertainment industry mentioned above, if there was an outbreak of Covid-19 within the practice, there would be a high chance that the practice would need to close until all staff involved had been tested. Whereas the impact to patients is low should an entertainment venue have to close, the impact to our patients would be severe if the practice had to close or had no clinicians available to provide a service. As a practice, we also have a high percentage of patients who attend regularly for blood tests or other procedures. Those patients may be in the process of receiving cancer treatment, or have an auto-immune condition, which means their immune system may not be as strong as other patients. Those patients are at a greater risk from the symptoms of Covid-19 which means we must continue to maintain reduced footfall within the practice to protect those patients. To revert back to our face to face appointment system (pre-covid) at this time would result in the risk to those patients increasing as not all patients who have Covid-19 have symptoms.

"I'm being fobbed off by the receptionist when seeking to arrange a GP appointment"

So many times we read comments about our reception team or hear comments about receptionists not providing an appointment when requested. Again, this is not true. Our receptionists are fully trained to provide care navigation to patients in order to advise patients of alternative, more appropriate, healthcare professionals who can assist them with their medical concerns. Patients do not have to follow that advice and our receptionists do not 'fob' off patients who insist on having a GP appointment. Our reception team have clear guidelines to follow regarding care navigation that have been developed by NHS Scotland and approved by the doctors. We regularly receive requests for GP appointments regarding toothache or dental issues. We also regularly receive requests for GP appointments that can be directed to a local pharmacy using the Pharmacy First service for symptoms such as a sore throat, general aches and pains, allergies (including hayfever), indigestion and other minor ailments. Care navigation is designed to enable patients to be seen by the most appropriate healthcare professional at the right place and right time. The advice provided by our reception staff really will enable you to be seen more quickly rather than awaiting a GP appointment.

"Why can't I book an appointment online"

Again, we are following governmental guidelines. All practices within Scotland have been advised to disconnect their online appointment system at this present time with all requests for an appointment being made by telephone call. As soon as this guidance changes, we will reconnect our online appointment system.

APPOINTMENTS (UPDATES) - CONTINUED

Our appointment system is currently working as follows:

Phlebotomy (blood) appointments: are bookable up to 2 weeks in advance

Practice Nurse / Healthcare Assistant appointments: are bookable up to 1 week in advance

Mental Health Practitioner appointments: are pre-bookable up to 1 month in advance

Practice Pharmacist appointments: are bookable up to 1 week in advance

GP appointments:

- **Pre-bookable telephone consultations** are available to book from 8am each morning. Pre-bookable appointments are available at 1 day, 2 days and 1 week in advance. Our reception team will offer you a pre-bookable appointment if there are any available.
- **Urgent / Emergency appointments** are available for urgent matters only. However, please note the following:
 - Requesting an urgent / emergency appointment does not mean you will receive an appointment. Your request will be forwarded to the duty doctor who will determine whether your symptoms are urgent in nature. If they decide that your request is not urgent in nature, you will be contacted back by our reception team and advised to arrange a pre-bookable appointment. If the duty doctor decides that your request is urgent in nature, they will contact you back to discuss your symptoms further. Please note that the decision taken by the duty doctor is final and our reception team are simply advising you of that decision.
- **Home visits** are available for patients who are housebound. If you require a home visit, please contact the practice as early as possible from 8am each morning. The duty doctor may contact you beforehand to discuss your request further.

If a GP feels you need to be seen for further assessment (a face to face appointment), you will be invited to attend the practice in person. We continue to ask that you wear a face covering when attending the practice and use the alcohol hand gel when entering and leaving the building.

CURRENT COVID-19 GUIDELINES

Scotland has currently exited all Covid-19 levels. However, the Scottish Government continues to advise that the general population should continue to stay safe whilst protecting themselves and others. The advice is as follows:

- You should get the Covid-19 vaccination when you are offered it. At this time, anyone aged 16 and over (by the 31st August 2021) can register for an appointment. To register, you should visit <http://www.nhsinform.scot/vaccineregistration> or, alternatively, attend any of NHS Fife's drop-in clinics which are advertised on NHS Fife's website.
- You should continue to wear a face covering where required
- You should continue to wash your hands regularly and cover your nose and mouth if coughing or sneezing.
- You should continue to take regular tests if you do not have symptoms. Lateral flow tests can be obtained from your local pharmacy or, alternatively, you can attend testing centres for a PCR test.
- You should continue to meet outside if you can and open windows when indoors.

In relation to self-isolation rules, the requirement to self-isolate as a close contact of a positive case has changed for **fully vaccinated individuals** so long as you remain asymptomatic. You do not need to self-isolate if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You are fully vaccinated and 14 days has passed since your second dose of vaccination
- You have taken a negative PCR test since being advised to isolate. You must remain in self-isolation whilst awaiting the result of the PCR test

Adults who are not fully vaccinated must continue to self-isolate for 10 days if identified as a close contact

PHARMACY FIRST SERVICE

Patients suffering from any of the below symptoms can use the Pharmacy First Service. A pharmacist will assess your symptoms and, where appropriate, provide medication.

<p>Acne</p> 	<p>Allergies - If over 12m old</p> 	<p>Athlete's Foot</p> 	<p>Minor Back Pain</p> 
<p>Conjunctivitis - If over 2 years old</p> 	<p>Cold Sores - If not immuno-suppressed</p> 	<p>Colic</p> 	<p>Constipation</p> 
<p>UTI - Please refer to additional criteria</p> 	<p>Diarrhoea</p> 	<p>Dry Eyes</p> 	<p>Dry Skin</p> 
<p>Ear Ache</p> 	<p>Haemorrhoids</p> 	<p>Hay Fever</p> 	<p>Head Lice</p> 
<p>Impetigo - If over 2 years old</p> 	<p>Indigestion</p> 	<p>Mouth Ulcers</p> 	<p>Ring Worm</p> 
<p>Scabies</p> 	<p>Shingles - Please see additional criteria</p> 	<p>Minor Skin Infections, e.g. insect bites</p> 	<p>Theadworms</p> 
<p>Thrush</p> 	<p>Warts</p> 	<p>Verrucas</p> 	<p>Oral Thrush</p> 
<p>Cellulitis</p> 	<p>Nail Infections</p> 		

Following over 20 years of service to Tayview, Dr Brown will be retiring from the practice during November / December 2021 (confirmed date still to be arranged). Dr Brown will be very much missed by all the staff of Tayview and, no doubt, by our patients too. We all wish Dr Brown a very enjoyable, and well earned, retirement and thank her for her dedication to Tayview over the years. At present, the practice is currently advertising for a new GP to replace Dr Brown and we will keep our patients updated via our practice website and Facebook group page.



We also say goodbye to one of our secretaries; Jayne, who is moving on to another practice within Fife. Jayne will leave us at the end of August 2021. We would like to thank Jayne for all of her hard work whilst she has been employed at Tayview and wish her all the best for her future.

TAYVIEW FACEBOOK PAGE



Following feedback from patients, the practice has set up a Facebook group page in order to share information with our patients via social media. We are currently trialing this form of communication and will review the success of it during the month of December 2021. Facebook enables us to place information online quicker than our practice website and enables us to reach our patients using a different method of communication.

Patients are welcome to join our Facebook page by searching for 'Tayview Medical Practice' on Facebook. We would also encourage those who have joined to invite any friends who may want to join the group.

FLU SEASON & COVID-19 BOOSTER INFORMATION

As September approaches, so does the start of the Influenza vaccination campaign. At this present time the information we have is limited. We have been asked by NHS Fife if we can assist with flu jags this year and have replied back to NHS Fife that we can assist if required. We still await communication as to whether that assistance will be required and, if so, what age groups we will be assisting with. Please continue to monitor our practice website and Facebook group page for further announcements.

There has been discussion regarding the possibility of Covid-19 booster vaccinations being given to patients who meet certain criteria. Again, at this present time, we have no information regarding whether such boosters will be offered to patients and we await further information from NHS Fife and the Scottish Government.

APPOINTMENT WASTAGE

Unfortunately, despite patients contacting the practice to request an urgent/emergency appointment with a GP that day, or booking a GP appointment in advance (following feedback from patients requesting this service), we are now noticing increasing amounts of GP appointments being wasted by patients not answering their call back (despite numerous attempts) or failing to cancel an appointment that is no longer required. This is an unacceptable waste of GP appointments.

We regularly receive complaints regarding challenges arranging appointments. The below gives an example of wasted appointments that could have been used for other patients:

MAY 2021—110 GP APPOINTMENTS WASTED (18 HOURS OF APPOINTMENTS)

JUNE 2021—115 GP APPOINTMENTS WASTED (19 HOURS OF APPOINTMENTS)