



# PRACTICE NEWS LETTER

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Updated : 20TH MARCH 2020

## **CORONA VIRUS**

Dear patients,

If you have symptoms of Coronavirus (check symptoms here <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>) or have come in contact with someone with such symptoms

**Do not go to a GP surgery.**

**Use the 111 online coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> to find out what to do.**

We are clearly moving into an challenging period for general practice, the wider NHS and care service, and for our patients. Practices, out-of-hours providers, walk-in centres and many other NHS organisations are already working extremely hard as they do their best to respond to the needs and understandable anxieties of their patients.

Following latest guidance from the NHS England to the general practice, we have outlined the measures that our practice has taken to help manage the escalating situation and to continue to provide necessary and safe patient care.

### **Minimise Footfall**

In order to prevent spread of COVID-19 infection (for safety of patients and staff) and to reduce demands on the practice at this challenging time, there are several measures which our practices has already taken to reduce footfall. These include:

- Move to total telephone triage for all patient contacts
- Care that is clinically necessary, relevant and possible is being delivered, primarily by telephone or digital consultation
- All routine appointments have been postponed where safely possible or converted into telephone triage appointments or remote assessment, with appropriate follow-up provided at the practice if clinically required
- All fit notes/letters/request forms for routine investigations would take additional time to process.
- Sick note for Self isolation: Evidence for COVID-19-related absence from work will be provided by NHS 111 and you should not phone the surgery for this.
- Electronic Prescribing should be the default method of providing prescriptions. Patients who do not have a nominated pharmacy should be asked to do this.
- Practices, whilst trying to meet the needs of our patients, also have duty of care to protect our workforce and thus we have made provisions to minimize exposure to our staff.
- Due to staff absences the prescriptions may take up to 7 days to turn around.

## **Activities to stop**

All non-urgent work will be postponed until further notice. This might include:

- Travel advice and travel vaccinations
- New patient reviews
- Over 75 health checks
- Minor Surgery
- Routine medication reviews (essential ones to be conducted by phone)
- All other routine nurse appointments will be subject to telephone triage by our nurses
- All non-essential paperwork and private medical report work will be put on hold.