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Dear Patient

Like wider society, General Practice has had to adapt to new ways of working as we work together to manage coronavirus (Covid-19).

We want to start off by saying thank you and for adapting so quickly to these new ways of working. It has been the drastic, yet fundamental change needed to ensure the safety of you and our staff. To slow down the spread of coronavirus, we have worked to reduce the number of people coming into the practice by using online consultation systems like e-Consult (on our website), telephone appointments and video consultations.

Our top priority is, and has always been, to keep you and our staff safe while ensuring you get the care you need. It is likely that this style of working will be necessary for the foreseeable future. GP practices continue to work as hard as ever, just differently.

This is why we ask you to read the following:

Contacting the GP surgery can be done in different ways:

- Go to our practice website www.wykeregisandlanehousemedicalpractice.co.uk and submit an eConsult. This is for less urgent clinical and non-clinical problems (e.g. fit notes) and will be replied to within 72 hours.
- Phone the surgery to speak to a receptionist, secretary or scripts clerk on 01305 782226. Please note reception staff are only available for urgent enquiries during the following times 8am – 8.30am, 12.30pm to 1.30pm and from 5pm to 6.30pm. Our pre-recorded telephone message will give you a mobile number to call during these times if your call is of an urgent nature. Please be aware that the secretary and scripts clerk numbers will automatically go to their answer machines if they are busy. You are welcome to leave a voicemail and they will get back to you as soon as they can; this may not be on the same day. Please do not leave voicemails intended for reception on these lines.
- Reception can book an appointment for you with the Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Practice Nurse or Health Care Assistant. Urgent appointments can be booked for the same day and routine appointments can be booked ahead. These are telephone appointments unless you are specifically told otherwise.
- Reception can now also book you a telephone appointment with our First Point Physiotherapist.
- Please do not visit the GP practice without an appointment
- Our receptionist can also refer you to the new GP Community Pharmacist consultation service where you will be contacted within a few hours.
- If a doctor or nurse does need to see you in person then you will be given an appointment to attend the practice. Please attend at the right time (not early) and with a mask. This is for your safety and ours.

By only coming into the surgery when you have a pre-booked appointment this means:

- You are reducing your risk of catching/spreading coronavirus by avoiding a crowded waiting room

Dr D Laird, Dr R Stow, Dr P Nicholls

- You are helping to keep staff healthy and safe
- The practice can maintain a clean environment and protect you from the virus
- Cleaning: For GPs and our clinical staff the new ways of working include putting on and correctly taking off appropriate PPE for face to face consultations and maintaining a clean protective environment for our patients and our staff (including wiping down waiting room seats between patients). We take this very seriously. All of this takes time. Our admin staff are now also fogging sites regularly, the waiting rooms/reception areas can only be done when there are no patients around.

Triage: When you telephone to request a consultation, our receptionists will ask you for some details. They are trained to make enquiries and to signpost you to the right help as best they can. This might include signposting you as appropriate to use an e-consultation or if appropriate to another qualified clinician e.g. pharmacist, district nurse, minor injuries etc.

Booking ahead: You will find there is generally greater availability of appointments and therefore more choice for you if you are able to book your appointment in advance. If all the telephone and consultations for that day are full you can contact a GP via an e-consultation.

Long Term Conditions: Management of long-term conditions such as diabetes, asthma and COPD will also increasingly be undertaken "remotely" using electronic communication and video or telephone consultations. Currently there are longer gaps than usual between chronic disease reviews due to the backlog created by the first lockdown.

Self-help: Please see our website www.wykeregisandlanehousemedicalpractice.co.uk where you can obtain medical advice, self-care advice, common ailments and contacts to access a variety of services.

Weymouth Hospital Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) is staffed by a variety of healthcare practitioners, nurses and doctors and cover a wide range of urgent minor injuries and ailments. The UTC is providing telephone consultations, with face-to-face appointments if clinically necessary. Please do not just turn up – you will need an appointment to be seen. Please call 01305 762541, open from 8am-8pm every day including weekends and bank holidays

Phone NHS 111 if you're not sure what support you need or call 999 for anything life threatening.

As you will be aware the COVID Vaccination Programme is now up and running in Weymouth. As a locality we will be vaccinating patients following the JCVI guidelines:

1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Please be assured that when it is your turn, you will be contacted. Please do not contact us to enquire about when you will receive your vaccine.

We would like to emphasise that these vaccines are free, at no point will you be asked to pay to receive your coronavirus vaccine. In the UK, the coronavirus vaccine will only be available via the National Health Services. The NHS will never ask you for your bank account or card details or ask for your PIN or banking password.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please get in touch with us to let us know how we can support you. We will endeavour to continue to offer the timely, appropriate and high standard of care that you have been used to and we thank you for your understanding during this challenging time.

Kind regards.

The Doctors at Wyke Regis and Lanehouse Medical Practice

Dr D Laird, Dr R Stow, Dr P Nicholls