

Dear Patients

The global COVID-19 pandemic has seen General Practice make rapid changes in order to keep patients and staff safe. You will probably have seen many changes at the surgery that have occurred during a very short period of time.

We know that this may feel very different but we want everyone to understand that these changes are essential to keep services going and are necessary to protect patients and staff. The quality of care has not changed, nor has the dedication of the staff. It may be different but this is not second best.

At the moment it can be hard to know what to do if you're unwell or have a concern about your health.

It is important to get medical help if you think you need it.

NHS services, including our practice, have made changes to make sure it is safe for you to be seen during coronavirus. There are also ways to get medical help and prescriptions online or over the phone.

If you need to see a doctor, always telephone to make an appointment before coming to the surgery. We also offer online consultations, where you fill in a short form on your computer, phone or tablet and one of our clinicians will then respond to you (click on **Online Consult** on the home page of the website). Following your initial contact with a clinician, we may arrange a video consultation or a face to face examination if that is what is needed. If you need a face to face appointment, we will arrange that in a way that is safe for you, other patients and practice staff.

We remain dedicated to offering you the best possible service, support and care. We are doing things differently, but we are doing them to help you stay well and to protect the health of our staff. Always contact us if you are feeling unwell or are worried about your health. You can also call 111 if you have a medical concern, particularly when the surgery is closed. If it is a life-threatening matter, call 999 straight away.

Remember that there are many services you can access via our website that remove the need to visit or phone the surgery. This includes prescriptions, registering new patients, change of address, sick notes, wellbeing services and more.

NHS England has some useful information about how services, including hospital appointments are being carried out during the pandemic. It also has a general overview of how some appointments will work when done by phone or video call. Please click below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/social-distancing/using-the-nhs-and-other-health-services/>

Vine House Health Centre
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