NEW APPOINTMENT SYSTEM FOR WALDERSLADE SURGERY

From the 28th January 2013 we will be introducing a new appointment system called ‘DOCTOR FIRST’.

Our aim is to create a more efficient appointment system with immediate access to a GP, thereby ensuring that you receive the most appropriate care straight away.

Why are we changing our appointment system?
You have told us, through general feedback with our staff, our patient questionnaires and via our Patient Participation Group, that sometimes you find it frustrating and difficult to get the appointment you need, when you need it. By offering telephone appointments in the first instance and giving advice this way, we can make sure that everyone is able to speak to, or see a Doctor on the day that they call or on the day that they choose.

Many people don’t need to come into the surgery to be seen as their problem can be dealt with by telephone. This gives your Doctor more time to see those people that need face to face appointments in the surgery. Because your Doctor is the one making the appointments, they can judge how much time you might need and give you a long or a short appointment. This also helps appointments to run to time and means
you’re more likely to be seen on time. We also know that when people make an appointment close to the date that they call, they are more likely to keep the appointment and so we hope that this will reduce the number of missed appointments.

All Nurse, Healthcare Assistant and Phlebotomy appointments will be handled as before this system is for GP appointments only.

This is how it works:

1. Call us on the main surgery number 743221 and ask to make an appointment with the doctor.

2. The receptionist will ask you for your name and the most appropriate telephone number to contact you on. If you need to speak to the doctor urgently, because it is an emergency, tell the receptionist straight away.

3. The receptionist will ask you to say generally what your health problem is. You don’t have to tell the receptionist if you don’t want to, but if you can, it helps the doctor to decide who needs their help first.

4. If you want to talk to a specific doctor please tell the receptionist, wherever possible they will arrange this. (Please bear in mind not all doctors work every day).

5. When you call the surgery your call may go straight through to the doctor if they are free, or you will be added to the doctors list for a call back.

6. The doctor will call you back as soon as they can. If you want us to call you back between certain times then please tell the receptionist and wherever possible we will arrange that.

7. You can talk to the doctor about your health problem in the same way that you would if you were in the consulting room. If the doctor thinks you need to come into the surgery to be seen, or if you would still like to come in, he or she will make an appointment for you.
Some of the advantages to the new system are:-

- The doctor may be able to deal with your problem while you are on the telephone (e.g. advice, prescriptions, referrals etc) saving you a journey and waiting time in the surgery.
- Whilst we expect most of our appointments to be requested in the morning, this new system reduces the pressure to call at 8am when our phone lines open, to get a same day appointment; if necessary you will definitely be seen on the day you request an appointment.
- If a face to face appointment is still needed, then the doctor will ensure that you are given the most appropriate appointment to suit your individual needs. This will mean that you are seen by the most suitable clinician within a suitable time span (on the same day in most cases).
- It may be suggested by the doctor while on the phone, that you need further investigations/tests before coming in to see the doctor. Again this saves an unnecessary journey to the surgery.

With this system, we are ensuring that you will be speaking to the person most qualified to assess your problem.

Your questions answered:-

**Q** Can I still have a same day assessment?  
**A** Yes. After speaking to one of the doctors over the telephone they will book you in to be seen the same day if agreed by both parties.

**Q** Can I still have an appointment with my preferred doctor?  
**A** Yes. After speaking to a doctor on the telephone, appointments can still be booked to see your preferred doctor when they are available.
Q Can I speak to my preferred doctor?
A Yes. If your call is not of an urgent nature we will let you know when your preferred doctor works and you can call back on that day to speak to them.

Q Will extended hours appointments still be available at my surgery?
A Yes. These will still be available to accommodate those patients that may find it difficult to attend during our usual surgery hours. Again as with all other appointments these can be booked for you over the telephone by one of our doctors.

Q How can the GP diagnose over the telephone?
A This new system is not designed to diagnose patients over the telephone, it is to streamline patient care and to see the patients that need to be seen. The GP can, if necessary arrange for you to have any tests e.g. blood tests before seeing you. This ensures that the GP has all the relevant information to make a diagnosis more quickly. Remember if the doctor needs to see you, he/she will book you a face to face appointment.

Q Can I still book an appointment on-line to see a GP?
A The on-line EMIS access will still be available but you will be requesting a telephone call back not a specific appointment time.

Q What happens if I don’t have a telephone or am unable to use it?
A That’s fine. Speak to a member of our reception team and they will make alternative arrangements for you.

Q Will I be able to book any appointments in advance?
A Nurse, Healthcare Assistant & Phlebotomy appointments will continue to be booked in the normal way and can be booked in advance.

GP routine, urgent and emergency appointments will be handled through the Doctor First system. Doctors will book follow up appointments/calls with patients where necessary.

Some appointments can be booked in advance after speaking to a doctor.