

STATEMENT ON CoViD-19

Dear Patient

I write to you at an unprecedented time, the likes of which none of us will have ever faced before. No doubt you will all be keeping tracks with the regular updates on CoViD-19 and are aware of the impact that this crisis is having on the NHS, as well as many other organisations. All primary care services are having to tread that fine line between trying to continue with “business as usual” and minimising the risk of spreading CoViD-19 to others.

We at The Allan Practice have therefore introduced emergency working measures to ensure that patients continue to receive any urgent care that they need, but at the same time minimising the risk to front line staff and other patients. I am sure that you will all appreciate the importance of keeping doctors and nurses illness free so that they can actively help fight this pandemic. In keeping with guidance for GP practices, we have therefore made the following changes :

Online Booking of Appointments : these will be available but be more limited for the time being to ensure that we can be more in control of keeping potential infections away from the premises. You may need to respond to a CoViD-19 screening text before the appointment is confirmed.

Telephone Booking of Appointments : this will now become the preferred way of securing a GP contact - please telephone your doctor’s secretary as necessary. These will initially all be in the form of a booked telephone consultation with a GP. It would help us a lot if you could provide some details about your concern. In the two days that we have operated this system we have already found this to be well received and that issues can often be addressed without needing a surgery visit at all. Should the latter be necessary, then a suitable appointment will be booked by the triaging GP. We will always aim for such an appointment to be on the same day.

Video Consultations : we are currently exploring other ways of working to try to keep our service running as smoothly as possible. These including video consultations, which we anticipate to be particularly helpful in certain situations, for example with rashes. You would, of course, need a smart ‘phone to access such a service and you will have to bear with us while we become accustomed to the technology.

Urgent vs Routine Problems : we do ask that you carefully consider whether you really need to use our medical service now. We are still finding our feet in adjusting to this very sudden development and ask you to bear with us. We will continue to see all patients and problems where there is need but do ask that you consider carefully whether the problem will wait. As a rule, we will be not offering travel services, insurance medicals, liquid nitrogen treatment or routine cervical smears for the time being. I know that we are in for the long haul with this pandemic but would be grateful if you could bear with us for a few weeks whilst we adjust to these emergency measures, as well as bolstering the national effort with social distancing.

Repeat Prescriptions : you should continue to be able to request prescriptions via ‘online access’ and I emphasise that this remains the preferred way to do this. Here is a link on how to sign up if you have not already done so <https://www.calcotmedicalcentre.co.uk/doitonline.aspx>. As a temporary measure, we will also accept telephone or e-mail requests for repeat prescriptions but would ask that you use these as a last resort. Please note that all prescriptions will be sent electronically to a pharmacist of your choice – there will be no more collection of paper prescriptions from the surgery premises. I would also ask that you do not try to stockpile medical supplies as this will have a knock-on effect on the whole NHS. Please be aware that the local pharmacies are currently under a

tremendous degree of pressure for this very reason so there may be a delay in the dispensing of prescriptions.

Premises : as explained above, we are trying to minimise footfall at the Calcot Medical Centre. The building will be operational and offering face-to-face consultations where necessary. However, we do ask that you only enter the building if you have a confirmed appointment with either a doctor or nurse. We are trying our best to minimise other reasons to visit Calcot, for example by sending any paperwork by text message. Sadly, we are still at the early stages of this crisis and there is no doubt that at some point in time we will lose staff to illness or otherwise self-isolation. Should you attend the surgery, you may therefore find that there are less staff on view. We are also exploring opportunities for remote working, again to minimise the risk of staff cross-infecting each other, or else allowing people who are self-isolating to continue to contribute to this battle.

Suspected CoViD-19 : should you experience symptoms that you feel may be due to coronavirus (currently defined as a new persistent cough or a fever greater than 37.8 degrees Centigrade) then please DO NOT attend the surgery. PLEASE follow these guidelines : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Kindness : I know that many have already written of this in the press but now is the perfect time for all be more considerate of each another and help those most in need, especially those who may have to self-isolate for lengthy periods of time. I understand that there have been some postings on the 'Chalfont St. Peter Connected' Facebook page in relation to this and the PDF below has been suggested as useful material to help set up a volunteer 'army'. We at The Allan Practice are all currently adjusting to our emergency working arrangements but in due course hope to co-ordinate a volunteer service to help. In the meantime, if any members of the community wish to take charge of this then that would be most welcome.



ViralKindness.pdf

I am sorry that I have to write to you all on such a grim matter but we really do need your help to run our practice to help those who are most in need whilst at the same time minimising the risk of spreading the disease. I am sure there will be light at the end of this dark tunnel but all the signs are that we are dealing with a marathon over several months rather than a sprint over a few days. The situation and guidance is changing on a daily basis and I will endeavour to keep you updated with further updates in due course.

Stay safe and healthy, and please remember the government advise on hand washing and social distancing.

Kind regards

Dr. Gurjit S. Dhesi

18/03/2020