

Didcot Health Centre



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APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

(updated: August 2010)

In June 2003 we changed the way we operate our appointment system, to work in-line with the Government's Patient Access directives. The majority of our Doctors' appointments are available to book **on the day**.

The overall intention of this system is that, *in most cases, when you contact the surgery you will be offered an appointment on the day you contact us*. For example, if you contact us on a Tuesday, you will be offered an appointment on that Tuesday.

The Doctors endeavour to provide *continuity of care* to their patients. Please ask for a **pre-bookable appointment** with the GP who is treating your condition; these are available for booking up to **4 weeks in advance**. Whilst **pre-bookable appointments** are intended for *follow-up appointments at your Doctor's request*, they may also be booked *for patients unable to attend at short notice* (for example, people at work). Should you need to book an appointment in advance please telephone **after 10.30hrs**, as we are extremely busy booking appointments for the day prior to this time. Please note that most of the pre-bookable appointments are scheduled for early morning, with some availability throughout the afternoon. For the convenience of commuters and shift-workers, we also offer pre-bookable appointments from 07.10-08.00hrs and 18.30-19.40hrs on Mondays, from 18.30-19.40hrs on Thursdays, and on alternate Saturday mornings (09.00-11.40hrs). Please ensure that you tell the receptionist that you need to book one of these appointment slots.

We are also able to offer some appointment **48 hours** in advance, subject to the working pattern of your usual GP.

A **consultation** with your GP is for **10 minutes**; should you wish to discuss **several issues** with the doctor, please ask the receptionist to book you a **double ("pre-bookable") appointment**. *Please note that double appointments are not available to book "on the day"*. Remember that you need to book a separate appointment for each person.

We also offer **telephone consultations** for problems that the Doctor can deal with over the phone, saving you a visit to the surgery. Telephone consultations can be booked in advance, or on the day, subject to availability.

Occasionally you may be informed "your usual Doctor is not available today" because the Doctor is providing emergency cover for the Practice on that day. You will be offered an appointment with an alternative Doctor.

Many of our Doctors work on a part-time basis. *We may not always be able to offer you an appointment on the day with the Doctor of your choice but we will do our best to meet your needs*. See overleaf for details of the days that the various Doctors generally work.

Our nursing team (**Practice Nurses** and **Health Care Technicians**) have appointments available for booking up to 6 weeks in advance. For the convenience of commuters and shift-workers, we also offer pre-bookable appointments with the Practice Nurse from 07.10-08.00hrs and 18.30-19.40hrs on Mondays, from 18.30-19.40hrs on Thursdays, and on alternate Saturday mornings (09.00-11.40hrs). Please ensure that you tell the receptionist that you need to book one of these appointment slots.

Phone lines are open between 08.30-17.30hrs (Monday to Friday), except for the first and third Tuesday each month when minimal reception cover is available due to staff training between 1.00pm-2.00pm. We have 6 exchange lines and as many as 5 Receptionists are available to book appointments. Each call is taken in turn, so please be patient during our busy periods! Medical emergencies between 08.00-08.30hrs and 17.30-18.30hrs will be dealt with by the Duty Doctor.

Should you wish to phone to enquire whether your prescription is ready for collection, please do so **after 10.30hrs**.

Results: We have two dedicated telephone numbers for **results** (01235 515544 or 01235 515509), which should be contacted between 10.00-13.00hrs, Monday-Friday.

When the Health Centre is closed (18.30-08.00hrs Monday-Friday and 24 hours/day at weekends and bank holidays) urgent medical care is provided at Abingdon Hospital by doctors working for Oxfordshire PCT.

Telephone: 0845 345 8995. General health advice is available from your local Pharmacist, and 24 hour advice is available from NHS Direct (telephone: 0845 4647).

NORMAL PATTERN OF DOCTORS SURGERIES

Doctor	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Ebbs (m)	am & pm	am & pm	am & pm		am & pm
Hawthorne (f)	am & pm	am & pm	am	am & pm	
Stainthorp (m)	am & pm	am & pm	am & pm	am & pm	am & pm
Yorston (f)	am & pm	am		am & pm	am
Starer (f)	am		am		am & pm
Surti (f)	am & pm	am & pm	am & pm	am & pm	
Anderson (f)	am & pm		am & pm		am & pm
O'Sullivan (f)	am & pm		am	am	am & pm
Southwood (f)	am	am & pm	am	am & pm	
Barnes (m)	am & pm	am & pm ¹	am & pm		am & pm

¹with effect from August 2010

Availability will change to take account of Doctors' holidays, training courses and other necessary absences.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. ***I don't want an appointment today. I want to come on Thursday. Why can't I make an appointment for Thursday?***
Answer- we operate a system where we aim to see patients on the day they contact us. If you want to see your Doctor on Thursday and there are no pre-bookable appointments available, please contact us on Thursday and we'll do our best to make you a suitable appointment. We are also able to offer some appointments 48 hours in advance, subject to the working pattern of your usual GP.

2. ***It's very difficult for me to contact the surgery in the morning because of my work but I need to see my Doctor again. How do I get an appointment?***
Answer – Where patients have difficulty contacting us or are unable to come at short-notice, ie on the day, we have a number of pre-bookable appointments that can be booked up to 4 weeks in advance.

3. ***What's the best time for me to ring for an appointment?***
Answer – Our reception staff take telephone calls Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.30pm, except on the first and third Tuesday each month (between 1.00pm-2.00pm), when minimal reception cover is available due to staff training. We would advise not ringing on a Monday unless you really need an appointment on Monday, as this is our busiest day. We also ask patients not to ring regarding other matters before 10.30am, as the early morning is the busiest time for people contacting us to make appointments.

4. ***I think my Doctor could deal with my problem over the telephone? How do I make an appointment?***
Answer – Your Doctor is available for telephone consultations. We will need to confirm the telephone number that you can be contacted on by the Doctor.

5. ***Does the fact that I'm being given an appointment on the day mean that it is an "emergency appointment" and I will have to wait?***
Answer - No, our routine appointments are now booked on the day. You will be given a timed appointment. We cannot guarantee that surgeries run on time, but reception staff can tell you whether your Doctor is on schedule.

6. ***What sort of things can a Practice Nurse or a Health Technician help with?***
Answer – Our Practice Nurses deal with minor injuries, dressings, wound care, removal of stitches, contraception, blood pressure (hypertension) and smears. They also run clinics for diabetes, heart problems and asthma, and can help patients who want to stop smoking or lose weight. Appointments should be booked with our Health Care Technicians for blood pressure checks, phlebotomy (taking blood), weight checks, ECGs, urine testing and well person checks.