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# Patient Participation Group

Newsletter January 2019



Grosvenor  
St James  
MEDICAL PRACTICE

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## Practice News

### Return of Dr Lizzy Hall

The Practice welcomes back Dr Lizzie Hall who will be returning from maternity leave as of 3rd January 2019.

### Repeat prescriptions

Please note that printed repeat prescriptions will now take **3 days** to process, prescriptions done electronically by EPS will still only take 2 days as these go direct to your designated Pharmacy. Please ask when putting in your request for it to be sent electronically or speak with reception.

### Improved Access

Tunbridge Wells GP surgeries are collaboratively providing an extra 12 hours of urgent appointments with Advanced Nurse Practitioners every week day from 2.00-8.00 pm. In addition, there are GP and Practice Nurse appointments available on Saturday mornings. These appointments will be offered at different GP surgeries on a rota, so might not be at either of Grosvenor or St James. Please phone GSJMP to book these appointments. On Sunday mornings appointments are available with a GP at Warders in Tonbridge.

### New Telephone system

The practice would like to apologise to patients for the problems we have experienced with our new phone system installed in October 2018. We appreciate your patience during this transition period, we are working closely with the telephone company to get all of the issues resolved. Ultimately it will help provide a better service and connection between our two sites.

## Appointments

There has recently been much in the media about the length of time patients in some surgeries have to wait before securing an appointment with their GP. *"Millions of patients face a three week wait to see a GP"* (The Times December 7<sup>th</sup>).

This is fortunately not the case at GSJMP however, we can all take some steps toward alleviating such difficulties by attending our appointments or at least cancelling them in a timely manner when we cannot attend. Many surgeries report a rate of approximately 10% of appointments are not attended by patients, without any notification, amounting to 30 million no-shows per year nationally. Similarly, a 10% rate of non-attendance is also reported for hospital appointments.

GSJMP offers mobile phone apps for both the online Patient Access service where you can book and cancel routine only appointments and order repeat medication from your phone. There is also the MyGP app which currently offers the ability to book and cancel routine appointments only— they have advised that in time there will be an option to order your repeat prescriptions but this is not available currently. These apps make it quick and easy for patients to manage their routine appointments without having to telephone the Practice.

If, however, you find it difficult to secure an appointment it is worth considering 3 possible alternatives without making an unnecessary visit to A&E.

### 1. Pharmacist

Pharmacists are the Health Professional of the High Street! Besides prescriptions they offer a variety of services, some of these include:

- Advice to you on minor health concerns
- Pregnancy testing
- Support for carers

So if you need some support on losing weight, or have a mysterious rash you'd like looked at, the pharmacist may be able to help. This is only a short list of the services your pharmacy may have available. For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/pharmacies/what-to-expect-from-your-pharmacy-team/>.

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## 2. NHS 111

The NHS 111 phone line is staffed by fully trained advisers 24/7 so you can always get medical support when you need it. During the phone call, they ask questions to evaluate your symptoms and decide what would be best in your situation. They have the ability to:

- Give you self-care advice
- Book you a face-to-face appointment
- Direct you to the right local service that can best help with your concern
- Connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist or GP
- Send an ambulance directly, if necessary

You can also get help or advice online using your smartphone, tablet or computer. For more information about the NHS 111 service, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111/>.

## 3. Urgent care centres (Walk-in centre and Minor Injuries Unit)

Many urgent treatment centres are open at least 12 hours a day (including bank holidays) and are led by GPs. These centres are there when you need urgent medical attention but when it isn't a life-threatening situation.

A few conditions that can be treated include:

- sprains, strains and suspected broken limbs
- cuts, grazes, bites and stings
- ear and throat infections
- coughs and colds
- minor head injuries
- minor scalds and burns
- skin infections and rashes
- vomiting and diarrhoea

For more information about Urgent Treatment Centres and what services they can offer, visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/when-to-visit-an-urgent-care-centre/>.

Locally we have walk-in centres at the following two hospitals:

### **Crowborough War Memorial Hospital**

Mill Hill

Crowborough

Kent

TN6 1HB

**Tel: 01892 652284**

### **Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital**

Southview Road

Edenbridge

East Sussex

TN8 5DA

**Tel: 01732 863164**

## **New Year – New Resolutions**

As we move into the New Year this is often the time many people make resolutions to exercise more and decide to join a gym often at considerable expense. That is fine, but will you keep it up? A less expensive alternative maybe to look into the NHS programme aimed at those who are new to running. This is available as a series of podcasts covering 9 weeks titled "Couch to 5k" available on the NHS website at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week/>

## **Healthwatch Kent**

Healthwatch Kent are interested to know if anyone has any comments and suggestions for improving the hospital service in respect of any of the following:-

- Pre out-patient treatment (basically social services or doctor referral)
- Out-patient treatment (if the referral was to a clinic... these are often overcrowded, less patient-centred than say the wards etc)
- In-patient treatment – is it patient-centred? if not what is wrong and needs attention?
- Discharge – organisation seems to be a frequent problem. What needs to change?
- Post discharge – are all the social services available and set up etc?

If anyone has any suggestions in any of these areas could they send them to the PPG Chairman – John Franks at: [jappad@pt-c.co.uk](mailto:jappad@pt-c.co.uk).

**The PPG offer support to the practice and it's patients giving constructive advice on matters relating to the surgery and local NHS issues. If you would like to be more involved with your PPG please email them on: [grosvenor.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:grosvenor.ppg@nhs.net).**