

## IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION

# Our Appointment System is changing on 18th January 2023

In response to your feedback about telephone waiting times and availability of appointments, we have reviewed our appointment system to improve things, ensuring that you can contact us when you need to. From Wednesday 18th January 2023 we are changing our appointment system.

Our current online system “**eConsult**” will become the main way to ask us for medical advice or administrative help (such as an extension to a sick note or for test results). Many of you regularly use eConsult and feedback has been positive.

**From Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023, please use eConsult as your first choice when contacting us if you can.**

eConsult is available from the practice website [www.boroughroadandnunthorpe.nhs.uk](http://www.boroughroadandnunthorpe.nhs.uk) on the front page. You do not need to register to use the eConsult service it is available to all patients. Just click on the GET STARTED button and follow the instructions.

eConsult will be available from 7.45am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

If we receive an extremely high volume of eConsult requests before 4pm eConsult may be switched off earlier but will be available from 7.45am the next working day.

### How will eConsult improve my experience of contacting the GP surgery?

**ALL** patients who can, will be asked to use eConsult to contact the surgery for medical advice or administrative requests. There will be no need to wait in a telephone call queue.

eConsult is an online system that prompts you to answer questions about your request for medical advice (such as the symptoms that you are experiencing), or the administrative help that you need. This will only take you a few minutes to complete. This information will help our team to prioritise your care and get you the right help from the most appropriate healthcare professional in the correct timescale. Please try to provide as much information as possible to help us to do this.

We will aim to review and reply to all eConsult requests for medical advice by the end of the next working day or sooner if we are able to.

We may respond in a variety of ways, based on the information provided or the urgency of your medical condition:

- If required, we will offer a consultation which may be later the same day or on a later date. The doctor who reviews your eConsult will decide on the best way of dealing with your medical problem, and the timing. The consultation may be a face-to-face, by telephone, or by video.

Should a face-to-face consultation be required, our admin team will contact you to arrange an appropriate time and day based on the doctor's decision. Where requested, we will try to arrange this with the doctor of your choice.

Should a telephone consultation be required, you may receive a call immediately, later the same day or on a later date depending on the nature of the medical problem. Should a consultation be required on a later date our admin team will contact you to arrange a time and day based on the doctor's decision. Where requested, we will try to arrange this with the doctor of your choice.

- If your problem does not require a consultation, we may send a reply by email or text message which will provide further information and advice or treatment recommendations.
- We may refer you directly to hospital for further investigations of your symptoms.
- We may advise you to contact another health care professional or service outside of the surgery, as they may be best placed to offer the advice or support needed. This could include a local pharmacy for minor illness.
- We may offer advice on how you can look after yourself.

### **What if you are unable to use the eConsult service or don't want to?**

For those of you who are **unable** to use eConsult or do not have access to eConsult via the internet, our admin team will be available to complete an eConsult health questionnaire with you over the telephone. Please telephone the surgery on the usual telephone numbers.

You can visit one of the surgeries in person to ask for advice. If you do one of our admin team will ask you to complete a paper version of the eConsult health questionnaire.

All requests for medical advice or administrative help will be managed in the same way regardless of how they arrive to us at the surgery. Any medical information provided will be reviewed by a doctor who will determine the most appropriate way of helping you and how soon you need this help. Administrative requests will be dealt with by our admin team.

### **Can I see the doctor of my choice?**

If you want to see or speak to a particular doctor or nurse, please include this in your request and we will do our best to ensure that continuity of care is achieved.

### **What do we hope to achieve by changing the appointment system?**

- Provide a fair and equal service to all patients
- Ensure consultations are booked in the correct timescales based on clinical need
- Improve access for all patients and reduce wait times on the telephone
- Provide care to patients who have a medical problem which the doctor requests to be dealt with on the 'Same Day' and cannot wait
- Facilitate 'continuity of care' by having sufficient appointments available to allow patients to be booked in advance with all members of our team including the doctor or nurse of their choice
- Manage demand and improve efficiency
- Reduce the number of patients who fail to attend appointments

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for your support in helping us to create a new appointment system which is designed to improve access to healthcare and your overall experience.

**Best wishes from the team at Borough Road & Nunthorpe Medical Group**