

## The NHS App

The NHS App can be really helpful in managing your healthcare and we recommend that our patients download the App. The NHS App recently marked its fifth birthday, and currently has 33.6 million registered users. You can use the App for the following:



- Request repeat prescriptions
  - Check or cancel appointments
  - Book certain appointments e.g. cervical screening (smears)
  - View your medical record
  - View test results and the GP comments
  - Nominate a preferred pharmacy
  - Find your NHS number
  - Find NHS services near you
  - Receive messages from your GP Surgery
  - Manage your organ donation decision
- View a prescription barcode which can be shown at a pharmacy to get your medication
  - Manage services for another person that you care for (proxy access)

**You can find more information on the NHS App on the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

## Pharmacy First

As part of a Government initiative called **Pharmacy First**, you should now contact your local pharmacy for the following conditions in the first instance:

Condition	Age Range
Acute Otitis Media (ear infection)	1 to 17 years
Impetigo	1 year and over
Infected insect bites	1 year and over
Shingles	18 years and over
Sinusitis	12 years and over
Sore throat	5 years and over
Uncomplicated urinary tract infections	Women 16-64 years

The pharmacy can treat these conditions and are able to prescribe antibiotics if needed. When you contact us with one of these conditions, we will then refer you to your local pharmacy and they will then phone you. Alternatively, you can also contact your local pharmacy directly if you have one of these conditions.

## PPG Chair meets the Patient Navigators!

A few weeks ago, I spent an interesting morning at The Hub located at St. George Health Centre. The Hub was set up to take incoming calls to Fireclay Health (St. George Health Centre and Lodgeside Surgery). The Hub has capacity for up to 11 out of 19 Patient Navigators (previously called receptionists) and this dedicated team sit together taking your calls and ensuring you get the right service for your health issue. Fireclay has kept this service in-house and has increased the size of the team in the last few years. This is so that you are not waiting too long on the phone and can get the appropriate service as soon as possible.

I sat down with three of the team and asked them why they enjoyed their job (given that it is very demanding and that some patients can be verbally aggressive). All three told me that they feel really enthusiastic about being able to help provide patients with a good service and are thrilled when patients thank them. I asked them all what messages they would like to pass on to patients to help improve the service. Here's what they said:

1. If you can jot things down before you phone that will help you to pass on clearer information:
  - Explain exactly what the symptoms are, when they started and how these symptoms are affecting your daily life
  - Give details of what action you have already taken and if things have improved as a result
2. Don't contact the surgery with simple problems like a runny nose or a cough. Wait a few days and then talk to a pharmacist first (pharmacists are well qualified and experienced). If you have a cough for several weeks then of course do contact the surgery.
3. If you have a recurring issue and want to see the same GP then you may have to choose between waiting for that GP (who may be on holiday!) or seeing another because your issue is urgent.
4. If you are going on holiday, check you have enough medication and if you need more order at least a week before you go.
5. Check your symptoms on the NHS website before contacting the surgery. Many issues go away after a few days with some self-care!
6. Don't be embarrassed to describe things you may never have talked about with a stranger; if you've been worried enough to contact the practice then you need to go for it!

*And just to makes things clear - Fireclay staff are not allowed to use the practice as patients - so there is no preferential treatment!*

I was so impressed by how the system works and how committed the team is. I was also really pleased to hear that most patients understand that we have many clinicians who are often better placed to support you than a GP and that by asking you appropriate questions Patient Navigators can signpost you to that right person.

My thanks to the team for their time and excellent work!

Jo, PPG Chair, April 24