

Westongrove Partnership – Thursday 19th March 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic – help us to help you

We are working very hard at Westongrove (Aston Clinton Surgery, Bedgrove Surgery and Wendover Health Centre) to find the best ways to care for our patients during this new Coronavirus pandemic. To do this we need to protect both our patients and our staff.

What is the current situation?

- We are already seeing a huge increase in workload with many more phone calls and emails coming into the practice, and more requests for repeat prescriptions.
- The local hospitals and pharmacies are all under pressure and this is having a knock on effect on us. At the same time healthcare workers recognise that they are at an increased risk of infection due to repeated contact with the public so we must plan for staff absences to keep everyone safe.
- Our team are under huge pressures, but are doing their best to help you.

What are we doing?

- We are meeting regularly as a team to review the service we can provide and to assess the current situation, along with both National and local guidance. We have clear plans for managing various possible scenarios.
- In line with Government guidance we are concentrating on providing urgent care, and so we are utilising telephone triage and telephone appointments for patients who feel they have an urgent problem. We will be contacting patients with telephone appointments during blocks of time rather than at exact appointment times. You will be informed of this when your telephone consultation is booked.
- We will be suspending routine health checks and monitoring.
- You might find that some systems you are used to using at the surgery such as touch screens will not be available, and we may ask you to visit one of our other sites that you haven't been to before.
- We are doing everything we can to reduce infection risk. We will close our doors and use an entry system in the future.

How can you help us?

- Please use our service responsibly and be a 'patient' patient considering the added pressures under which we are currently working.
- Contact us only if you need to do so.
- We are seeing a huge increase in emails, and would ask that you use this method only if you need to, as every email needs reading and auctioning
- DO NOT enter the surgery if you have a fever or a new, continuous cough – if you enter our premises you will put other patients and our staff at risk.
- Use the online 111 service, (or call 111 if unable to use the online service), if you are worried about having Coronavirus.
- Use our online patient access system as much as possible for example, ordering repeat prescriptions and checking results.
- Repeat prescriptions may take longer than usual to process, in our practices, our dispensary and also in the local pharmacies. You may need to allow up to 3 full working days.

- Make sure we have an up to date mobile telephone number for you and that you have consented to receive texts from us.

How you can help yourselves and each other?

- Continue to wash your hands regularly, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Please follow the NHS advice given, even if this may be difficult.
- Take care of the elderly and vulnerable in our community. Make contact with them regularly and offer to help in any way you can.
- Please don't bulk buy shopping, this makes shopping for essentials very difficult for some.
- Be wary of online sources of information and limit your time on media sources if you are feeling anxious. Stick to reliable sources of information such as the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> .
- Be kind to each other and keep safe.

We will be updating our website www.westongrove.com as often as we can. You can also follow us on Facebook for updates, this is the easiest and quickest way to keep you informed.

Thank you for your support.
The Team at Westongrove