InformationNOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Your Doctor or GP

General Practitioners (GPs) provide a wide range of health services, including:

- advice on health problems;
- vaccinations;
- examinations and treatment;
- prescriptions for medicines; and
- referrals to other health services and social service, social services, social prescribing services
- nurse expertise

Usually a small group of GPs work together in a practice, often referred to as a surgery, clinic or health centre. GPs provide consultations in their practices and through home visits.

All GP practices belong to a Primary Care Network. Read more about **PCNs on the NHS England website.**

In Newcastle, the PCNs are:

Outer West Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **Throckley Primary Care Centre**
- **Parkway Medical Group**
- **Denton Park Medical Group**
- **Newburn Surgery**
- **Denton Turret Medical Centre**
- **Westerhope Medical Group**
- **Saville Medical Group Newbiggin Hall**

West End Family Health Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **West Road Medical Centre**
- **Cruddas Park Surgery**
- **Holmside Medical Group**

Inner West Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **Fenham Hall Medical Group**
- **Betts Avenue Medical Centre**
- **Elswick Family Practice (was Grainger Medical Group)**
- **Prospect Medical Group**
- **Dilston Medical Centre**

North Gosforth Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **Park Medical Group**
- **Brunton Park Health Centre**
- **Broadway Medical Centre**
- **Regent Medical Centre**
- **Gosforth Memorial Medical Centre**

Jesmond Lower/Gosforth Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **Jesmond Health Partnership** (formerly Osborne Road and Holly Medical Group)
- **Roseworth Surgery**
- **The Grove Medical Group**
- **Avenue Medical Practice**

East Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **St Anthony's Health Centre**
- **Heaton Road Surgery**
- **Thornfield Medical Group**
- **Benfield Park Medical Group**
- **Biddlestone Health Group**
- **Walker Medical Group**
- **Newcastle Medical Centre**

Central Primary Care Network (PCN)

- **Saville Medical Group**

Registering with a GP

Everyone in your household or family needs to register with a GP surgery. To register with a GP you need to **find a local practice** that you are able to attend appointments at.

Once you have found a local GP, you need to contact them to give them your medical card details. If you don't have a medical card, the surgery will give you a form to complete. Once you

have been accepted as a patient, your medical records will be transferred to the new surgery and you will be sent a new medical card.

You are entitled to a health check when you first register with a new GP. It's a good idea to take advantage of this, even if you are feeling fit and well. From the age 50 years, your GP or Pharmacy may offer you a regular free health check. You should really take advantage of this, even if you're feeling fit and well.

Sometimes you may not be able to register with your chosen GP because they already have enough patients, or because you live too far away. If this is the case, you will have to choose another GP in your local area.

You do not need a permanent address, identification or to declare your immigration status to register with a GP surgery. Support is available to access health services if you are:

- **homeless**
- **refugee or asylum seeker**

Changing your GP

You have the right to change your GP without giving them a reason. To do this, you follow the same process as you do when registering with a new GP.

GP consultations

GP consultations can take place over the phone, by appointment or on the internet (using their website).

You could use E Consult to contact your GP practice about test results, to check when your appointment is due, to arrange a health check or request a letter because your are travelling. There is also a symptoms checker, self help guides and films on topics/medical conditions.

There is also a patient online service where you can see your healthcare summary, test results and order prescriptions or make appointments. You can sign up for this service on their website.

Your GP consultation

Before your appointment

- book your appointment by phone, website, NHS app or at reception
- you can ask for a double appointment if you feel that you need more time for discussion. Book in advance
- you may have to wait for a non-urgent appointment. If you think you need to see someone urgently, tell reception and you may be seen or phoned on the same day. Home visits can be arranged.

When visiting your GP, it is a good idea to go prepared with as much information as possible on your symptoms to help them to diagnose and assess your condition. It's a good idea to write down any questions you have or symptoms you have had before you go.

You may feel anxious and confused when visiting your GP, especially if you are feeling very unwell or haven't been to see your GP for a long time. Please remember that GPs are used to nervous patients and they are there to answer any questions you may have.

If you require further support, remember that you can take a friend or relative into the appointment with you. Often two sets of ears are better than one.

During your appointment

Don't be afraid to ask questions, or ask for clarification if you don't understand anything.

You may want to write down some notes whilst you are talking to your GP, especially if they use any medical terms that you are not familiar with.

All the personal information you give to the doctor or nurse is confidential. This means that your health care won't be discussed with anyone, including your family, without your permission.

The only time when a doctor or nurse is unable to keep your information private is in the unusual situation where they hear about a child or adult being in danger or at risk of serious harm

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Before you leave your appointment

Before you leave the appointment with your GP, you could ask the following questions to ensure that you understand what is happening:

What might be wrong?

- can I check that I've understood what you said?
- can I have a copy of any letters written about me?

Information about any further tests (such as blood tests and scans)

- what are the tests for?
- how and when will I get the results?
- who do I contact if I don't get the results?

Information about treatment

- are there any side effects or risks?
- how long will I need treatment for?
- how will I know if the treatment is working?
- what will happen if I don't have any treatment?
- is there anything else I should stop or avoid doing?

- is there anything else I can do to help myself?

Information about what happens next

- what happens next? Do I come back to see you?
- who do I contact if things get worse?
- where can I go for more information? Is there a support group?

NHS.UK has a useful page giving advice on how to get the most from a doctor's appointment.

Your prescription

- if you need to take any medication, your GP will give you a prescription which you can take to any pharmacy
- if you are registered for electronic prescriptions with a local pharmacy, your prescription can be sent directly to the pharmacy
- tell the pharmacist if you need support
- the pharmacist will give you your medication and will be able to answer your questions
- the pharmacist will check if you need to pay for prescriptions or if you can get them free
- you may be eligible for free NHS prescriptions. Check on the **NHS BSA eligibility checker**.

NHS app

The NHS app allows you to access your health information. This can be useful if you can't remember when you last saw a GP or had a consultation about your health or condition. Download the app to your mobile device and you can:

- book GP surgery appointments and add them to your calendar
- see your referrals to a hospital or specialist and manage the booking
- nominate a pharmacy
- order repeat prescriptions
- opted in or out of organ donation
- see your Covid 19 vaccination status with dates of the vaccine and the product

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Accessing GP services out of hours

Lemington Resource Centre offers a GP extended access service. Access it through your GP or NHS 111 after hours.

See our **Urgent Treatment Centres** information for more GP extended access services.

NHS 111 are available 24 hours a day every day. Call them if you have an urgent medical need outside of office hours.

Home visits

If you are unable to get to your GP's surgery because you've got a serious illness, you can call to arrange a home visit. However, such visits are only for medical reasons and are not for your personal convenience.

GPs visit patients at home when they're confined due to illness or disability; or when urgent treatment could be administered more quickly by a home visit. If you call the surgery to request a home visit, your GP will probably call you back to find out more about your problem before deciding whether the visit is really necessary.

NHS 111 are available 24 hours a day every day. If you have an urgent medical need outside of office hours they may be able to arrange for an out of hours GP to visit you at home.

GP Referrals

Your GP may decide to refer you to a specialist, such as a consultant at a hospital, if they think that you would benefit from more specialist advice.

NHS e-Referral Service (formerly Choose and Book)

If you live in England and need non-emergency medical treatment, you can choose to have it at any hospital in the country. This scheme is called NHS e-Referral Service.

You may wish to choose a hospital other than your local one for a number of different reasons (for example, to be closer to a relative who can visit you, because you can have your operation sooner at a particular hospital, or because you have heard good reports about a particular hospital). Your GP must now discuss these options with you when referring you for further treatment. You can choose whether to make your choice immediately, or to take some time to consider the options and make your decision later.

Information to support your choice

The NHS provides information on every hospital and clinic, so that you can decide which one you want to use. This information includes local transport details and whether or not the hospital provides services such as car parking, disabled access, a visitor canteen and shops.

There are also star ratings or performance standards, which are based on information collected to show how health services are doing in relation to some of the main targets set by the government for the NHS. They are also based on information from surveys of patients and staff.

Choice will not be offered to patients where other factors are thought to be more important, such as emergency admissions, rapid access chest pain clinics, cancer services, and mental health.

For further information on hospitals and clinics Use the 'Services near you' tool on NHS.UK

Exercise Referral and Cardiac Rehabilitation Schemes

Exercise Referral Scheme

If your GP thinks that you will benefit from an exercise programme as part of your treatment, they may refer to an Exercise Referral Scheme at a local leisure or community centre.

The scheme is specifically designed for people who are new to physical activity. It is **not** intended for those people who simply need to do more exercise, but is for those:

- who have a medical condition, such as arthritis or diabetes, which will be alleviated by regular exercise; or
- whose doctor or practice nurse believes that they need the structure and support of a special programme to allow them to take part in physical activity.

The exercise programmes are subsidised and, after an initial one-to-one session, are held as group sessions usually lasting between 10 and 15 weeks.

Cardiac Rehabilitation Scheme

If you have suffered from a heart attack or other heart problems, your GP may refer you to to a Cardiac Rehabilitation Scheme.

The scheme runs a rolling programme of exercise, relaxation and information for patients. Physiotherapists and exercise instructors review patients cardiac status, as well as giving advice and guidance about how to exercise appropriately for your condition.

Complementary Therapy

Some **complementary therapies** are available on the NHS, the kind of complementary treatment you can access depends on where you live. However, complementary therapies are being introduced in more healthcare settings, including hospitals, GP surgeries and community clinics. Ask your GP about what's available in your area.

Accessing your medical records

You, or your representative, have a right to access your health records under the Data Protection Act 1988. If you want to read your health records, you can ask to do this at your GP surgery and can arrange a time to go in and read them. You don't have to give a reason for wanting to see your records.

You may be asked to submit your request in writing. It's a good idea to state the dates you want to see, for example from January 2009 to January 2015, and to send the letter by recorded delivery and to keep a copy. By law, you must receive a response to your letter within 40 days.

Your family are not allowed to see your health records unless you give them written permission to do so, or if they have **Power of Attorney.**

If you don’t have a GP, or you are applying on behalf of someone who has died, you should write to the Medical Records Officer at your local health authority. In Newcastle, this is the North East Strategic Health Authority.

Read more on how to view your health records on NHS.UK

NHS app allows you to access your health information, contact your GP or Healthcare provider, book an appointment, see test results, manage prescriptions and more.

Help to get your voice heard

The Patients Association has a national telephone and email helpline for anyone trying to navigate health and care systems in the UK. The helpline service is free and confidential. They provide guidance and signposting on how to:

- access to treatments
- get a second opinion on your health condition or diagnosis
- make a complaint
- understand social care
- get your voice heard as a patient rights and responsibilities
- change your GP or dentist
- see your medical records
- speak to other organisations to help you if needed

Independent advocacy is available to help you to get your voice and opinions heard. This can help you if you are unable to access services yourself or have problems making decisions. Advocacy can help you to be involved in your health care.

Have your say about health services there are opportunities to get involved in patient feedback and research in Newcastle. This can help to improve health services for everyone.

Accessible Information

The Accessible Information Standard is a UK law to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are given information they can easily read or understand. Health and social care services must find out your information and communication needs make sure you get support the way you need it in an accessible format.

For example you may need large print text for a letter or a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter at medical appointments for communication.

Read more about Accessible information

Complaining about your GP

If you wish to make a complaint about the care or service provided by your GP, or by someone working at your GP surgery, you should contact the person responsible for the practice complaints

procedure. Your GP will try to resolve your complaint at this stage. You can get support to help you to do this.

Alternatively, you may feel that you need to take the complaint to a more formal level by using the NHS Complaints Procedure.

You can find out more about informal and formal approaches to complaining in our section **How to complain about health services.**

Other useful information

Men's Health Forum provides health advice to men. They run the Man MOT. This means you can contact a GP 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Great North Care Record gives the staff caring for you a more complete picture of your medical history. It does this by making information held about you in different places such as your GP practice or local hospital available to the staff who are looking after you. Being able to access this information helps make your care safer.

Other useful organisations

- **NHS 111** is the new telephone service which has replaced NHS Direct. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.
- **NHS.UK** is a website providing health and medicines information and you can search for local services.

> **Please note** – The content on this website is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional. If you are feeling unwell, make an appointment to see your GP or contact **NHS 111**. In an emergency, dial **999**.

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Useful Organisations

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Email: pals@nhct.nhs.uk

Website: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/what-is-pals-patient-advice-and-liaison-service/

Telephone: 0800 032 0202

Address: Freepost PALS,

Patient Information Centre – Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

Website: www.cntw.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 246 7288

Address: St Nicholas Hospital, NE3 3XT

The Patients Association

Email: helpline@patients-association.org.uk

Website: www.patients-association.org.uk

Address: P Block, HA1 3UJ

NHS 111

Website: www.nhs.uk/111

Men's Health Forum

Email: office@menshealthforum.org.uk

Website: http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk

Telephone: 0330 097 0654

Address: 49-51 East Road, N1 6AH

NHS

Website: www.nhs.uk

NHS Business Services Authority

Website: https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/

Telephone: 0191 232 5371

Address: Stella House, NE15 8NY

Extended GP Access at Lemington Resource Centre

Address: Lemington Resource Centre, NE15 8RZ

Great North Care Record

Email: gncarerecord@nhs.net

Website: https://www.greatnorthcarerecord.org.uk/

Telephone: 0344 811 9587

Betts Avenue Medical Centre – Kenton Centre

Email: bettsavenue@nhs.net

Website: http://www.bettsavenue.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 246 1546

Address: Kenton Centre, NE3 3QP

NHS App

Website: https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-app/

Related Articles

10 Tips for good health

Having your say about health and care services

Introduction to Complementary Therapies

Walk-in centres (Urgent Treatment Centres)

Minor Injuries Units

Urgent medical help from NHS 111

How to use your GP surgery well

Bereavement and grief

Homeless or worried about becoming homeless

Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees