

# **MAKING A GP APPOINTMENT AT THE DUNSTAN PARTNERSHIP**

## **Get help fast from the practice with eConsult**

The practice has now moved its appointment system to a Triage First Model. This decision has been made by our GP Partners to help ensure patients are seeing the right clinician at the right time and ultimately **offering our patients a better service.**

Every day, we receive requests for help or advice through patients traditionally calling in or walking in. For each patient request, the practice needs to work out:

1. Why the patient is trying to seek help from their GP.
2. What kind of help the patient needs.
3. How quickly the patient needs help.
4. Who is the best person to help the patient.
5. Where the patient should be seen.

The answers to these questions help the practice to sort patients based on their needs. This process is called triage. Triage is essential when we may be dealing with hundreds of patients a day, all with different health needs, requests and backgrounds.

Therefore, we are asking all patients, who have internet access, and who feel they need to make an appointment with a GP, to submit an eConsult form online, via our website:

[www.thedunstanpartnership.co.uk](http://www.thedunstanpartnership.co.uk) to help us assess a patient's need.

The service is available Monday to Friday from 7.30 AM. The sooner you complete an eConsult form in the morning, the sooner your response from the GP Partner will be. The form is really easy to complete and will give the Triage GP a full picture of why you need to be seen. This is a much quicker way of getting an appointment with a Doctor, rather than waiting in the phone queue. **Whilst you are waiting in the phone queue, patients who have completed their eConsult form, are already receiving their appointments.**

eConsult is an NHS-approved online digital triage and patient history taking tool, designed to enhance patient access, improve practice efficiency and signpost patients to the right place at the right time for their care. For more information on how to use the software, please visit <https://econsult.net/nhs-patients/how-to-use-econsult>

### **Why Should I use eConsult?**

#### **Saves you time**

- Save a trip to the practice – your query may be resolved with a phone call or text.
- You avoid the need to get through on our very busy phone lines; simply click on the link on our website, **you don't need any usernames or passwords to complete the form.**

#### **Quick Response Time**

- You usually get a response to the outcome of your submitted form from the GP Partner the same day (usually within a couple of hours).

#### **More Convenient**

- You can access eConsult from anywhere: at home, at work, on holiday or on the move.

- You can access it via a smartphone, tablet, laptop or PC. You can also access it via the NHS App.
- You can complete the eConsult form at a pace that suits you. It asks the same questions that a Doctor would in a consultation, but you have more time to think about your answers. **You can also add pictures, if appropriate.**
- You can complete an eConsult query for a child in your care.
- **You won't have to queue on the phone as soon as the practice opens** in order to get an appointment – you simply complete a form from 7.30 AM Monday to Friday and tell us what you need help or advice for, we will let you know if you need a face to face appointment and how soon this needs to be.
- **You may not have to come into the practice to get help, meaning you don't have to take unnecessary days off from work or can stay at home if you feel poorly.**
- Opportunity for you and your Doctor to plan investigations before seeing a GP – **meaning one appointment, rather than two**, or the GP may call you to discuss the next best steps, or send a prescription to the local pharmacy to be collected.
- Be able to request admin support, rather than waiting in the phone queue for issues such as: requesting a Fit (sick) Note, doctor letters, medication issues (not requests for repeat prescriptions, please continue to use the NHS App) and referral problems.
- Due to the fact that the GP already knows what you are attending with and is prepared for your consultation, it makes your consultation a much better one.

#### **Clinically supported and digitally safe**

- The robust 'red flagging' system applied to every eConsult request ensures that patients with urgently worrying symptoms are assessed and identified quickly and offered appointments earlier.
- eConsult uses the highest security standards to ensure patient information is always secure

**We are hoping that the majority of patients with internet access will be submitting their GP appointment requests via eConsult going forward. We have a dedicated GP Partner every day assessing all the eConsult submissions. This will enable more patients to obtain a more appropriate appointment, for example:**

- Many conditions are better dealt with by a member of our multi-disciplinary team.
- Our GP Partner will try and ensure that you see the same Doctor, especially if it is for the same condition.
- Booking you with a Doctor, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Senior Nurse Practitioner, Musculo-Skeletal Practitioner, Mental Health Practitioner or Paramedic who specialises in the condition you are requesting an appointment for.

#### **Vulnerable Patients and Patients who do not have access to the internet**

- We are aware that this system is not suitable for each and every patient. There will always be some patients who cannot, or will not, use eConsult and that is fine. eConsult should not be the only way to make a request for a GP appointment. **However, the more patients that can use online do, then it frees up the phone line for patients who cannot use online.** So if you ring us and there is a long queue, think, 'I can save time by completing an eConsult form'.
- For those patients who do not have access to the internet or who are unable to complete an eConsult form, our admin team are more than happy to complete the form for you. We do this so that all the information required when requesting a GP appointment is gathered in a standard format and helps our triaging Doctor to address patient need efficiently and fairly.