

Elizabeth Courtauld Surgery

New appointment system from 18th March

Since May 2012 we have been trying a Telephone Triage system so that the doctor could assess your problem and decide if you could be helped over the phone or whether you needed to be seen face to face. We have reviewed how well this has worked and listened to the feedback from the Patient Participation Groups. Although many people liked the system, some found it inconvenient to be phoned back.

We are, therefore, returning to a system where you, the patient, decide if you need a telephone consultation with the doctor or a face to face appointment. Please tell the receptionist which you need.

We will provide

- Morning and evening surgery. Face to face and telephone appointments. Late appointments are available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (until 7.50 pm). There is a limit to how many patients we can see in a day so you may need to wait for an appointment, but you can book up to 4 weeks in advance.
- Minor Illnesses Clinic each morning run by our Nurse Practitioners. This is for those conditions that have not responded to home-treatment. This clinic may also be useful if you are not sure about the seriousness of a new condition.
- Urgent Problems Clinic each afternoon for serious conditions that cannot wait until the next day. You will need to tell the receptionist what the nature of the problem is so the doctor can prioritise the return telephone calls.
- Clinics for long term conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, heart disease etc. Also contraception and stop-smoking clinics.

We are not an emergency service. If you have severe or life threatening symptoms then you should call 999 or go to A+E at Colchester or Broomfield.

We are not a “Walk-in Centre”. These are provided at Colchester and Springfield for those patients that feel that their symptoms cannot wait for the next available appointment at the surgery.

The fact is that we are the lowest funded practice in Mid Essex, which means we cannot provide a 10 minute face-to-face appointment for everyone who would like one. We need you to help us by asking for an appointment **only** if it is really necessary. There is a lot of advice available on our website and from the local pharmacies about dealing with minor illnesses. You can also call NHS 111, the new national helpline that has replaced NHS Direct. Most sore throats, coughs, colds, ear aches, upset stomachs etc do not need a doctor's advice as they will get better on their own.

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Other ways to help us help you –

Phone after 10.30 am for lab results and administrative problems.

Use the auto check-in. It is quick and easy and allows receptionists to do other tasks. It saves you having to queue.

Order and collect prescriptions from the chemist rather than reception – it is more efficient for everyone. (If you prefer to collect from reception, we have a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week telephone line where you can leave your prescription requests- 01787 479889).

Use the online booking facility to make appointments.

Use our website www.elizabethcourtauld.gpsurgery.net for advice, addresses and links to other services.

Please cancel your appointment if you no longer need it, so we can see someone else.

Please be patient and polite to our staff – they are here to help you.

We are open 8:30am - 6:30pm Monday, Thursday & Friday, 8:30 - 8:00pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We also open alternate Saturdays between the hours of 8:00am and 10:00am. Appointments are available during the hours listed below. Our doctors commence afternoon clinics at 3.30pm and our nurses are available from 1pm or 1.30pm.

The phone lines are closed daily between 1 and 2pm, except for emergencies.

From 14 May 2012 the Surgery will be operating a new appointment system. Under this new system when you contact the surgery to request an appointment, we will take your details and your telephone number. Your doctor will then call you back as soon as possible to discuss your requirements. Should they need to see you face-to-face they will arrange an appointment with you. Many such calls can be resolved by medical advice, a prescription or a more suitable appointment with a nurse or healthcare assistant. Your doctor will advise you on the best way to proceed.