



Welcome to Alma Medical Centre

Our mission statement and values:

At Alma Medical Centre we aim to be a centre of excellence offering top quality services that are readily accessible to all our patients, provided by friendly, happy, well trained and supported staff.

Patients are at the centre of all our decisions.

We offer you the flexibility of consulting either with your registered doctor or with one of the other practice doctors, so that if you wish particularly to be seen by a male or female doctor, we can usually arrange this.

THE DOCTORS

Dr Andrew Barraclough
MBBS DRCOG MRCGP

Dr Paula Barrett
MBBS DCH DRCOG MRCGP

Dr Gavin Pereira
BM DRCOG

Dr Heather Deacon
MBBS, MRCPCH, MRCGP

Dr Shiny Kuzhivelil
BM MRCGP DFRSRH DRCOG

Dr Matt Adcock

Dr Zara Mufti

SURGERIES

Tues, Weds

Mon, Weds, Thurs

Mon, Thurs

Tues, Thurs

Mon, Weds, Fri

Mon, Wed, Fri

Tues, Wed, Thurs

Registering with a Doctor

To register, you need to come into the surgery and talk to the Receptionist. They will check whether you are in our practice area and give you a Welcome Pack.

On registration you will be allocated a named GP who is responsible for your overall care. Should you wish to know who this is please ask the receptionist. If you have a preference for a particular GP we will make reasonable efforts to accommodate your request

Postcode	Area
BH1 2	Dean Park
BH3 7	Talbot Woods
BH8 8	Charminster
BH8 9	Queens Park
BH9 1	Winton 1
BH9 2	Winton 2
BH9 3	Moordown
BH10 4	Ensburry Park



Surgery and Opening Hours

The telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 08.00 –12.00 and 14.00–17.30. Telephone: **01202 519311**.

Main reception is open from 8.00 - 18.30 Monday to Friday with additional extended hours opening until 19.30 on Mondays.

Consultation times

Monday	08.30 – 11.40	14.30 – 19.30
Tuesday	08.30 – 11.40	14.00 – 17.30
Wednesday	08.30 – 11.40	14.30 – 17.30
Thursday	08.30 – 11.40	14.30 – 17.30
Friday	08.30 – 11.40	14.30 – 17.30

Making an Appointment

To make an appointment, please contact the practice by telephone or come in and speak to a Receptionist.

The receptionist will ask you a few questions regarding your appointment, so they can direct you in the best way possible. Please remember, they are not making arbitrary decisions regarding your care, but helping you obtain the best treatment in the most efficient way. You will be offered a face to face appointment or a telephone appointment with a Doctor/Nurse/Pharmacist.

Many patients find the telephone appointment system more convenient as they do not necessarily need to come in to the surgery.

You can make an appointment with your doctor of choice, just let the Receptionist know.

Chaperones

It is the policy of this practice to respect the privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs of our patients

If you feel you would like a person to be present during a physical examination by a doctor or any other health professional you may be consulting at the surgery (or if you would prefer to be examined by a doctor or health professional of the same sex as yourself), please let us know and we will do our best to comply with your wishes

At times professional guidance dictates that a doctor needs to ensure that a chaperone is present for physical examinations. We hope patients will feel able to agree to a request under these circumstances



Emergencies and Out of Hours Services

**If you need medical help you can call NHS 111,
24 hours a day—7 days a week**

The normal hours covered by the Alma Medical Centre doctors are from 8am to 6.30pm. The Duty Doctor is on call between these hours even when the surgery itself is not open. When you call the surgery number (01202 519311) during the hours we are closed, the answering machine will give you the number **111**. NHS 111 is a service to help you access local NHS healthcare services and is open 24 hours a day. For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.

The Boscombe and Springbourne Health Centre provides a GP walk-in service for both registered and non-registered patients on Saturdays and Sundays from 8am—8pm. The centre is located at 66-68 Palmerston Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 4JT and can be contacted on 01202 720174.

Home Visits

These are predominantly for the elderly housebound, or people who are seriously ill and unable to attend the surgery. Please be prepared to give some details of the problem to the receptionist answering your enquiry as it will help the doctors to plan their visits for the day. Please remember that a doctor can see up to SIX patients in the surgery in the time that it takes to make ONE house call. Patients can also be examined much more thoroughly in the surgery environment, so please keep requests for home visits for urgent matters only.

Please phone in requests for home visits before 10.00am.

Carers

You may be giving regular help to a member of your family or a friend who has a long-term physical or mental health condition, disability, is frail due to age or has an addiction.

We may be able to help you by giving you advice and information about services available to you and the person you care for. You may be entitled to benefits.

To register as a Carer and to be put in touch with our Carers Lead, please ask Reception for a Carer's Registration form or phone 01202 519311 and ask to speak to Terrie Carr.



Repeat Prescriptions

There are various methods of organising your repeat prescriptions.

The **request** for medication can be:

- Delivered in person to the surgery by posting it in the prescriptions slot at the front reception desk
- Emailed to us at: alma.prescriptions@dorset.nhs.uk (please ensure you include your name, address, date of birth and the medication you require)
- Ordered via our website— www.almapartnership.co.uk
- Sent to us by post in an envelope marked 'Prescriptions Clerk'
- Faxed to us (01202 548532) for the attention of the Prescriptions Clerk
- Liaised via your chemist if you have made this arrangement. You tell the chemist you need a repeat prescription, then they tell us and we issue the prescription. This obviously takes slightly longer.

You can **collect** the completed prescription:

- In person by asking at the desk. If someone comes to collect your prescription instead of you, please sign a note to say that they have your permission to do so.
- If you give us a stamped addressed envelope we will send the prescription back to you.
- If you have an arrangement with a chemist they will collect the prescription for you.

We require 72 hours to process a routine repeat prescription request. New or non-routine repeat prescriptions, for example medication you have been prescribed in hospital, may take a little longer.

Non-NHS Examinations and Treatment

Medical examinations for special purposes, for example pre-employment, fitness for sports and fitness to travel are available but they are not part of your doctor's NHS duties and therefore a standard fee will be payable. Please enquire at Reception.

Travel Advice Clinic

Our travel advice clinic offers travel health advice and immunisations. Note that a fee is chargeable for most travel advice and immunisations as this is not an NHS service. Please ask at reception for our travel form.



The Alma Team

Practice Management

Our Practice Manager, Mrs Beverley Lane and Deputy Practice Manager, Miss Nell Montague-Rendall are both responsible to the day to day operational running of the practice.. They are also available to help you with administrative or non-medical aspects of your health care. Compliments and comments are always welcome as we continue to improve our service to our patients.

Practice Staff

Our receptionists are your link with the doctors and the rest of the Primary Health Care Team. They will try in every way to help you. The more information you are able to give them, the better they will be able to assist you. Behind the scenes our administration staff help the doctors work efficiently, dealing with results of blood tests and investigations, checking and printing out repeat prescriptions, filing, registering patients, booking appointments and organising clinics. Our team of medical secretaries type the doctors' letters referring patients to hospital and liaise with the Health Authority.

District Nurses

Community nursing services for the practice and can be contacted directly on **01202 528 990**, or a message can be left on their answer phone.

Health Visitors and Nursery Nurse

The Health Visiting Team provide health visiting and health promotion services. Health Visitors Barbara Watson, Marjorie Madhawa and Liz Vadas and Health Visitor Assistant Julie Williamson offer health advice and run clinics for babies and under 5s at Stokewood Children's Centre. You can contact the Health Visiting Team on **01202 547307**.

Disabled Facilities

Our reception desk allows wheelchair-using patients to communicate directly with reception staff, our large car park area has disabled parking spaces and easy flat access into the building. There are also **disabled** toilet facilities.



Our Nursing Team

Our Practice Nurses are Sister Jane Dluzewska RGN, and Sister Julie Canham RGN.

You can book appointments with the nurses in advance for blood pressure checks, cervical smears, changing dressings, travel immunisations etc. The nurses also run clinics for patients with established health problems, for example Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, Hypertension and Heart Disease. These patients will be invited for regular reviews.

Influenza Vaccinations

Flu vaccines are highly effective in preventing illness and reducing both hospital admissions and deaths from flu. We encourage everyone aged 65 and over and people at risk because of a medical condition to have a flu vaccination each year. Flu vaccinations are given from October to March. If you would like a flu vaccination, please ring us on 01202 519311 and ask for a flu vaccination appointment. We regularly hold flu clinics in the flu season and we may contact you to invite you to one of these clinics. If you fall into the eligible group and do not wish to have a flu vaccine, please let us know so that we don't contact you.

Pneumonia Vaccinations

We are able to offer pneumonia vaccinations free of charge under the NHS to all patients aged 65 years and over. If you are aged 65 or over and have not had a pneumonia vaccination, you are welcome to contact reception and ask for an appointment with one of our practice nurses.

Please note that unlike influenza, a pneumonia vaccination must be given ONCE ONLY in a patient's lifetime, (with rare exceptions) NOT each year.

Smokestop

If you think a Smokestop course would give you the support you need to motivate yourself to stop smoking, please contact our Smokestop Advisor , Julie Gray on 01202 519311.



Contraception and Sexual Health

Our doctors can provide family planning advice to men and women of any age in complete confidence in a normal surgery appointment.

The Alma Clinic is a specialised Contraception and Sexual Health Clinic staffed by doctors and nurses who specialise in family planning, coil fittings and contraception.

Emergency contraception is available within 3 days after you have been at risk. If you think you have been at risk, you should tell our receptionist you need an emergency appointment on the same day.

Alma Clinic reception: Telephone 01202 519491 during opening hours (phones open half an hour before clinic begins).

Alma Clinic times:

Monday 17.30 – 19.30

Friday 09.00 – 12.30 & 13.00—14.00

A clinic leaflet is available from Reception.

Contraception and Sexual Health Doctors

Dr Alison Vaughan MB ChN DRCOG MRCGP MFFP DipM

Dr Sarah Atkinson MB BS DFRH

Contraception and Sexual Health Nurses

Kerrie Ewer RGN

Other Specialist Clinics

On the advice of your doctor, you may be referred to one of the following specialist clinics held at the surgery which provide care both to our patients and to patients from other practices: **Podiatry, GU Medicine and Psychosexual counselling.**



Training New GPs

We are pleased to be approved as a Training Practice for doctors who have extensive hospital experience and who have decided to become GPs. Known as GP Registrars, they join our Practice Team for up to a year before entering full-time General Practice. Two of our Partners are approved trainers. The practice is also involved in training medical students. We are very proud to be involved in the training of the next generation of doctors however, we are sensitive to the fact that some patients do not always want a student present and we will give you the opportunity to say no.

Suggestions and Complaints

The doctors and staff are always open to suggestions you might have to improve our service to patients. There is a suggestion box in Reception. Occasionally patients feel that they would like to register a complaint regarding an aspect of our service. Should you wish to complain, please ask to speak to the Practice Manager or Deputy Practice Manager who will endeavour to give you an immediate explanation. If it proves impossible to resolve the matter you will be advised on how to make a complaint formally.

All patients are invited to join our Patient Participation Group. Please ask Reception for a form or go to www.almapartnership.co.uk for further information.

Violent Patients

The Alma Partnership fully supports the aims of the NHS Zero Tolerance to Violence campaign. 'Violence' means any incident where staff are verbally or physically abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.

If the threat of violence and intimidation by a patient is seen to be serious, then as a last resort it may be deemed necessary to withhold treatment from a patient, or remove the patient from the practice list. This means the patient will have to seek another GP who is willing to take him or her on.

All incidents in which patients are abusive or violent are reported to Dorset CCG. If staff or doctors feel themselves to be at risk, they will call the police without delay.



Choose and Book

Choose and Book is a service which allows patients to choose a convenient place, date and time for their initial hospital appointment and to book it themselves on the phone or internet.

If you need to be referred to a hospital, your GP will discuss with you the possible choices of where you can go for treatment. Our team of medical secretaries will then process your referral via Choose and Book and send you a letter containing your reference number and information on how to book your appointment.

You then phone the Patient Contact Centre or go online. You will be offered a range of appointment dates and times from which you will be able to choose the most convenient appointment for you. Please ask for a Choose and Book leaflet for further details.

Access to patient information

Your doctors, their staff and everyone else working for the NHS have a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patient information.

In some instances, you may be receiving care from other people as well as the NHS. We may need to share some information about you with them so that we can all work together for your benefit. Anyone who receives confidential information about you from us is also under a legal duty of confidence. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example when the health and safety of others is at risk, we will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission.

We will only give your relatives, friends and carers information if you want us to.

In certain circumstances we are required by law to report information to the appropriate authorities. This information is only provided after formal authority has been given by a qualified health professional. For example, the notification of new births, if we encounter infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others (e.g. meningitis or measles, but not HIV/AIDS) or where a formal court order has been issued.



Self Treatment of Common Illnesses and Accidents

Many common aches and pains can be simply treated at home without the need to consult a doctor.

Burns—Apply large quantities of cold water to the affected area as soon as possible and maintain this until the pain subsides. This may take as long as 15 minutes. If the skin is unbroken but blistered, apply loose, dry dressing. If the burn is larger than 4 or 5 inches in diameter or if the skin is broken, consult your doctor as soon as possible.

Minor Cuts and Grazes—Wash the wound thoroughly with water and a little soap. To stop bleeding apply a clean handkerchief or dressing firmly to the wound for about 5 minutes. Cover with a clean, dry dressing.

Colds—Even in this day and age there is still no magic cure for the common cold. Go to bed, take plenty of drinks. If you have a headache or are feverish, take Paracetamol. Do not bother to take any antibiotics you may have in the house, these will have no effect!

Diarrhoea—In adults diarrhoea is usually caused by a virus infection and is therefore unable to be treated directly. Ensure adequate intake of clear fluids (non-alcoholic). Holiday diarrhoea is often due to a bacteria. In both of the above cases, consult doctor if the symptoms persist for more than a few days. Diarrhoea in very young children and babies needs careful attention. Most babies have loose bowel action during their first 6 months due to their predominantly liquid diet. If the symptoms persist for more than 24 hours, or are accompanied by vomiting or weakness, consult your doctor.

Sprains—First apply a cold compress, containing ice if possible, for 15 to 30 minutes to reduce the swelling. Apply, firmly, a crepe bandage and give the sprain plenty of rest until all discomfort has subsided. Further strain will inevitably lead to further swelling and a longer recovery period.

Nose Bleeds—Sit in a chair (leaning forward with your mouth open) and pinch your nose just below the bone for approximately 10 minutes, by which time the bleeding should have stopped. Avoid hot drinks or food for 24 hours. If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

Sunburn—Treat as for other burns with cold water to remove the heat. Calamine Lotion will relieve the irritation whilst Paracetamol will also help. Children are particularly susceptible to sunburn and great care should be taken to avoid over exposure to the harmful affects of the sun.

Insect Stings and Bites—Antihistamine tablets can be obtained from the chemist without prescription and will usually relieve most symptoms. Note: Bee stings should be scraped away rather than 'plucked' in order to avoid squeezing the contents of the venom sack into the wound.



Headlice—These creatures, contrary to popular belief, prefer clean hair and are, therefore, not a sign of poor hygiene. The best treatment is to apply hair conditioner and comb the hair for 5 minutes daily with a nit comb.

Back Pain—Back pain causes 13 million working days to be lost in Britain each year. The spine being made up of 24 fragile bones and associated cartilage and tendons supports the whole weight of the upper body and therefore, it is understandable that it sometimes goes wrong.

Because of the complex nature of the spine it is advisable to consult your doctor if back pain persists for more than a week.

If, as is usual, the pain has been caused by overuse i.e. lifting too heavy weights etc., be sensible and take things easy. Take care to sit as upright as possible with a support for the small of the back. Take paracetamol if you have no contraindications which will not only relieve the pain but will help to relieve inflammation. If this is ineffective your doctor may well prescribe stronger drugs, heat treatment or gentle exercise.

For more information—please see our wide range of ‘Self-Care’ leaflets and factsheets, located in our waiting rooms and on our website.

The Family Medicine Chest

Here is a list of useful medications and dressings with a description of their uses. They are quite cheap and worth stocking at home in readiness for minor illnesses. Keep them in a box or cupboard with a lock or store them well out of the reach of children.

Paracetamol Tablets—For adults and older children. Good for headaches, colds, sore throats, painful bruises and back pain.

Paracetamol Mixture—For relief of pain or fever in young children.

Menthol Crystals—Add to hot water to make steam inhalations for treating catarrh and dry or painful coughs.

Vapour Rub—Again, for steam inhalations. Also useful for children over the age of one year with stuffy noses or dry coughs. Rub on the chest and nose.

Antiseptic Solution—One teaspoon diluted in warm water for cleaning cuts and grazes.

Antiseptic Cream—For treating septic spots, sores in the nose and grazes.

Antihistamine—For allergies, insect bites and wasp stings. A variety are available for both adults and children.

Calamine Lotion—For dabbing (not rubbing) on insect bites and stings and sunburn.

Dressing Strips—For minor cuts.

3” Wide Crepe Bandage—To keep dressings in place. To support sprained or bruised joints.

Cotton Wool—For cleaning cuts and grazes.

Thermometer—For fevers.



Keeping Healthy—Staying Healthy

Sensible Drinking - A small amount of alcohol does you no harm but if it's more than a small amount you may be damaging your health.

Alcohol is measured in units—one unit is 10 grams of alcohol and is found in:-

- Half a pint of beer
- Less than half a pint of export beer, larger or strong cider (a 440 ml can of cider = 2.3units)
- A small glass of wine (a 75cl bottle contains between 7 and 9 units)
- A small sherry (a 75cl bottle = 13 units)
- A pub single measure of spirits (a 75cl bottle of whiskey = 28 units)

Only you really know how many units you drink. Be fair to yourself and your family—stay within healthy limits.

- For men, a sensible limit is up to 21 units a week
- For women, the limit is 14 units a week.

Giving Up Smoking—Some people smoke because they enjoy it and do not want to stop. However, when we ask most people they say they do not really enjoy it, would like to stop but cannot manage to.

Some of the risks are:-

- Heart and arterial disease
- Heart attack, stroke and amputation
- Cancer (all kinds)
- Ulcers
- Chronic Bronchitis (a cough with phlegm every morning is an early sign)

Contact our in-house Smokestop advisor, Julie Gray for stop smoking support.

Reducing Your Fat Intake—When cooking with oil use polyunsaturated oils such as sunflower, or monosaturated oil, such as olive oil. Measure with a tablespoon the amount of oil so you can see how much you use, then you can slowly reduce it to maybe half or less (there are 130 calories per tablespoon of oil). When cooking meats, trim off the excess fat. Skim off any oil that settles on the top of the food. Eat more vegetables as they can provide you with more fibre (filling you up) and have fewer calories than meat. Have less red meat and more fish or chicken. Change from full cream milk (blue top) to semi-skimmed or skimmed (green or red top). Avoid hidden fat in pastry and pies, biscuits, cakes, sausages and burgers.

For more information—please see our wide range of 'Self-Care' leaflets and factsheets, located in our waiting rooms and on our website.



Practice Charter

The Alma Partnership is committed to providing a high quality health service to meet the needs of all our patients. We regard the care for your health as a partnership between yourself and the doctors and staff. The success of this partnership depends on co-operation and shared responsibility. In this Charter we set out what our mutual responsibilities are to achieve a high standard of care.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOU	YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO US
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will offer an urgent consultation on the same day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform us of any change in name, address or telephone number.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We run an appointments system in this practice. You will be given a time at which the doctor or nurse hopes to be able to see you. You should not wait more than 30 minutes in the waiting room without receiving an explanation for the delay. • We will try to ensure that you are seen on time but some consultations take longer than others and we have no way of knowing about this in advance. If there is a patient with an emergency or a serious problem we will give them priority. When there is a prolonged delay, an explanation will be given by the receptionist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please do everything you can to keep appointments. Tell us as soon as possible if you cannot, otherwise other patients may have to wait longer. • Please try to be punctual. If you arrive later than your appointment time, this may cause delays and inconvenience to other patients. • Please ask for more than one appointment if you want more than one patient to be seen. • If we are running late, please be patient because on another occasion it might be you who needs the extra time. Please do not blame the receptionist. • Check in at reception on arrival.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency care is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only request a home visit if it is impossible to come to surgery. A doctor can see SIX patients in the time it takes to visit you at home. Out of hours visits should be for emergencies only.



OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOU	YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO US
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will offer advice on disease prevention and health promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are responsible for your health. Please act upon our advice and take medication as prescribed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will be received and addressed with courtesy and respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We expect you to treat our staff and doctors with courtesy and respect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We aim to have routine repeat prescription requests ready within 2 working days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request your repeat prescriptions in good time. Do not wait until you run out of medication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have undergone tests or X-rays ordered by the practice, we will inform you of the results at your next appointment. If no further appointment needs to be arranged we will advise you when and how to obtain the results.• If you consider that you need a second opinion on treatment not available in the practice, we will try to inform you of the best way of achieving this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test results take time to reach us. Please do not ring before you have been asked to do so. Please telephone between 2-5.30pm.• Enquiries about tests ordered by the hospital should be directed to the hospital, not the practice.• Please do not ask for or arrange a specialist appointment without first discussing the matter with your doctor.• If you later decide that you no longer need an appointment made for you, please inform both the hospital and us.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following discussions you will receive the most appropriate care given by suitably qualified people. No care or treatment will be given without your informed consent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In return we would ask you to try to follow the medical advice offered and to take any medication as advised. In the interests of your health, it is important for you to understand all the information given to you. Please ask us questions if you are unsure of anything.



OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOU	YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO US
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors and staff are involved in continued education and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can choose whether or not to participate in research or medical student training.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will try to answer the telephone promptly, and to ensure that there are sufficient staff to do this. You will be able to speak to a doctor by phone but you need to specify if it is urgent or routine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please keep your telephone call brief and avoid calling during the peak morning time for non-urgent matters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your suggestions and comments on our services will be welcome. A suggestion box is available for this purpose. Any complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Please contact the Practice Manager. • If you are totally dissatisfied with us or the services we provide, you have the right at any time to leave our list and to register with another practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe we have the right to bring to your attention if you have made inappropriate use of our services. • We also have the right to have patients removed from our list. In general we will only exercise this right in the case of patients who repeatedly and persistently ignore their own responsibilities to us and to other patients. We will remove from our list immediately patients who are violent or seriously abusive towards any of the practice staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have the right to see your medical records under the Data Protection Act 1988 subject to the limitations in law. Please note that a charge may be payable. • The contents of your medical records will be kept confidential. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have the right to express a preference to see a particular practitioner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please let our receptionist know if you would prefer to see a particular practitioner when booking your appointment.



NHS 111

NHS 111 is a service which makes it easy for you to access local NHS healthcare services. 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 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

When to use it

You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

Call 111 if:

- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- you need health information or reassurance about what to do next

For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacist in the usual way.

If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.

How does it work?

The NHS 111 service is staffed by a team of fully trained advisers, supported by experienced nurses. They will ask you questions to assess your symptoms, then give you the healthcare advice you need or direct you straightaway to the local service that can help you best. That could be A&E, an out of hours doctor, an urgent care centre or a walk in clinic, a community nurse, an emergency dentist or a late-opening chemist.

Where possible, the NHS 111 team will book you an appointment or transfer you directly to the people you need to speak to.

If NHS 111 advisers think you need an [ambulance](#), they will immediately arrange for one to be sent to you.

Calls to 111 are recorded. All calls and the records created are maintained securely, and will only be shared with others directly involved with your care.