

Medical students in our practice

Help us train the doctors
of the future

Most patients like to see a 'skilled' GP who listens to you carefully, takes notice of what you say, conducts any examination required by your symptoms, and then gives you appropriate advice and treatment. The difficulty is that the skills of a good GP cannot be taught solely by lecturers and consultants in universities and hospitals. Students need to be taught by GPs who are working in practices such as ours.

Our practice is a training practice

When medical students are towards the end of their studies and are well on the way to becoming qualified doctors, some of them will be lucky enough to come to Riverside and Tower House Surgeries. They will learn how to be a successful GP by being given the opportunity to work with our doctors and other staff. These trainee doctors will also be learning a great deal more when they meet and interact with our patients.



Riverside Surgery
Bovey Tracey

01626 832666

Tower House Surgery
Chudleigh

01626 852379



You decide

When you arrive to see your GP or a practice nurse, you might be asked if a student can be involved with your care. You will be told exactly what this will involve before any consultation and you will always be able to decide 'Yes' or 'No' to a student's involvement. If you say, 'No', this will have no effect on the care you will receive.

If you agree to a student's involvement, you can withdraw that consent *at any time*, and, again, this will have no effect on your care.

When might I see medical students?

- ❖ Students may be sitting in with doctors or nurses at the practice. The doctor or nurse will tell you about this and you can say if you would rather not see a student. Saying 'No' will not have any effect on the care you receive.
- ❖ You might be asked if the student can do the consultation while your doctor or nurse watches. The student may be asked questions by the supervising doctor or nurse. If something is said that you do not understand, please ask for clarification.
- ❖ You might be asked to see a student before your appointment, or to attend a student surgery. If you are asked to attend a student surgery, a doctor will always be in charge and will see you to make sure your problems are dealt with appropriately.
- ❖ You might be asked to come in to the surgery especially to talk to students about a problem which has been dealt with by the practice on an earlier occasion. If you have a long-standing problem, you might be asked to see students so that they can better understand its effects on your life.
- ❖ You might be asked if students can visit you at home.

What do I tell students?

If you are coming to see a doctor or nurse about an illness or problem and you've consented to the involvement of a student, then tell the student about it, how it affects your daily life, what worries you have and what you hope to gain from the consultation. It is important that students learn about illness from the perspective of the patient.

If you are seeing a student by special arrangement, then they will want to know how your illness was discovered, how it has developed and how it affects you, your family or friends now. They will also be interested in the investigations you had, what they were like, your treatment and any side-effects you have had. It is important for them to hear things in your own words.

If you know what is wrong with you then it is all right to share that with the student, unless the supervising doctor has asked you not to.

Will a student want to examine me?

Medical students need to learn how to examine patients sensitively. Your doctor or nurse may ask if a student can examine you during a consultation. If it is too painful or embarrassing, you can say 'No'. This will not affect the care you receive.

If a student sees you before you're seen by a doctor, they may ask to examine you. We hope you would be happy for them to look at your throat or ears, hands or feet.

You might be asked to undress so that a student can examine your trunk or limbs: this is up to you. No one will mind if you refuse or if you want to wait for the doctor to join the consultation.

Students will not ask to do a sensitive or embarrassing examination unless a doctor or nurse is present.

Can students do tests or treat me?

Medical students are not fully qualified doctors and they cannot treat patients or carry out procedures unsupervised. However, they may, for example, carry out a simple urine test as part of an examination.

A doctor will always check on the need for, and sign, any prescriptions or requests for investigations suggested by a student after discussion with you and the student.

Students have been or are being trained to do simple procedures like taking blood. If the doctor has checked a student's ability, then if you agree, the student may be allowed to carry out a procedure under supervision.

Can I ask students to explain things to me?

Students often have more time available and should be able to explain things in simple language. However, they are still learning so may not have answers to all your questions. What they can do is listen to your questions and ask a doctor or nurse to give you fuller answers.

Do students have access to my records?

It helps students if they can read the history of your problem and see what doctors have found. If you consent to the involvement of a student, we take it that you also consent to let a student look at your

records. Students are, of course, bound by the same rules of confidentiality as any doctor or nurse.

If you don't want students to look at your records please let us know.

Students may see the records of any patient when working with a doctor or nurse; this might include looking at results, dealing with hospital letters or reviewing notes as part of an audit.

What happens if a student upsets me?

That will be a very rare event. If it does happen, please let the doctor or someone in the surgery know at once. Be assured your concerns will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Checking a student's identity

Students will carry photographic proof of identity, usually a card from their university. You can ask to see their proof of identity whether they're seeing you at the practice or if they visit you at home.

Feedback from patients

If you have positive or negative views on the skills and behaviour of a student, it's always helpful for us to hear what you think. We like to know when a student has been warm and helpful or if they have seemed cold or muddled. Please tell the doctor or receptionist whenever you feel it appropriate, or write a note if you prefer.

Finally!

Students learn an enormous amount from the patients they meet, so we'd like to thank you for your help. It's all very important in making sure we have excellent doctors in the future who are both knowledgeable and caring.

If you would like to have a copy of this leaflet in a different format to make it easier to read, please contact the Practice.