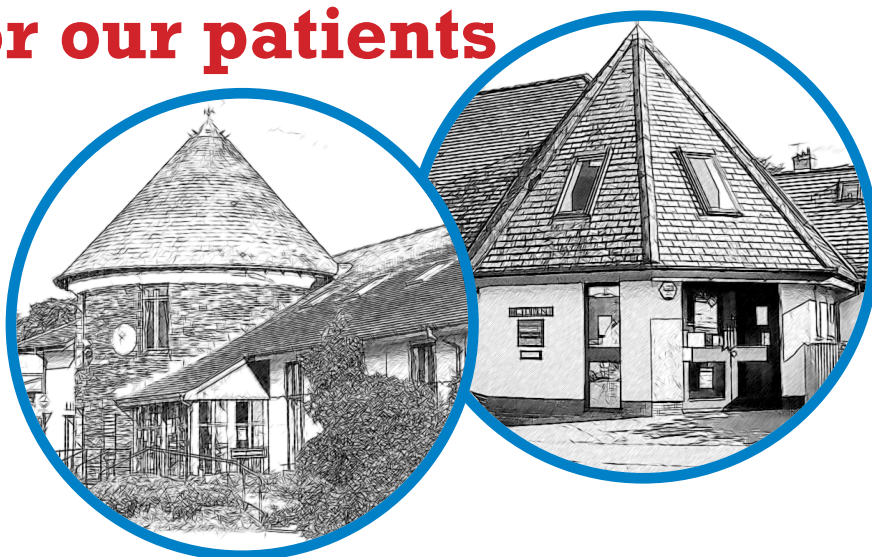


Newsletter for our patients

May 2022

Riverside Surgery
Bovey Tracey
01626 832666

Tower House Surgery
Chudleigh
01626 852379



Changes to our appointments system

The Covid pandemic forced us to make many changes to our appointment system including having all patients' requests for appointments being assessed by a clinician (this process is called 'triage') before any face-to-face appointment could be booked.

In April, as the workload caused by the pandemic, we were able to begin to change the way our appointment system works.

We are phasing out our telephone-first triage system that was put into place over the pandemic.

We have also greatly increased our pre-bookable capacity, and patients can now book face-to-face appointments with all our clinicians.

The changes to the appointment system are being made gradually, and we welcome our patients' comments on the new system.

We will be regularly reviewing and updating the system, and patient feedback will play a significant role.

Online booking

We have reinstated our SystmOne on-line appointment booking service and appointments will be available to book on-line as soon as they become live on our system.

Phone lines

We are still dealing with significant staff shortages due to Covid-19 isolation and difficulties in recruitment. As a result, our phone lines can become very congested at times, and, when you do get through, our non-urgent appointment capacity is often reduced.

We appreciate how frustrating these challenges can be, but we are doing our best with the resources we have.

As we all come to terms with how the Covid pandemic has forced long-term change upon everyone, please be patient.

If you need urgent help, perhaps for a collapse, a possible stroke or heart attack, or a life-threatening injury, do not phone the Practice. Instead, please phone 999 straightaway to get the immediate help you need.

Who else can help?

If you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do, phone NHS **111** from your mobile or landline. The NHS **111** service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If the person you're worried about is aged 5 or over, you can also visit <https://111.nhs.uk>.

If it's not a life-threatening situation, but you need urgent medical attention, you can go along to an Urgent Treatment

Centre (UTC). All Urgent Treatment Centres are open at least 12 hours a day, every day.

Conditions that can be treated at an urgent treatment centre include:

- ❖ Sprains/strains
- ❖ Suspected broken limbs
- ❖ Minor head injuries
- ❖ Cuts and grazes
- ❖ Bites and stings
- ❖ Minor scalds and burns
- ❖ Ear and throat infections
- ❖ Skin infections and rashes
- ❖ Eye problems
- ❖ Coughs and colds
- ❖ High temperature in children and adults
- ❖ Stomach pains
- ❖ Vomiting and diarrhoea
- ❖ Emergency contraception

The closest UTCs for our patients are Newton Abbot Community Hospital and Exeter (Sidwell Street) NHS Walk-in Centre.

Help from pharmacists

Pharmacists are experts in medicines who can help you with minor health concerns. As qualified healthcare professionals, they can offer clinical advice and over-the-

counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains.

If symptoms suggest it's something which could be serious, pharmacists have the right training to make sure you get the help you need.

All pharmacists train for five years in the use of medicines. They are also trained in managing minor illnesses and providing health and wellbeing advice.

Many pharmacies are open until late and at weekends. You do not need an appointment.

Visit this link to see how a pharmacy can help you: (<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/pharmacies/>)

Routine appointments

Our receptionists are here to help you and to direct you to the most appropriate health care professional in our team. This may be a GP, our nurse practitioner, a healthcare assistant, the pharmacist or perhaps our paramedic.

Remember that our receptionists do not make clinical decisions: they have been extensively trained to follow strict care guidelines defined by our clinicians.

If you wish to book a routine appointment, please try to avoid phoning between 08:30 and 09:30, as this is our busiest time.

Phone early if urgent

Patients who need urgent care, on the day, should phone as early in the day as possible to get an urgent same-day telephone appointment. This appointment will be with our Emergency Duty Team. This may be with our nurse practitioner, pharmacist, GP or paramedic. You will not be given a time frame for receiving an urgent, same day call, and you'll therefore need to be available all day.

To book an urgent same day call, you need to give the receptionist some details regarding the urgency. The duty team will clinically assess ('triage') everyone who asks for an urgent call back.

If you do not wish to give any details, the receptionist will advise you to pre-book an appointment rather than use an urgent call back.

eConsult

If you'd like to avoid waiting in our telephone queue for help with a non-urgent problem, we suggest you do an eConsult. This is a consultation where you fill in an on-line form about a health issue. It allows patients to get medical help without making an appointment or phoning the practice. We can often direct patients to appropriate alternative sources of assistance or suggest self-help resources.

To start an eConsult, please visit our Practice Website at <https://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk/>

After an eConsult has been submitted, a clinician will review the request and decide on the most appropriate care. This may come in the form of an email reply, a prescription, a sick note, a follow up phone call or a face-to-face appointment.

The great thing about eConsults is that they provide us with detailed information about your symptoms and the effect they are having on you, allowing us to respond effectively.

The Practice website also has a great deal of information and advice on many common medical problems: go to <https://towerhousesurgery.webqip.com/>

Evening appointments

Extra evening appointments are being made available, to be booked at Reception or by telephone.

On Mondays to Thursdays, one GP surgery in the Newton Abbot

area will be open from 6pm to 8pm and you can be seen at whichever GP surgery is open on that particular night. These sessions are for routine pre-booked appointments.

As these appointments are for patients from over a wide local area, you might not be seen by a clinician known to you from our practice.

Rota for Monday to Thursday evening appointments

- ❖ Riverside Surgery, Bovey Tracey: Monday, every week
- ❖ Devon Square, Newton Abbot: Alternate Tuesdays
- ❖ Cricketfield, Newton Abbot: Alternate Tuesdays
- ❖ Albany, Newton Abbot: Alternate Wednesdays
- ❖ Kingsteignton: Alternate Wednesdays
- ❖ Kingskerswell and Ipplepen: Thursday, every week
- ❖ Buckland: to be announced

Friday and weekend appointments

There are Friday and weekend appointments available at Albany Surgery. Patients can see a health care assistant, practice nurse, or GP.

This service is for pre-booked routine work and is not intended nor suitable for acute, urgent or walk-in situations.

- ❖ Fridays: between 6pm and 8pm
- ❖ Saturdays: between 8am and 6pm
- ❖ Sundays: between 8am and 1pm

For any life-threatening problem, you should phone 999 for immediate help.

For any other urgent or acute problem, you should contact NHS **111** for help and advice.