



# Helix Medical Centre

Herts & Essex Hospital, Cavell Drive, Haymeads Lane  
Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5JH.  
Tel: 01279 594450

## **PATIENT CHARTER**

**ALL MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM ARE DEDICATED TO PROVIDING EXCELLENT HEALTHCARE SERVICES TO MEET PATIENT NEEDS**

### **Patients' rights to General Medical Services:**

Patients have the rights to:

- Be registered with a General Practitioner.
- Change Doctor if desired.
- Receive appropriate drugs & medicines.
- Be referred for specialist or second opinion if they & the GP agree.
- Have the right to view their medical records, subject to the Acts & to know that those working for the NHS are under legal obligation to keep the contents confidential.

### **Changes to Procedures:**

When changes are introduced to practice procedures that affect patients, we will ensure that these are clearly explained, by means of our surgery leaflet; waiting room notice board, website, giving as much notice as practicable.

### **Repeat Prescriptions:**

To ensure the best knowledge of your personal health, these will be signed by a GP Partner wherever possible. 48 hours' notice is required for repeat prescriptions. **No prescription requests will be taken over the telephone.** Please either attend the surgery to make your request via our reception team or call your preferred pharmacy who will make the request on your behalf & currently collect prescriptions from the surgery on a daily basis. We also use the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) this enables your prescription to be sent electronically & directly to your chosen pharmacy.

### **Referrals:**

- Urgent referrals to other health & social care agencies will be made within 48 hours of the patient consultation. Where requested, our GPs will refer you to a private health provider.
- We will normally process non-urgent referrals within 7 to 10 working days of the patient consultation or the Doctor's decision to refer.

### **Test Results:**

When a Doctor or Nurse arranges for a test to be taken the patient will be informed to phone the surgery within a specified time period. Some results take longer to be processed than others so this may vary from one test to another. Please ask if unsure when to call for the result. **IT IS THE PATIENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT THE SURGERY TO OBTAIN YOUR RESULT – PLEASE CALL ONLY BETWEEN 10AM & 6PM.**

Please also remember that while the reception team will do all they can to help, they are not trained to discuss these results with you but will try to obtain further information or ask the Doctor to call you to discuss further.

### **Transfer of Medical Records:**

The GP2GP record transfer process is designed to automatically retrieve the patient's record safely, securely & quickly from the previous GP practice. Typically, the record will arrive within minutes of the patient details being entered on to the clinical system.

Not all GP2GP Electronic Health Records (EHRs) will send due to current restrictions, EHRs over 5MB in size &/or EHRs with more than 99 attachments will not send (a future version of GP2GP will remove these size restrictions) - in these instances, we would request your paper records from the Health Authority, resulting in it taking longer for your full medical details to reach us.

The Practice will endeavour to dispatch any medical record required by the Health Authority within 14 working days & on the same day if the request is urgent.

### **Privacy & Confidentiality:**

We will respect our patients' privacy, dignity & confidentiality at all times.



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## Appointments:

### **With a Doctor / GP Registrars / Medical Students:**

For **medically urgent** requests, we will triage your symptoms with our on-duty Doctor & offer an appointment on the same day if they deem your symptoms clinically urgent. For routine consultations patients can book the next available appointment via our reception team or online.

When appointments are in demand, we will implement a triage system that will involve a reception team member taking some details from you & arranging for the Duty Doctor to call you back on the same day to find a solution with you.

To facilitate this process, it would help if you are able to give the receptionist the information requested. If for any reason you are uncomfortable providing this information e.g., you are at your place of work, or it is highly personal information then state this clearly so this information can be passed to the Doctor.

**You must provide a contact number that can be answered by you when the Doctor calls back.**

### **Appointments are also available with the below staff:**

<b>Prescribing Nurse:</b>	Minor illness
<b>Physicians Associate:</b>	Minor Illness
<b>Practice Nurse:</b>	Routine nursing, ECG, 24-hour BP Monitoring, Childhood Immunisations, Travel Vaccinations, Health Advice, Smoking Cessation, Complex wound dressing, Asthma/Diabetes/COPD monitoring, Ear syringing, Suture removal, Cervical Screening, NHS Health Checks.
<b>GP Assistant/ Nursing Associate</b>	BP, ECG, 24-hour BP monitoring, Smoking Cessation, Wound dressing, Suture removal, NHS Health Checks, limited vaccinations
<b>Healthcare Assistant:</b>	BP, ECG, 24-hour BP monitoring, Wound dressing, Suture removal, limited vaccinations.

### **Appointment Delays:**

If there is a delay in the appointment wait (when you arrive) of more than 20 minutes our receptionist will endeavour to inform you. They are happy to update you on any delay situation if you feel that you have been waiting too long. You also have the option to rebook if desired.

### **To keep surgeries running smoothly & on time, please:**

Do not save up several problems for one appointment or ask the Clinician to see a family member too. Please ask for a longer appointment when booking if you have several problems as some take longer than others, we usually allocate a 10-minute slot per condition/illness. The Nurse or Doctor cannot deal comprehensively & safely with more than one problem in a single appointment & your request is likely to cause a delay to other booked patients. You will be asked to rebook an appointment if this happens.

### **Home Visits:**

We are unable to guarantee a specific doctor will visit you as this depends on availability & other factors. The decision to home visit will be at the Doctors' discretion. Usually after a home visit request is received, a Doctor will call the home phone number to talk to the patient & arrange a mutually convenient time. **Requests must be received as early in the day as possible.**

We would ask that home visit requests are only used as a last resort as the equipment available within the surgery is far superior to items that would be transported to your home.

### **Out of Hours Emergencies:**

We will do everything possible to ensure that our system for contacting the Duty Doctor is easy to follow, reliable & effective. The surgery telephone number diverts directly to the 'Herts Out of Hours Team' whenever the surgery is closed.



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## **Waiting Times:**

- Surgeries will normally start on time.
- We expect patients to be seen within 20 minutes of their appointment time, & in the event of a delay we will endeavour to offer an explanation, or you can speak with our receptionist for an update & rebook if you feel unable to continue waiting.
- When a Doctor is called away on an emergency, we will endeavour to inform patients & give the opportunity to book an alternative appointment, or if preferred, be seen by another doctor (if available) / wait if the Doctor is expected to return.

## **With these rights come responsibilities for patients - this means:**

- Courtesy & cooperation with the team at all times - remember they are working under Doctors' orders.
- Responding in a positive way to questions asked by the reception staff. Shouting / Swearing / Intimidating behaviour, Passive / Aggressive comments etc. will not be tolerated & may result in you being removed from our list.
- To attend appointments on time; if you arrive late we cannot guarantee you will be seen as your late arrival can affect the rest of the clinicians booked appointments and this is unfair to other patients who have arrived on time.
- To give the practice adequate notice if you wish to cancel an appointment. Someone else could use your appointment! **Call our cancellation line on 01279 594450 option 2.**
- An appointment is for **one** person only - where another member of the family needs to be seen or discussed, another appointment should be made & the medical record be made available.
- Patients should make every effort when consulting the surgery to make best use of nursing & medical time - home visits should be medically justifiable & not requested for social convenience.
- When patients are asked to give 48 hours' notice for repeat prescriptions, please give us this time as it is to allow for accurate prescribing.
- Tell us when you are not happy & give us a chance to work with you to get it right.