

# Why are GP practices working differently?

## GP practices are open but the pandemic is not over

In South West London there are still thousands of people getting Covid-19 every week, with many being admitted into hospital and some into intensive care.

Local GP practices treated people throughout the Covid lockdowns and continue to do so. We must make sure our practices are safe for our staff and protect patients who need to attend in person.

## How are practices working now?

When people need seeing face to face this should happen as quickly and safely as possible and it is important that people are assessed first to decide who needs:

- to be seen in person by one of the team
- a phone consultation
- a video consultation
- help from a community pharmacy or another health service

We also want to avoid asking people to travel to practices, where they may come into contact with unwell or infectious people, when this is not essential.

## How can I contact my GP?

You can still telephone your GP practice but, if your practice offers it and you are able to, the best thing to do is to use an online service on the practice website. You will then be contacted with the best appointment for you.

If you need help with minor injuries at any time or urgent care when your GP practice or pharmacy is closed visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or dial 111. 111 can also book out of hours appointments.

You can access NHS 111, contact your practice and get your Covid Pass using the NHS App. Search NHS App in your app store.

## Why do receptionists ask personal questions?

GP reception staff are skilled professionals and ask questions to make sure you see the right person at the right time and treat all information confidentially. If you don't want to speak on the phone, you can use the online service on the practice website, if your practice offers this.

## I wanted to see my GP, so why am I seeing someone else?

Many GP practices now include a range of professionals like physician's associates, nurses, practice pharmacists and paramedics who can help you. This means you can often be seen more quickly and if you then need to be seen by your GP they will organise this for you.

## Where else can I get help?

Always dial 999 in a life-threatening emergency.

Visit [www.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) for advice on common symptoms and a list of local services or speak to your community pharmacist first for advice on minor illnesses [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy)