

Dr Wendy Reeves
Dr Andrew Inglis
Dr Katy Turton
Dr Alison Pitt
Dr Kate Langridge



Tadcaster Medical Centre

Crab Garth

Tadcaster

LS24 8HD

Tel: 01937 530082

Fax: 01937 530192

www.tadcastermedicalcentre.co.uk

APPOINTMENTS

Like all other GP surgeries, it's becoming increasingly difficult to see everyone who needs to be seen that day and we have all reached a point where we need to look at ways to cope with the demand for doctor appointments.

Some practices are introducing a service (Doctor First) where all requests for appointments and home visits will result in the patient getting a telephone call from the doctor first.

In some practices you will only get an appointment by ringing in on the day.

In some, you will be asked by the receptionist if you mind saying briefly why you need an appointment with the doctor.

From **9th May** we are going to trial this last system for 3 months to see if we can make more doctor appointments available.

When you call the surgery, you will be asked if you mind saying briefly what the problem is, just as we do now if you request a home visit or need to see a nurse. You don't need to go into the full details, just something along the lines of:

- I've got back pain
- I think I might have a urine infection
- I've got a headache.

You don't have to tell the receptionist if you'd prefer not to, but telling her really does help us know how best to help you.

Our staff are not being nosy, but know how our system works. By asking for information about the problem, they can help find the best solution for your care. Helping you more efficiently also enables us to help others more efficiently.

Examples of some of the things our receptionists know:

- Which things can easily be dealt with by a doctor over the phone
- Which things involve a clinical area where one of our doctors is more expert than another
- What sorts of problems our practice nurse can deal with and prescribe medication for (examples include urinary tract infections and asthma flares, diabetes and contraceptive pill checks).
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- When talking to another member of our team makes sense rather than you having to wait to see a GP (examples include medication queries, requests relating to test results and if you have a particular form you need our help with).

One of our big concerns is to identify patients who may need more urgent attention than they think they might need.

If you need to be seen urgently you will be seen.

Confidentiality is guaranteed with all our staff, just as with the doctors.

We do not discuss your information with anyone, not even with colleagues unless it is relevant to your care and you have given your permission. Even the fact of you seeking our help is something we would not disclose.

Thank you for your help,

Drs Reeves, Inglis, Turton, Pitt and Langridge