

The Cross Keys Practice

December 2023

See our 'How to' leaflets' on our website on the 'online forms' page.

- How to amend your personal details
- How to book an appointment
- How to order a repeat prescription
- How to be seen as a temporary patient or as an 'immediate & necessary patient'
- How to get your test results
- How to make a compliment, comment or complaint
- How to register a death with the Registrar
- How to request Private / Non NHS paperwork
- Home visit policy

Staff Training Dates 2024

The practice will be closed from 1.00pm on the following dates for staff training.

Wednesday 17th January

Wednesday 7th February

Wednesday 13th March

If you need assistance during these afternoons, please call 111.

Staff News

At the end of August Dr Keran left the Practice to get ready for a move to work as a GP in Australia. One of our Practice Nurses, Laura Burton, also left us due to relocating out of the area. We were sorry to see them both go.

We have since recruited 2 Salaried GPs, Dr Ankit Chawla and Dr Daniela Dinca, and Olive Gronow as a Practice Nurse. We look forward to working with them all.

After 23 years at the practice, our Medical Secretary, Carol Newport is retiring at the end of the year. We are sure she will enjoy a well earned rest.

Phoenix Health PCN staff provide a number of additional services for us including Physiotherapists, Pharmacists, Health & Wellbeing Coaches, Mental Health Practitioners, Social Prescribers and Paramedics. You may be offered appointments with them or you may be contacted by them regarding your care. Please see the Phoenix Health PCN page on our website to see members of the team.



Emailing and texting

We are now communicating with patients more via text and email.

Please ensure you have given us consent to contact you in this way. Forms are available for you to sign up from reception or on our website under 'Online forms' then 'Consent form to receive SMS and Emails'.

Flu

If you are eligible for a free NHS flu jab and have not booked yet this winter, please call reception. We still have appointments available.

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Open Mon—Thurs

0800—1800

Fri 0800—1700

Diazepam no longer prescribed for flying

We will no longer be prescribing Diazepam for flight anxiety, and instead suggest flight anxiety courses which are easily accessible for those who wish to fly and conquer their fear of flying.

We have several reasons why we have taken this decision:

1. Diazepam is a sedative. This means, the medication makes you sleepy and more relaxed. If there would be an emergency during the flight, this could impair your ability to concentrate, follow instructions, or react to the situation. This could seriously affect the safety of you and the people around you.
2. Sedative drugs can make you fall asleep, however, when you sleep it is an unnatural non-REM sleep. This means, your movements during sleep are reduced and this can place you at an increased risk of developing blood clots (DVT). These blood clots are very dangerous and can even prove fatal. This risk further increases if your flight is over 4 hours long.
3. Although most people respond to benzodiazepines like Diazepam with sedation, a small proportion experience the opposite effect and can become aggressive. They can also lead to disinhibition and make you behave in ways you normally wouldn't. This could also impact on your safety and the safety of your fellow passengers or could lead you to get in trouble with the law.
4. National prescribing guidelines followed by doctors also don't allow the use of benzodiazepines in cases of phobia. Any doctor prescribing diazepam for a fear of flying would be taking a significant legal risk as this goes against these guidelines. Benzodiazepines are only licensed for short-term use in a crisis in generalised anxiety. If this is the problem you suffer with, you should seek proper care and support for your mental health, and it would not be advisable to go on a flight.

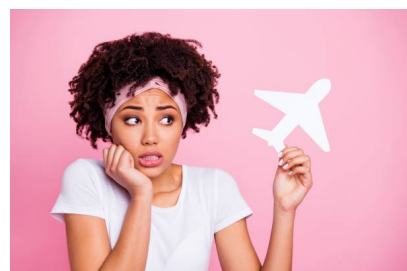
5. In several countries, diazepam and similar drugs are illegal. They would be confiscated, and you might find yourself in trouble with the police for being in control of an illegal substance.

6. Diazepam has a long half-life. This means it stays in your system for a significant time and you may fail random drug testing if you are subjected to such testing as is required in some jobs.

- Flight anxiety does not come under the remit of General Medical Services as defined in the GP contract and so we are not obliged to prescribe for this.
 - Patients who still wish to take benzodiazepines for flight anxiety are advised to consult with a private GP or travel clinic.
- It is important to declare all medical conditions and medications you take to your travel insurer. If not, there is a risk of nullifying any insurance policy you may have.

For further information/References:

We appreciate a fear of flying is very real and very frightening and can be debilitating. However, there are much better and effective ways of tackling the problem. We recommend you tackle your problem with a Fear of Flying Course, which is run by several airlines. These courses are far more effective than diazepam, they have none of the undesirable effects and the positive effects of the courses continue after the courses have been completed. Fear of Flying Courses Easy Jet
www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com Tel: 0203 8131644 British Airways
<http://flyingwithconfidence.com/courses/venues> Tel: 01252 793 250 Virgin Atlantic
<https://flyingwithoutfear.co.uk/collections> Tel: 01423 714900 1252250



New Telephone system

In September we moved to a new telephone system. The benefit to patients include an unlimited number of lines coming into surgery, so you will never hear an engaged tone. Our phone line opens at 8am and your call will be automatically queued. The first 8 calls in the queue will be answered in turn. The remaining calls will be automatically queued and you can select to have callback. You DO NOT lose your place in the queue! You will receive an automatic call back, when it is your turn in the queue. It is helpful if you can avoid using your phone until you receive your call back. However, if your phone is engaged you will receive 2 further call backs. After that, you will no longer be in the queue and will need to ring back to the Practice. You will be prioritised to the front of the queue if you call back on the same day from the same number.

Please note that if your telephone number is ex-directory you will not be able to receive a call back from our telephone system if requested.

Online access to notes

As communicated back in our June newsletter, our patients now have online access to their prospective/future records. We would like to bring to your attention that you may therefore read something in your notes from a secondary care appointment before your GP or consultant has contacted you to discuss. Documents you can view may contain details of a diagnosis you had not yet been made aware of.

We also understand that some of our patients may have encountered difficulties viewing certain documents (e.g. letters from the hospital) due to a software problem.

We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

We are pleased to inform you that this issue has been resolved for new documents being added onto the system. It may take up to a month for older documents to become visible.

Your GP team will have been able to access the letters so your care will not have been affected during this time.

Health and Wellbeing

Nutrition in a nutshell by your health coach Tais.

My top tip to get more nutrients to your food is to include chia seeds.

They are tiny black seeds from the chia plant (*Salvia hispanica*) and are packed with fibre, omega 3 (healthy fat!), protein, minerals, and antioxidants.

They are so versatile: you can add to yoghurt, smoothies, salads, soups, cakes, and you can also use 1 tablespoon of chia seeds in a cup of almond or coconut milk and leave in the fridge overnight. The seeds will swell and form a jelly-like structure that is very good for your gut health. Add berries and banana for a healthy breakfast.



If you want to improve your nutrition and lifestyle, the health coaches can support you. Ask your doctor, nurse, or the reception team for a referral to this free NHS service in our practice.

Patient's view

Now that our new phone system has been installed and our staff have become familiar with it, it is time to update the information on our appointments system. There are 3 ways you can book an appointment:

BY PHONE

You can make doctor or nurse appointments by phone. For a doctor's appointment you can request a face-to face or a phone consultation. There are a limited number of face-to-face appointments and, should you have a telephone consultation, the doctor will offer you a face-to-face consultation at a later time if they think it is appropriate. It is helpful if you can give the receptionist a short resume of your problem as, in some cases, they may offer you a more appropriate clinician to a doctor's appointment.

ONLINE VIA THE PATIENT OR NHS APPS

A limited number of on the day and future appointments are available to be booked via the Apps. You can only book telephone appointments online. On the day appointments go live at 8 am. You can choose the location and doctor when booking.

IN PERSON

You can book any type of appointment by attending either surgery in person. Our doors open at 8 am. Again, it is helpful if you can give the receptionist a short resume of your problem as, in some cases, they may offer you a more appropriate clinician to a doctor's appointment.

Doctor Booked Appointment

If a doctor wishes to see you for a further consultation, they can book you an appointment. They will normally advise you to ensure the date/ time is convenient. You will be able to see these appointments on the NHS or Patient Access Apps. In some cases, you may see 'Admin FYI' on the App. This is just a reminder to a doctor to review some aspect of your treatment. It is NOT an appointment and you do not need to attend or wait for a phone call. If the doctor thinks it appropriate they will advise of any follow up action.

Cancelling an Appointment

If you need to cancel an appointment you can do it by all of the means listed above, phone, online or, in person. Every appointment that you don't cancel costs the NHS £120 and denies fellow patients an appointment.

Summary

There are a variety of ways to book an appointment. Sadly, most days we cannot offer all patients an on the day appointment. When our bookable appointments have been filled, our receptionists will try to offer an alternative solution. They are trained to recognise those cases that need immediate attention. So, it is important that you can give them an indication and urgency of your problem.

Finally, as I always ask/plead, the PPG is there to put the patients view to the Practice, we need more members! It is your Practice and, at present, we are a very aged few and not representative of the patient population. If you want to know more, please email me at cross-keysppg@gmail.com.