



Access your GP

A useful guide for Enfield residents

Register with your GP, access services,
and know your rights.

healthwatch
Enfield

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Ways of getting medical help

It's not always necessary to book an appointment with a GP, or go to an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department, to get medical advice or treatment.

What is NHS 111?

NHS 111 is a FREE helpline which can provide advice about all medical issues and can direct you to the local service that can help you best. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and you can access it simply by dialling 111 from your landline or mobile phone or by accessing the NHS 111 online service at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or the BSL service at <https://interpreternow.co.uk/category/nhs-111>



You should call NHS 111:

- when you need help but it's not life threatening
- when you think you need to go to A&E
- when your GP practice is closed
- when you don't have a GP

How can the local pharmacy help?

Your local pharmacy can help you with a wide range of common illnesses such as coughs and colds, stomach upsets, aches and pains, minor cuts and bruises, insect bites, babies' teething problems, nappy rash, etc. You can find a list of local pharmacies on NHS UK website <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

When do I need a dentist?

If you have got toothache, bleeding gums, or need advice about how to look after your teeth, you should go to a dentist, not a doctor. You can find a list of local dentists on NHS UK website, www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist, or by phoning Healthwatch Enfield. For emergency dental help, **phone NHS 111.**

Who can help you at your GP practice?

What does a Practice Nurse do?

The Practice Nurse can carry out men's and women's health screening, including: height, weight and blood pressure checks; smear tests and can help you with stopping smoking.

You can see the practice nurse, if your child needs immunisation. The practice nurse can also help you manage long-term conditions such as asthma, diabetes and mental health.

The Practice Nurse can talk to you about pregnancy, sexual health, family planning and contraception. They can give you advice before travelling and provide you with vaccinations. The practice nurse can also, in some instances, ask for tests and prescribe medicines.

What does a Healthcare Assistant do?

The Healthcare Assistant can help with taking blood samples. You can see the Healthcare Assistant if you need your height, weight and blood pressure checked. The Healthcare Assistant can also give you diet and lifestyle advice.

Some Practice Nurses and Healthcare Assistants provide wound care, for example stitch removal and bandage changes.

Please ask the medical receptionist to confirm what services the nursing team can provide.

What does a Medical Receptionist do?

The Medical Receptionist is usually the first person you will meet at your GP practice. They are responsible for: registering you at the practice and providing you with information and advice; answering the phones and booking your appointment and helping you when you arrive or your visit including letting the doctor or nurse know that you are at the practice and telling you which room your appointment will be in. The Medical Receptionist can help you with booking an interpreter.

What does a Practice Secretary do?

The Practice Secretary helps with typing referral letters from your GP to the hospital and booking your transport for hospital appointments. You should contact the practice secretary to check if your referral has been sent off, if you have been waiting a long time for an appointment after your referral and to check the status of your medical forms. The Practice Secretary can help you with booking an interpreter.

The role of Patient Participation Groups

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) involve local people from a practice who want to take a more active role in working with their GP surgery. Patient Participation Group members work in a partnership with their GPs and practice teams to ensure that services provided by their practice are responsive to patients' needs and that the quality of care continuously improves.

Joining a Patient Participation Group will help you get a better understanding and knowledge of the practice and its staff. You will be part of a group who can suggest positive ideas for the practice and voice patient concerns. You can also encourage health education activities within the practice.

Joining a Patient Participation Group is not the way to deal with your individual complaints.

If you are interested in becoming a member of your local Patient Participation Group, all you need to do is contact the practice manager of your GP surgery and ask to join the group. You will be given all the information you need about the process.

What does a GP do?

Your GP can advise, give you the medicines you need and point you in the right direction if you need other specialist services.

General practitioners (GPs) treat all common medical conditions, and will arrange for you to see a specialist, or to receive urgent treatment for a serious condition, if needed.

GPs can provide advice on managing minor conditions and can help you to manage longer term conditions such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease to name a few.

GPs help you to look after your mental health as well as your physical health. If you are feeling anxious, depressed or feel you are not coping emotionally, you should make an appointment with your GP. They will arrange for you to see a specialist if needed.

It is important to see a GP as soon as you start to notice any worrying symptom, for example, a cough which lasts a long time or a small lump in your breast. The GP will arrange for tests, if required, which may help to identify a serious illness such as cancer at an early stage, which will increase your chance of a full recovery. They can also reassure you if there is nothing to worry about.

GPs can also help you and your family to stay healthy, and can give advice and support on how to give up smoking and lose weight.



Am I entitled to see a GP?

Anyone in the UK, regardless of nationality or immigration status, can register and consult with a GP free of charge.

How can I find a GP?

If you have access to the Internet, you simply need to:

1. Visit the NHS UK website <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp>
2. Put your postcode in the "Find a GP" search box

This will give you a list of practices in your area.

It will also provide the following information so you can make an informed choice about which practice to register with:

- Services the practice provides that may be relevant to you
- Whether there are male and female doctors at the practice
- How many patients are currently registered
- Whether patients would recommend the practice to others
- A "star rating" from other patients

If you do not have access to the Internet, you just need to call Healthwatch Enfield on 0208 373 6283 and we will do the search for you and send you the details by post.

What to consider when choosing a GP?

It is a good idea to find three local practices and then choose between them. Phone up to check whether your address falls within their "catchment area", an area covered by the practice. You may also want to visit each practice, to meet the receptionist, ask what services are provide, and have a look at the reception area.

You should also think about what you need from your practice, for example:

- Would you prefer to be seen by a female doctor?
- Does the practice have other staff who would support your healthcare?
- Does the practice provide maternity services, immunisations etc?
- Is there a doctor or nurse based at the surgery with a specialism which is relevant to you, such as mental health, dementia, asthma or diabetes?

You can find this information online, by going to the website of your chosen practices, or by speaking to the practice manager either in person or over the phone.

Register with a GP

Once you have decided on which practice you would like to register with, give the practice a call to confirm their arrangements for registering new patients.

You will usually be asked to complete a form called GMS which will ask for the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- NHS number, if you know it
- Name and address of your previous GP, if you had one
- Whether you wish to sign up for organ donation

Some GP practices will ask to see proof of identity and proof of address, however the law does not require you to provide this. NHS guidance clearly states that a practice cannot refuse to register a patient because they do not have identification or proof of address. You can ask to be registered on a temporary basis if you cannot provide these documents.

What if I am only visiting Enfield?

If you want to see a GP and are visiting an area for more than 24 hours but less than 3 months, you can apply to register with a GP surgery as a temporary resident. You will be entitled to the same treatment, free of charge.

You should also think about what you need from your practice, for example:

- Would you prefer to be seen by a female doctor?
- Does the practice have other staff who would support your healthcare?
- Does the practice provide maternity services, immunisations etc?
- Is there a doctor or nurse based at the surgery with a specialism that is relevant to you, such as mental health, dementia, asthma or diabetes?

You can find this information online, by going to the website of your chosen practices, or by speaking to the practice manager either in person or over the phone.



Are you having problems registering?

You just need to call Healthwatch Enfield on 0208 373 6283 and we may be able to help.

What if I don't speak English?

If you don't speak English, or if you use British Sign Language (BSL), you are entitled to an interpreter at no cost to you or the GP practice. The interpreter can help you with registration and accompany you to your appointment. You should always have a professional interpreter for a medical appointment, and the GP practice should not ask you to bring a friend or relative to translate for you.

You must inform the practice at the same time as booking your appointment that you require an interpreter, to make sure they have enough time to arrange this.

Are you having problems booking an interpreter at your practice?

Ask any of your friends or relatives who speak English to call Healthwatch Enfield on **0208 373 6283** and we may be able to help.

You must inform the practice at the same time as booking your appointment that you require an interpreter, to make sure they have enough time to arrange this.

Are you having problems booking an interpreter at your practice?

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Online GP services

Many GPs offer online services to their patients making it easier and more convenient to get in touch with your practice. Online services are not intended to replace traditional ways of contacting your GP practice, over the phone or in person.

By using the online service you can:

- book and cancel appointments any time of the day
- order your repeat prescription from home or workplace
- check your medications online

You need to speak to the reception staff to ask how to access online services.

How to make a complaint

If you are not happy about the service you received from your GP practice and would like to make a complaint, please contact Healthwatch Enfield via email admin@healthwatchenfield.co.uk or by telephone **020 8373 6283**

We will advise you about the best way of making a complaint including who to contact, what the process is and how it should be handled.



Support with making a complaint

If you received information on how to make a complaint but you need help, contact POhWER. It is a free, independent organisation which can help you with writing letters, preparing for meetings, and can accompany you to meetings.

Contact POhWER via email pohwer@pohwer.net or phone 0300 456 2370

Other ways of getting medical help

If you need urgent attention but your condition is not life-threatening, you can go to one of the Urgent Care Centres which are open 7 days a week at Chase Farm Hospital and North Middlesex University Hospital. Urgent Care Centres can treat conditions such as sprains and strains, broken bones, wound infections, minor burns and scalds, minor eye injuries etc.

If your condition may be life-threatening – for example if you are experiencing chest pain or breathing difficulties, you should go to the nearest Accident & Emergency Department.

Call 111 for weekend/ evening appointments

Have a question?

admin@healthwatchenfield.co.uk

www.healthwatch.co.uk

0208 373 6283