



**Not sure what to do
when you are unwell?**

**This leaflet will
help you make
the right choice**

A streamlined appointment service at Bridport Medical Centre

Life for staff at Bridport Medical Centre is always extremely busy. Some patients need to see a GP urgently but for many this is not the case. To ensure you see the most appropriate clinician at the right time there is now a :

48-Hour GP Service for new or suddenly-worsening conditions and a

Registered GP Service for ongoing care with your usual GP

These services are designed to ensure that all patients receive the right treatment, advice or information at the right time.

We need the understanding and cooperation of our patients to ensure the success of the new system.

We have produced this booklet describing the choices you can make when you are unwell.

This may not necessarily mean an appointment at the medical centre, as the booklet explains.

Why have the changes been made?

GPs, nurses and other staff at Bridport Medical Centre are under more pressure than ever before.

There are several reasons for this:

- we have an ageing population whose health needs may become more complex as they grow older
- the emphasis now is to care for people in the community wherever possible, rather than in hospital. GP services are heavily involved in their care
- there is a shortage of GPs and nurses. This may make it more difficult for our team to continue providing the high standard of care for our patients in future.

The new service will also help to relieve the increasing pressures on GPs, nurses and other staff at the centre.

For the most up-to-date information, please refer to our practice website: www.bridportmedicalcentre.co.uk

As a patient, what choices do I have?

When you or a member of your family has a health concern or injury we would like you to consider the choices you can make and pick the one that is best for you.

This could be:

- calling NHS 111 for advice and information
- self-care at home, perhaps with over-the-counter medicines
- talking to your local pharmacist
- attending your nearest Minor Injuries Unit
- going to your local GP-led Walk-in Centre at Weymouth Community Hospital
- using our GP 48-Hour Service when you have a new or suddenly-worsening health problem
- making an appointment through our Registered GP Service when you do not need an appointment within 48 hours
- going to the Emergency Department (A & E) at Dorset County Hospital or calling 999 in a life-threatening situation
- using other services that can help, for example if you are experiencing a mental health crisis (see page 13).

All these choices are explained in more detail in this booklet.

Please keep it for reference in the future.



Having a plaster cast fitted in a Minor Injuries Unit

Choose Self Care for adults - keep a well-stocked medicine cabinet

IN ADULTS, many minor ailments will run their course and be over in a relatively short period of time. Others can be treated at home with over-the-counter remedies to ease the symptoms.

Here is a list of ailments you can manage safely yourself.

- back pain
- cold sores
- common cold
- conjunctivitis
- constipation
- diarrhoea
- dysmenorrhoea (painful periods)
- earache
- haemorrhoids
- hayfever
- head lice
- headache
- influenza
- insect bites
- migraine
- nasal congestion
- nappy rash
- sore throat
- sinusitis
- sprains & strains
- thrush
- warts & verrucas

There are other conditions that can be managed at home if they are not related to any other underlying conditions, for example:

- cough that doesn't last for more than three weeks
- heartburn & indigestion unless symptoms persist

If a child is unwell, please call 111 for advice or call the 48-hour GP service (see P 10)

Still not sure what to do? Search the internet

There is plenty of useful information on the internet. For example:

[NHS choices](#) health A-Z of conditions and treatment

[Patient](#) for tips and advice on caring for minor illnesses

[Self Care Forum](#) where you can download leaflets and information on a huge range of minor ailments

[Self help page](#) on Bridport Medical Centre website with links to NHS Choices information about common ailments

You can also call [NHS 111](#) for information and expert advice at any time of the day or night (see page 6).

Be prepared to deal with minor illnesses by having a well-stocked medicine cabinet. Check that you have all you might need at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pharmacy/Pages/Pharmacyhome.aspx>

A [When Should I Worry](#) leaflet is a guide to parents on coughs, colds, earache and sore throats. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.whenshouldiworry.com/>

If then you are still not sure what to do, you can contact 111 for advice or the 48-hour GP service.

When should I dial 999?

Always call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.

Examples of medical emergencies are shown on page 13.

Choose NHS 111 - the non-emergency number 24/7

NHS 111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It's fast, easy and free. It is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

When should I call 111?

You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

Call 111 if:

- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to the Dorset County Hospital Emergency Department (A&E) or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call
- you need health information or reassurance about what to do next.

However, if a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

What happens when I call 111?

You will speak to an advisor, who is supported by healthcare professionals. They will assess your symptoms and direct you to the best medical care for you.

This could be a referral to:

- the Emergency Department (A&E) - they will call an ambulance for you if necessary
- the Out-of-Hours Doctor Service
- your local Urgent Care Centre
- your nearest Minor Injuries Unit
- an emergency dentist
- a late-night opening chemist.

Where possible, the NHS 111 team will book you an appointment or transfer you directly to the people you need to speak to.

Don't forget, NHS 111 is a 24-hour service, so you call them even when the medical centre is open if you are not sure whether or not you need to see a GP.

Choose your local pharmacist

Pharmacists are highly-qualified health professionals who do much more than dispense medicines. You can walk in and talk to them in confidence without an appointment.

They can provide you with:

- advice about your medicines, including repeat dispensing, reviewing your medicines, collecting and disposing of your old medicines and out-of-hours dispensing
- information and advice on a range of common conditions and minor injuries such as aches and pains, cystitis, colds and skin rashes, saving you a trip to the GP
- the 'morning after' pill – which is free for some people
- pregnancy testing kits, which have to be paid for
- a needle and syringe exchange service
- lifestyle advice on healthy eating, physical activity, losing weight and stopping smoking to help you improve your health and wellbeing
- flu vaccinations privately if you are not eligible for a free injection under the NHS.

Check with your local pharmacy about what services they offer.

To find out more about pharmacies you can log on to NHS Choices at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pharmacy/Pages/Pharmacyhome.aspx>

Pharmacies in Bridport

Boots UK Ltd

3-5 West Street, Bridport, DT6 3QJ

Tel: 01308 422475 (shop) 01308 456167 (dispensary)

Well Pharmacy Bridport

24 East Street, Bridport, DT6 3LF

Tel: 01308 422100

Lloyds Pharmacy

Bridport Medical Centre,

West Allington, Bridport, DT6 5BN

Tel: 01308 424350



**Information and advice
from a pharmacist**

Choose your local Minor Injuries Unit (MIU)

The Minor Injuries Unit at Bridport Hospital is run by nurses who are qualified to assess and treat non life-threatening injuries and illness for adults and children. Please note, they can only offer advice for children under one year. No appointment or referral is necessary (see below for opening times).

The nurses can:

- organise an X-ray (except for chest, spine or hip problems in adults or children under two). The X-ray service is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.45pm
- apply plaster casts
- close uncomplicated wounds
- prescribe a limited range of medications (some pain killers, antibiotics and anti-histamines)
- remove foreign bodies from eyes, nose and skin.

MIU nurses can perform dressings out of hours and at weekends if needed, to fit around work and childcare needs.

Visit Bridport Hospital MIU for:

- injuries to upper and lower limbs
- bites – human, animal and insect
- burns and scalds
- broken bones, sprains, bruises and wounds to shoulder, upper limbs, knees, lower leg, ankle and foot
- wound infections
- minor head injuries
- foreign bodies in eyes, nose and ear
- minor ailments - check with the Minor Injuries Unit
- emergency contraception
- minor asthma attacks.

Bridport Community Hospital

Minor Injury Unit (MIU)

Hospital Lane, North Allington

Bridport, DT6 5DR

Tel: 01308 426245. The last patient is seen 30 minutes before closing. Open 7 days a week 9am to 6pm, hours subject to change

[Bridport Minor Injuries Unit](#)



Choose a GP appointment – the Registered GP Service

When you think you need to see a GP, it would help us if you took a moment to decide whether you need an urgent or non-urgent appointment. The information below will help you decide.

Although you can ask to see any of the GPs at the centre, it is also helpful for continuity of care if you try to see the GP you are registered with each time and normally see.

This makes the best use of your current appointment if time does not have to be spent asking you about your recent history.

When should you choose the Registered GP Service (for non urgent appointments with the doctor you usually see)?

This service **is** for:

- complex medical cases where your regular GP has started investigations and is in a better position to manage your care
- multiple problems
- ongoing mental health problems, unless you are in sudden severe distress
- long-term heart / lung conditions unless there is a sudden deterioration.

You may have to wait one to two weeks for a non-urgent GP appointment. If you feel you need to be seen sooner than the first available appointment, you will be asked to talk to the Duty GP. He or she will assess your request and decide whether your regular GP should see you sooner. Please do not ask for this unless you feel it is absolutely necessary.

The Registered GP Service is not suitable for:

- long-term disease reviews that could otherwise be managed by the nurse team e.g. blood pressure checks
- self-limiting illness that can otherwise be managed by you at home, or with advice from your local pharmacist or NHS 111
- administrative requests – for sick notes under 8 days or repeat prescriptions. If you have a non- NHS request please ask to be directed to the appropriate administrator
- other tasks that could be managed by the nurse team, including blood tests/dressings or ear syringing for example.

Choose a GP appointment – the 48-Hour GP Service

The 48-Hour GP service ensures that patients with a new or rapidly worsening health problem see a healthcare professional within 48 hours.

This could be a **GP or experienced Nurse Practitioner**. Nurse Practitioners are qualified to diagnose and treat a wide range of medical conditions, but will always refer to a GP if necessary.

Demand for this service is very high. We have found that it is best to ask patients to come along within a half-hour slot instead of being given an exact appointment time.

For example, you may be asked to come between 11 and 11.30am. This gives the GPs the flexibility to spend as much time as needed with each patient, which will vary from person to person. But it does mean you may have to wait for up to an hour to see the doctor. We would ask you to be understanding and patient and perhaps bring a book to pass the time.

The 48-hour GP Service **is** suitable for:

- sudden infective conditions such as a cough, earache, sore throat and skin infections that have not responded to self-care at home (see page 4)
- sudden musculoskeletal problems such as back pain, newly-painful joints.
- sudden asthma or a worsening of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

The 48-Hour GP Service is not suitable for

- complex medical cases where your GP has started investigations and is in a better position to manage your care
- multiple problems
- long-term mental health problems, unless you are in sudden severe distress (see P 13)
- long-term heart/lung conditions unless there is sudden deterioration
- dental problems (see Other Services on page 14)

The 48-Hour Service is **NOT** a drop-in/ walk-in service. You will be offered the next available slot.

Choose a GP appointment - talking to the receptionist

What happens when you call for a GP appointment?

You will be asked by the receptionist for a brief reason for wanting to be seen by the 48-Hour Service. If you wish to speak to a member of staff confidentially, please ask.

These questions have been set out by the doctors to ensure you are given the same advice as a GP would give.

This will:

- direct you to the most appropriate clinician. This may include the pharmacist
- prevent delays in potentially life-threatening conditions.

Receptionists have an important role in helping us tend to those patients who need immediate attention.

They are part of our clinical team and are bound by the same rules of patient confidentiality as the doctors and nurses.

You do not have to divulge sensitive information if you would prefer not to, but please answer as fully as you are happy to do.

NB If you would prefer to be registered with a different GP, please notify reception. We will organise this if the GP has space on their list, otherwise you will be added to a waiting list.

Choose the GP-led Walk-in Centre

Weymouth Hospital -
Community Urgent Care Centre

Weymouth Community Hospital
Melcombe Avenue
Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 7TB
Tel: 01305 980000
Open: 7 days a week. 08.00 – 20.00

More information:

<http://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/services/pages/miu/weymouth-community-hospital.htm>

Choose the Emergency Department (A & E) or call 999

Only call 999 or go to the Dorset County Hospital Emergency Department in a genuine life-threatening emergency, such as:

- loss of consciousness
- sudden confused state and fits that are not stopping
- persistent, severe chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped.

Emergency Department (A&E)
Dorset County Hospital,
Williams Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2JY
Tel: 01305 255541

[Dorset County Hospital](#) overview on NHS Choices

[Dorset County Hospital](#) hospital website

[Visiting an A & E department](#) urgent and emergency care services in England - information from NHS Choices

Choose Mental Health Urgent Care Services

Most people with mental health problems can obtain the help they need from services at the medical centre or from the [community mental health team](#) based at Bridport Community Hospital (01308 426281). If you feel you have become so unwell that you need to come into hospital, contact your Care Co-ordinator or the lead professional involved in your care.

If you feel it is urgent that you come to hospital you can contact the [Crisis and Home Treatment](#) team directly on 01305 361269.

In an emergency, call 999.

Choose Other Services

Use the NHS Choices website to find services in the Bridport area and elsewhere, such as: Emergency Department (A&E), hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacies, care homes and care at home, maternity, depression, alcohol, sexual health, stop smoking and urgent care services.

<http://www.nhs.uk/service-search>

Self referral and Support Groups ~ someone to talk to

Take a look at Bridport Medical Centre website for some useful links to [online support, self referral services and local groups.](#)

Bridport Medical Centre

West Allington

Dorset DT6 5BN

Tel 01308 421896

www.bridportmedicalcentre.co.uk