



# Pembroke Road Surgery

[www.pembrokeroadsurgery.co.uk](http://www.pembrokeroadsurgery.co.uk)

## What is the current position at Pembroke Road Surgery?

On behalf of the team at Pembroke Road Surgery, we would like to give you some updated information to help you and your family at this time.

**The last few months have been challenging for all of us and we recognise how the pandemic has affected people in different ways.** Your GP surgery has had to adapt to this change recognising that all the needs of our population have not gone away.

Our focus over the last few months has been on the most unwell patients but we have gradually adapted our systems to try and manage some of the less urgent needs of our population. We are very aware that heart disease, strokes, cancer and all the many chronic diseases have not gone away. We are working on innovative ways of supporting our patients with chronic disease, minimising their risk of complications from these diseases and reducing modifiable risk factors for disease prevention.

So how can you help us?

Firstly, we are still trying to conduct most of our consultations remotely so please do not come into the surgery unless you have been specifically asked to by one of the staff. This will help to protect you, us, and other vulnerable patients. Please continue to telephone with any queries you may have as we are unable to accommodate walk-in queries at present.

If you are asked to come in, you will quickly recognise that we have designed the system for infection control. We have a new access at the back of the surgery up the ramp. You will also see two gazebos in the garden where we may conduct simple procedures like blood taking or even undertaking simple clinical assessments where allowed. If you would rather not be assessed outside, please make this known to our staff and we will accommodate you. At the top of ramp there is an intercom access through which we can manage people entering the building. Please arrive at your appointment time. If you arrive early you may be asked to take a short walk and return. Please follow the signs as this has been designed to maintain strict social distancing.

Inside the building...

**Please ensure that you wear a face mask and use the hand sanitiser when you enter the surgery.**

If you think you may have coronavirus we would ask you not to attend the surgery. The current guidance is to **look at 111online for advice** - <https://111.nhs.uk/> .

You will find that all our staff are wearing face masks and that clinical staff will wear personal protective equipment when assessing you. Please be aware that we are unable to provide patient toilet facilities in the surgery at present. Whilst waiting for your appointment, you will be advised to wait in a specific area that maintains good social distancing. Once your

appointment has concluded you will be supported out of the surgery through the front door. As you can see the new system of seeing patients takes more time and effort and therefore we have to carefully consider who will benefit most from a face to face consultation. Please bear with us.

How do I seek help at the surgery?

We have been updating our website to try and provide information especially about COVID-19. You will also find lots of other information such as how to make appointments, ordering medicines, accessing help through your local pharmacist and lots of self-help resources. Please feel free to make yourself acquainted with our site and we welcome feedback on how to make it even better.

We have introduced a new means of consulting us through **e-consultation**. You may access this through our website. This is a means of telling us more about your query so that we can get back to you by the end of the next working day.

If you think you need to phone the surgery, take a moment to have a think about why you are calling.

Think: can this problem wait and if so...how long? Have a look on our website, <https://www.pembrokeroadsurgery.co.uk/self-help-centre>, [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or <https://111.nhs.uk/> or [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info) to see if you can find out more about your problem: it might give you some self-care tips you should try first.

We have recently opened a small number of routine appointments for individual doctors. These are limited and so please consider alternative means such as e-consultation for contacting us about more routine matters.

Referrals...

As you may be aware referrals to hospital for imaging and routine specialist care were suspended during the initial lockdown. They were opened again at the beginning of June however there is currently a severe backlog in routine imaging, specialist appointments and routine surgical procedures. This means that existing and new routine referrals will be delayed.

**Urgent care** is still being managed in the same way and we would encourage you to seek advice about urgent problems as soon as possible rather than delaying any presentation.

Most of our appointments will be conducted via telephone triage. This means a clinician will speak to you on the phone, to work out if your problem can be managed that way, or if we need to see you face to face. We know it can feel strange not being able to see your doctor in person and not being examined. But did you know that 80% of diagnoses are made from the story of your symptoms alone?

There are some [tips on our website for making the most of a telephone triage consultation](#) that

can really help us and you.

We can also now send information via secure text messaging and do some video consultations via your mobile phone. If we want to do a video consultation, we will text you a link to click on to set up the consultation system.

A photograph can sometimes be useful for assessing a condition remotely. This is particularly so for skin conditions. You may attach a photograph securely to an e-consultation or to a secure link that we send you via a text message. Photographs received in this way are stored securely in your medical record. If you are not happy for any photographs to be stored this way then please make this known to the surgery at the time.

For some things like vaccinations, wound dressings, medication reviews etc., business has continued as usual.

We are still deferring certain face to face activities until we are clear that the main concern around the pandemic are firmly behind us.

**We are deferring/limiting:**

- Travel advice and injections
- NHS health checks and routine medication reviews
- Minor surgery and injections,
- Spirometry
- Routine blood tests that can safely wait

This is in line with what we have been advised by the government and what other surgeries will also be doing. This may change; this list is up-to-date at the time of publication, we will try to post updates about this on our website.

**Thank you for all your support and all your well wishes as we navigate our way through this crisis.**

There are some more things you can continue to do to help us in our plight:

1. [Order your prescriptions online](#) if possible, and expect them to take longer than usual. They will go electronically straight to the chemist, please allow **7 days before collecting from the pharmacy**. Do not come to surgery to collect them. **We cannot change the pharmacy that your prescription has been sent to.** Once issued, **your prescription must be collected from your “nominated” pharmacy.**

**Prescriptions can now be sent to any pharmacy in England. We can text you with a special code to obtain the medication from any pharmacy.**

2. Please don't over-order medications, especially inhalers or paracetamol. If you don't normally need an inhaler but fancy getting one just in case you get Covid - don't. Wait and see if you need it: if you do, you can call us and we can get an urgent prescription for you. The supply of inhalers is already running short - make sure those people who need an inhaler every day of their normal life can still get hold of them.

3. **Please do still “bother us” if something feels important or worrying to you!** For example, if you are worried your symptoms may fit with the red flags for cancer we want to hear from you. The 111 website can also be helpful to decide if you should call a GP about your problem.
4. If you need to call 111 or go into hospital, they may not have access to your GP medical notes, so think about writing down your medications and past medical problems somewhere, as well as any allergies that you have.
5. Have a think about what you want to do if you get very sick. Tell your relatives, and consider writing this down somewhere it would be easy for paramedics to find (some people put this in the fridge, as paramedics always check in there for medications!). Get paperwork organised, and think about if anyone should have a spare key to your house.
6. **If you are isolated or alone, we want to hear from you!** If you do not have relatives who can help you, we want to know! There are lots of people out there who can help you if you are on your own, and they will be careful not to invade your privacy. But a bit of care and a regular supply of food can make the world of difference. So if you need some support or a helping hand, **please contact reception who can make contact with our social prescriber for you.**

Remember, your GPs, nurses, health care assistants, admin staff, receptionists, pharmacists and dispensers are working longer hours, and in different ways from usual to support you through what is an unprecedented time for us all.

Look after each other. Protect the vulnerable. Work as a community. Look after yourselves.

And don't forget... wear a mask and wash your hands!!

With best wishes -

**From the whole team at Pembroke Road Surgery**