

## **Corbett Medical Practice service during the pandemic – Questions and Answers**

The Corbett Practice team is committed to providing the best service possible to our population that we serve.

We understand that this is a frustrating time for all of our patients and the changes in ways of doing things cause a degree of concern. We thought that we would put some queries and answers on here to help our patients understand the issues caused by the pandemic and what solutions we have designed.

- **Why can't I book a face to face appointment directly?**
  - Answer: We previously had 15-20 people in our waiting rooms at any one time – with a high proportion of our patients over 65, this is no longer considered safe. If one of our patients or one of our staff were to be unknowingly infected, large numbers of patients could be infected by coming to the practice if we continued all the face to face appointments as previously. We can still see patients face to face after a phone triage, but in much smaller numbers to keep everyone safe. Many conditions can be accurately managed by phone with addition of photo or video as needed.
  
- **Can I be seen face to face if needed?**
  - Yes. At a phone triage, the clinician will assess if the problem can be confidently dealt with remotely, but if it can't, we have safe systems for seeing patients face to face while keeping numbers limited in the waiting rooms. We also keep time in a consulting room to the minimum for just an examination, with further discussion (if needed) by phone. The chairs / couches are cleaned between each patient.
  
- **What about photo and video appointments?**
  - We will phone first but having a smart-phone really helps in some consultations when we can send a text link to upload photos or start a video consultation. It's not a perfect solution but can really help in many circumstances.
  
- **Are GPs and GP staff working less hard now?**
  - No. We have all been working hard throughout the pandemic and have seen patients face to face throughout where there was a clinical need. Initially we invested much time developing new safe systems when working during lockdown. We are now busier than before the pandemic, offering the same or more appointments as before but with phone triage to start with. Like many of our working age patients, doctors, nurses, receptionist and administrative staff have to cover for colleagues who have to self-isolate and do their job as well as our own.
  
- **Why do I have to wait to get through by phone?**
  - We are much busier on the phones than before the pandemic as all queries come through the phone. Internet booking was previously limited for safety reasons.

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- **Can I book appointments on-line?**

- We are opening some internet booking for appointments now – please note these are phone appointments – we have had some patients turn up in person when they have booked a phone appointment and it always is difficult to ask them to return home to take the call.

- **A phone appointment doesn't feel the same as a face to face appointment**

- We agree! We much prefer face to face appointments too and look forward to a time when we can get back to many more of these. There are patients who have benefitted from the phone / photo / video consultations and a blend of options is likely to be the way forward.

**We have had some very positive feedback from our patients which keeps morale up when times are tough for all our staff.**

**Do tell us when things don't work well too. As a team, we continually strive to get the best out of difficult situations and appreciate when our patients understand we are doing our utmost to keep a good service running.**