

Getting started with GP Online Services

Did you know that since April 2015, you don't have to wait on the phone to speak to your GP surgery?

Just like online banking, you can look at your GP records on a computer, a tablet or a smartphone, using a website or an app. You can choose to:

- **Book and cancel appointments** with your doctor or nurse online, when it suits you. Your surgery will choose which appointments can be booked online.
- **Order repeat prescriptions online**. Some patients have found that they save money and time as they don't need to make a special trip to their surgery to order repeat prescriptions.
- **Look at part of your GP records online**. You can look at your records whenever you want, even from the comfort of your home, and find answers to questions you may have without ringing your doctor.

You can already go online and see some of the information in your GP records, including your medications and allergies. During the next year, you will be able to see even more. This will include illnesses, immunisations and test results. Each GP surgery will make this information available at different times, as their computer systems become ready.

Online services are free to use and are just another way of contacting your surgery. You can still ring them or go to your surgery in person like you do now. You can also still request your full printed records from your surgery. They may charge you for this.

Anyone can benefit from using online services

We have found that a lot of people can benefit from using online services. Please see the comments below from patients who use these services. For a video of what other patients had to say, go to: **www.nhs.uk/patientonline**.

'Ordering repeat prescriptions online saves me a lot of time. If I realise I'm running low and the practice is closed on the Saturday, all I do is log on, request the relevant medication from the drop down list and then pick it up a few days later.'
Adam, University Health Centre.

About online records, **Ingrid (Thornley House Medical Centre)** said *'I have had access to my online records since 2006. With online access to all my GP held information, I have all I need, anywhere in the world 24/7. With several chronic conditions, I can share the information with other health professionals to keep me safe.'*

'I am a carer for my mother and a mother to two small children. It has now become essential for me to access GP appointments online. Having access to the online booking system has allowed me to fit appointments around our family as a whole. I now have the opportunity to plan my time and life better. I can book an appointment for my mother at a time which suits her and her carers whilst at the same time, I can take my children to football practice. There is no more phoning around for me!'
Keymn, Arran Way Medical Centre.

How to sign-up for online services

It is not hard to start using online services. Your surgery will need to check who you are to make sure you only see your record and not someone else's. Just like your bank or the post office when you pick up a parcel, your surgery wants to protect your records from people who are not allowed to see them. The steps below explain how this works.

1. Tell your GP surgery you would like to start using online services.

2. Your surgery will give you a short form to fill in and sign to confirm you agree with the information on the form.

3. Your surgery will then check you are who you say you are. They will do this in one of three ways:

    - Photo ID and proof of address, for example, a passport or driving licence and a bank statement or council tax statement.

    - If you do not have any ID and are well known to your surgery, a member of staff may be able to confirm your identity.

    - If you do not have any ID and are not well known to your surgery, they may ask you questions about the information in your GP record to confirm the record is really yours.

4. Your surgery will then give you a letter with your unique username and password. It will also tell you about the website where you can log in and start using online services.

When you ask your surgery to register you for online services, they might discuss with you why you want to use these services. For example, if they think your record may be seen by someone who shouldn't see it, they might decide to give you access to book appointments or order your repeat prescriptions only. If your surgery doesn't think it is in your interest to use GP online services, they will discuss their reasons with you.

If you forget your login details

If you lose or forget your login details, go to the website and click the 'forgotten details' button, then follow the instructions.

If this does not work, please contact your surgery.

Things to remember

- No one should force you to share your username, password or GP records. You have the right to say no. If someone asks to see your records and you don't want them to, tell your surgery as soon as you can.
- You can choose to let another person see your medical records, for example members of your family or a carer. To do this safely, speak to your surgery. Some surgeries are not able to do this at the moment but will do so in future.
- You can choose to stop using online services at any time by telling your surgery.
- If you change surgeries, you will need to register again for online services at your new surgery.

Learn how to use the internet

There are a lot of places where you can learn how to use the internet. Many are provided by local authorities, colleges and charities. A good place to start is your local library, but there are many others where you can learn for free, such as

- UK online centres which help people learn how to use the internet and manage their health online. For more information and to find your nearest local venue, please go to **http://www.learnmyway.com/** or ring **0800 77 1234**.
- Age UK helps older people get online. For more information and to find your local Age UK centre please go to **www.ageuk.org.uk** or call Age UK Advice on **0800 169 6565**.
- Digital Eagles at Barclays Bank run sessions to teach people how to use the internet. Call into your branch and ask to talk with their Digital Eagle or book onto a 'Tea and Teach' session. Information is also available on their website **http://www.barclays.co.uk/DigitalEagles/P1242671738729.**

Learn how to use GP Online Services

If you already know how to use the internet, you can take a short course on how to start using GP services online at **http://www.learnmyway.com/what-next/health.**

