

Help West Bar Surgery to Help You!

Can I see the advanced nurse practitioner?

At the Monday walk in surgery, and on most days of the week, we have one or more advanced nurse practitioners available for people to see.

These are very experienced nurses who have the expertise to manage lots of medical problems. They are also able to prescribe medication (like antibiotics, pain killers etc) if needed without asking a doctor. They have had special training to do this expert role.

For example they can deal with: sore throats, tonsillitis, ear infections, bladder infections, back pain, chest infections, asthma, headaches, migraines, skin problems and so on....

By seeing the nurse practitioner you are 'freeing up' the doctors to deal with the problems only they can deal with. At the moment many patients are saying 'they only want to see a doctor' for a problem the nurses could easily deal with. By doing this they are blocking up valuable doctor appointments and making the wait for everyone to see a doctor even longer. At the moment it is very, very hard to find any new doctors (**see below**) so we really want the doctors to only be seeing people that definitely need a doctor.

If you are not sure if the nurse practitioner will be able to deal with your problem then ask one of our reception team. Even if you see the nurse and they then find it is more complex – **then they will always ask a doctor to see you.**

We really want the care at West Bar to be excellent; and to keep appointments with doctors as available as we can. So please help us to help you - let the receptionist know a little about your problem if possible. Then, by agreeing to see the nurse practitioner, pharmacist, nurse, health care assistant etc you are helping us to save the doctor appointments for those that really need them. We hope this will keep down waiting times for everyone.

Thank you,
Dr Ann Sanders



Why is it so hard to find doctors?

This is a national problem - the Royal College of GPs says that 75% of doctors across 540 general practices over the age of 55 are nearing retirement. ... and there was a fall of 15 per cent in the number of doctors training as GPs last year, and 451 training places unfilled. This means the UK may be short of 10 000 GPs by 2020.

Why are not enough new doctors becoming GPs and why are doctors leaving?

Government funding for general practice is falling in real terms year-on-year, while the costs of running a practice are spiralling out of control; and the number of patients is rising all the time – so the work has become more stressful and therefore much less attractive as a career.

90% of all patient contacts in the NHS occur in general practice - but in 2017/2018 we will only receive 7.3% of the budget. This shows that general practice is exceptionally good value for taxpayers' money - but it desperately needs more – we think about 11% of the NHS budget would keep help it afloat and allow us to offer a good service to the UK population.

In 2016 there were record numbers of practice closures in England, with more than one GP surgery closing every week (not including mergers). The proportion of patients waiting for more than two weeks for an appointment has risen to a record high of 20% – up from 12% five years ago

What can we do about this?

As patients we all need to think about how we use the whole NHS and make sure we look after it – that means:

- looking after ourselves (healthy eating, exercise, stopping smoking etc),
- trying to use online advice if we can (patient.co.uk symptom checker is good)
- using the local pharmacist for advice
- using the excellent knowledgeable reception team for advice about who best to see – we aren't trying to 'fob you off' but want you to use ' the right person for the right problem at the right time' e.g. the dentist for a tooth problem, seeing the health care assistant for a BP check etc
- ordering medications etc well in advance so they don't become 'urgent'

We can also speak to our local MPs, the local papers and 'powers that be' to remind them how important the NHS is to all of us.

