



How to use **NHS 24** when your GP surgery is closed



08454 24 24 24



SECTION 1:

Introduction to NHS 24



Please take time to read this booklet – it explains how NHS 24 can help you when your GP surgery is closed and what will happen when you call us. Knowing what to expect from us at NHS 24 will help you if you have to call.

Most people call us when their GP surgery is closed, for example, at night (from 6pm until 8am the following day), over a weekend or a public holiday. We call this ‘out of hours’.

When GP surgeries are closed we work with your local NHS Board to provide you with health-care services.

If your GP surgery is closed and you can’t wait until it opens, you can call NHS 24. We will direct you to the right care for you or the person you are calling for. This may be to your local Health Board’s out of hours services, Accident and Emergency department, or the Scottish Ambulance Service. If appropriate, we may recommend some steps you can take to look after yourself at home.

If you think someone’s life is in danger and you need an emergency ambulance, dial 999.

TIP: We would encourage you to keep this booklet somewhere handy, such as next to your phone, so that you know where it is, should you need to call us.

SECTION 2:

If you are ill and need help



When should I call NHS 24?

If your GP surgery is closed and you can't wait until it reopens, phone NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24**.



Calling for someone else?

You can call NHS 24 on behalf of someone else – for example, if you are a carer for a child, elderly relative or a neighbour – if they cannot speak to us themselves.

Not calling from home?

If you are not calling from home, we will need to know, for your own safety, where you are and the phone number you are calling from. If, for any reason, your call is cut off, we will call you back.

When you call NHS 24

When you call NHS 24 you will hear a message explaining that all calls are recorded as part of your patient record and may be used anonymously for research purposes. This is to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible service to our patients. You will also be given the option to listen to advice on flu or medication.

Your call will then be answered by a highly trained call handler.

The call handler will introduce themselves and ask you clear questions that are easy to follow. We do not have access to your GP medical record, so the details we ask for are important in case we need to get you help quickly or we need to call you back. This part of the call will take a couple of minutes.

You will be asked to provide the following details about yourself or the person you are calling for:

- name;
- date of birth;
- home address or the address where you are calling from;
- telephone number you are calling from; and
- GP's name and practice.

You will then be asked some questions about the reason for your call. This is to make sure that you are passed to the most appropriate person.

Talking to a nurse

If you need to speak to a nurse, the call handler will transfer your call.

The nurse will:

- double-check the details you gave to the call handler (in case you need help quickly, such as an ambulance, or your call gets cut off);
- ask you questions about your symptoms to assess what care you need; and
- ask you about your medical history including medication or allergies.



TIP: If you have a phone that allows you to programme telephone numbers into it, you might want to programme in our number, **08454 24 24 24**. If you have a mobile, why not do the same?

When the assessment is complete, the nurse may:

- give you practical advice about how best to look after yourself, or the person you are calling for, if you or they do not need face-to-face care;
- give you information and reassurance about your symptoms or those of the person you are calling for
- tell you where your nearest pharmacy or chemist is and when it is open (for example, late at night), or arrange for you to speak to a pharmacist over the phone;
- ask you to go to a primary-care emergency centre (this is where your local NHS Board's out of hours doctors and nurses are based);
- arrange for a doctor from your local NHS Board to visit you (out of hours);
- advise you to contact your GP surgery when it is next open;
- ask you to go to Accident and Emergency (A&E) (the nurse will send your details to them first so they know to expect you); or
- get you an ambulance. You will be asked to stay on the line while this is arranged.



Talking to another health professional

If you are calling about medication or have a pharmacy related query, you may not need to speak to a nurse. In this case the call handler will transfer your call to a pharmacist.

If you have dental symptoms, the call handler may pass your call to a dental nurse.

When NHS 24 is busy

At busy times, we may have to call you back. This is so that we can handle the most serious and urgent cases first. You will be given an indication of the time within which you will be called back.

Remember, you can call us back at any time if you are still worried or your symptoms worsen.

If you think a life is in danger and you need an emergency ambulance always dial 999.

SECTION 3:

Important information

Confidentiality and consent

All calls to NHS 24 are private and confidential. We record them as part of your patient record and we may use the details anonymously for research purposes. When you phone, we will always ask your permission before we pass any information to your GP about you contacting us. If you need further face-to-face care out of hours and you agree, we will pass the relevant information to the appropriate care provider.

Special patient notes

For people who have particular health-care needs, such as palliative care, or a chronic illness, or those who have specific mobility or communication needs, GPs can provide special patient notes, which we can get access to. These notes provide information which helps us deal with your call in the best way for you.

If you want to know if a special patient note would be helpful for you, or for someone you look after, please discuss this with your GP.

Emergency care summary

Your emergency care summary (ECS) is an electronic record created by your GP which provides information that may be important if you need further care when your GP surgery is closed. When you call us, we will ask if we can look at your ECS or the ECS of the person you are calling for.

Information in it includes:

- your name;
- your date of birth;
- the name of your GP surgery;
- a unique identifying number called a CHI number;
- information about any medication prescribed by your GP; and
- information on any bad reactions you've had to medicines that your GP knows about.

TIP: If you are unsure about the name of any medication you are taking, ask your GP or pharmacist/chemist and they will help you with this.

Complaints, compliments and comments

We want to know what you think about our services. Please contact us using the following details.

Patient and Customer Relations Manager
NHS 24
Caledonia House
140 Fifty Pitches Road
Cardonald Park
Glasgow
G51 4ED
Phone: 0141 337 4501

You can also send an email through our website at **www.nhs24.com**.

If you're not happy with the face-to-face care you received from a GP or nurse when your GP surgery was closed, please contact your local NHS Board and ask to speak to someone about complaints.

Accessibility

Can people with hearing and speech difficulties use NHS 24?

Yes. Through the Text Relay service, we can provide the same services if you are deaf, hard of hearing or have difficulties with your speech, as long as you have a textphone.

If you want to contact us by textphone, call **18001 08454 24 24 24**.

What if English isn't my first language?

We have a language-line service available for people whose first or preferred language is not English. Simply call NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24** and say the name of the language you want to use.

Other formats

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in another language or format, such as in large print, easy read, British Sign Language (BSL) or Braille, please contact us on **0800 22 44 88**. Textphone users dial **18001 0800 22 44 88**.

Your contact card

Please remove this card and keep it somewhere handy such as in your purse or wallet, or next to your telephone. If your card is missing, please call us on **0800 22 44 88** to order a replacement. You can also order multiple copies of the booklet or card.

If your card is missing?

Please call us on **0800 22 44 88** to order a replacement.

Keep this card by your phone

Your name

Date of birth

Address

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Post Code

Phone number

GP's name/practice

TIP: If you are on a lot of medication, you might want to keep a copy of your repeat prescription form with this card.

• **Allergies**

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• **Conditions/Illness**

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• **Medication**

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Local pharmacy phone number

Local pharmacy opening times

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www.nhs24.com

If you are looking for urgent advice on caring for yourself, you can visit www.nhs24.com and use our Self-Help Guide which will help to direct you to the right care. We can also give you contact details of all pharmacies, GP practices, hospitals and dental practices in Scotland, as well as your local support groups and services.

www.nhsinform.co.uk



NHS inform is our national health information service that gives the information you need, when you need it, online or over the phone. We provide information you can trust that can help you in many different ways. We can give you information on medical conditions, answer common health questions and keep you up to date with all the latest health-related news. We also have lots of information on specific health and welfare topics from living with diabetes, asthma or finding out how to register with a GP.

We hold links to local information across Scotland, such as support groups in your area, and details of your rights when it comes to your health.

There are three ways you can get the information you need:

- Phone us on **0800 22 44 88** and talk to a health information advisor.
- Visit our website at www.nhsinform.co.uk
- Send us an email with your question (you can do this through our website www.nhsinform.co.uk).