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**What is eConsult?**

eConsult is an online system that prompts patients to provide information that describes their current medical concern. Patients will be asked questions about their symptoms and it should only take a few minutes to complete. The completed form is called a health questionnaire.

After adding some personal details (which are needed to help us to identify you), the eConsult system uses its built-in clinical knowledge to determine if urgent help is needed. In these cases, the system will stop processing the request and suggest how to seek urgent medical advice.

Otherwise the system submits the health questionnaire to the Practice where it is reviewed by our clinicians within 72 hours. We aim to contact you within 72 hours.

For example:

* If our clinicians decide that an appointment is needed, they will text you with a date and time.
* If a Fit Note is requested, an email or text will be sent to inform when this is ready for collection
* In the case of a minor illness, such as new cough or cold, we could text to advise a visit the pharmacy in the first instance

**Please note that eConsults should not be used in an emergency**

**Is my data safe?**

Your data is kept secure at all times and eConsult do not store any patient identifiable data. When you complete an eConsult, your information is encrypted using up-to-date encryption techniques (TLS v1.2, strong key exchange and strong cypher) and your completed health questionnaire is delivered straight to us. As soon as this has been sent, eConsult delete your data from their system, this usually happens within seconds of submitting an eConsult.

Here is a link to their Privacy Notice if you wish to learn more.

<https://econsult.net/nhs-patients/privacy-policy>

**What are the advantages of an eConsult?**

There are a number of advantages to using eConsult rather than the more traditional methods of contacting us.

* You can complete the eConsult health questionnaire at a time that suits you.
* The clinician gets lots of very useful information about your problem and is able to review your notes before making contact with you.
* Your query may be resolved without the need to attend the surgery.

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**How do I access the eConsult system?**

You can access the eConsult system by following the [Online Consultation link](https://stthomasmedicalgroup.webgp.com/) on our website, alternatively, eConsult can be accessed via the NHS App. Log into the NHS App, select ‘Advice’ and then select ‘Ask your GP for advice’. This will then take you to the eConsult health questionnaire.

**What if I can’t or don’t want to submit an eConsult?**

You can still contact the surgery on 01392 676676 to book an appointment. However, we are suggesting the use of eConsult as this may mean your problem can be solved quickly and sometimes without the need to attend the surgery. It is hoped that once our patients become accustomed to this new way of communicating with us, it will reduce the burden on our telephone line, which in turn should make it easier for our more vulnerable patients to make contact with us.

**Can I submit an eConsult for my child?**

If you are the parent/guardian of a child who is aged between 6 months and 18 years, then you can submit an eConsult on their behalf. It’s worth noting, that if your child is aged between 16 and 18 years of age, they are able to submit the eConsult themselves.

**What if I want to discuss multiple conditions?**

If you have multiple complaints, we suggest that you complete an eConsult for each one; this is because the health questionnaires are tailored based on your answers and you may not get the appropriate support.

**What if I need a letter or a prescription?**

You can submit requests for letters or fit notes (sick note) by following the eConsult banner on our website and then selecting ‘I want administrative help’, this will then be passed to a clinician to action.

Please remember that requests for letters will be chargeable and a member of our administration team will make contact with you to request payment.

**Do I need my NHS number?**

You don’t need an NHS login to use eConsult and when you are asked about this, you can continue without logging in. The health questionnaire will ask you some questions to help us identify you; however your NHS number is not needed.

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**What should I not use eConsult for?**

eConsult’s should not be used for emergencies (chest pain, stroke, loss of consciousness etc.). It has a built in safety net to flag up critical medical problems, and in certain cases it will prompt you to contact 111 or 999.

We continue to offer on-the-day duty appointments for urgent conditions, to book one, please call the surgery on 01392 676676.

**Helpful Videos**

What is eConsult and how does it work –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fGEpzrgAJc>

Using the NHS App to send an eConsult - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4jw7yhMghE>

How to upload a photo while submitting an eConsult - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3abZDtvyUU>

**eConsult Top Tips**

* Please try to give as much information as possible and answer the questionnaire in full.
* Select the most appropriate template for your query, otherwise you will be asked questions that may not apply to you.
* Please try to avoid using the ‘General Advice’ template unless there is not another one suitable for you.
* If you have an administrative query or a follow-up query or an individual piece of information to pass on to us from a previous consultation, please select the ‘I want administrative help’ button.
* If you have a rash or skin condition you may be asked to submit a photo with your eConsult. However, **please do not include photos of intimate areas – for example genitalia or breasts.**

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