



WHY ARE WE WAITING??

Hello. If you're reading this, it's probably because one of us is running late. Sorry about that. We know it happens more than any of us would like, and we know it can be really annoying. So, whilst you're here, we thought it might help to explain some of the reasons why it might have happened.

Ten minutes is a really short time.

Every appointment is 10 minutes long. Sometimes that's all we need. Sometimes it isn't. It takes time to hear your story, to examine you, to explain things, and plan next steps. We want to do all of those things properly, and we're pretty sure you want that too.

Emergencies, referrals, multiple problems all take longer than we have. Even without those, some things really just do need to be given more time, and we think it's important to do so.

We're sometimes asked why we simply don't have longer appointments – to which the answer is that we simply wouldn't be able to see you all, and the wait for an appointment in the first place would be even longer. There is however the option to ask for a longer appointment when booking, if you think you need it.

Where possible, our reception staff will warn you that we're running late, but again, they won't always know we're over running when you arrive (because at that stage we might not be.)

Delays between patients.

There are several reasons why these can happen. Firstly we have to ensure we write up every consultation immediately after we've seen you. Depending on the problem (again) this can sometimes take a while.

In addition we may have questions from nurses, colleagues, or reception staff to address urgently. Occasionally our surgeries will be interrupted by phone calls from hospitals, social workers or others seeking information or advice. Where possible our reception staff try to ensure we're not interrupted by these until after surgery, but there are some issues which cannot wait.

How you can help.

I know it doesn't help you right now, but there are lots of things you can do to help us avoid keeping people waiting longer than necessary.

- If you're coming with more than one problem, ask for a double appointment. Given that 10 minutes is not always enough for one problem, it's rarely enough for multiple problems. We understand why some people like to save issues up, to reduce the number of visits they need to make, but if you have, it's worth asking for a little longer when you book your appointment.
- Double appointments aren't simply for those who have more than one problem. If you know it's going to take more than 10 minutes to discuss a particular issue, again you can ask for a longer appointment.
- Arrive on time. Given how little time we have, a single late patient means that everyone else will be kept waiting too.
- Before you book, consider whether you need to see a doctor at all. This may seem a ridiculous statement, but there are many problems – such as simple viral illnesses like coughs and colds – which can be treated with over the counter medication. We're lucky to have an excellent local pharmacist, and it's often worth seeking their advice before coming to the surgery.

Thank you!

Ultimately, you're almost certainly waiting because someone really needed the extra time. On their behalf, as well as ours, we'd like to thank you for your patience, and hopefully we'll be with you very soon.