

Out of Hours Health Service

Out of Hours Health Service is a constant worry for all our Carers when they are responsible for their loved ones 24 hour care.

“We don't know who we should contact.”

“Why doesn't our GP work longer hours so we know who is coming?”

Do you know what to do in an emergency?

Now is the time to think about what you need to do while you are managing the day to day routine of your loved one's care. **Please** don't wait till the crisis hits and you don't know which way to turn! Everyone is different so here are a few recommendations you may find helpful whatever the time of year or hour of the day.

Your GP

Find out the hours of your GP surgery as many surgeries have increased their hours into the evenings. In some areas they have returned to Saturday mornings for emergencies only. While you may not be able to get an appointment with your named doctor it will be a doctor from your familiar GP practice.

Out of hours GP

This service is for a GP service when you need advice quickly; but the condition is not life threatening. The surgery answer phone will give you the local number to contact, so have pen and paper ready to take the number. You may receive telephone advice from a GP, Nurse or they may decide that a GP needs to do a home visit. In some areas you may be requested to visit a named GP at a primary care centre. You will be told where to go.

NHS Direct

A 24 hour national confidential Helpline Service 0845 46 47

You can contact them if you are unsure what treatment or service is needed, as well as guidance on general health information and advice. You will be asked simple questions as part of their information gathering. The call taker can request that a qualified nurse or medical professional will speak to you further once the first assessment is made. This will usually result in the named professional phoning you back.

Walk in Services

Depending upon where you live these can be accessed in and though a number of our hospitals East Surrey, Crawley, and Mayday. They cover a wide range of minor injuries, treatments and ailments. Many are run by Nurse Practitioners but as most are based by the local hospital so doctors are close by. You don't have to make an appointment but it can be advisable to check with them that the requested treatment can be covered by them especially if the patient is a child. These centres have different opening times so find out the local numbers and opening times before you are caught out and in need of their services.

Pharmacies

Local Chemists are a good source of information both medically and for a wide range of relevant supplies. The pharmacist is qualified to help us all with many basic illnesses, recommending certain medications and reassurance. They will confirm that more professional medical help is needed or not - enabling many to access the GP wisely. As we know they are often a pillar of the local community offering many ideas of practical and emotional support. All chemists work alongside the local GP surgeries offering a collection and delivery service for prescriptions. Some pharmacies help with direct ordering of repeat prescriptions to prevent you running out.

Accident & Emergency Dept.

We are often reminded that too many people use this service when really they should go to their local pharmacist or GP, but there are times when this is the only option. In serious cases “999” is still the only number you need for an ambulance and the crews will always examine the patient before taking them to hospital. They do leave patients at home as long as they have been examined by the crew and they will be seen by the local GP within a set time scale. The greatest reassurance for the Carer is that once the ambulance crew arrives they are in expert hands. Along with the crews guidance and advice is sound everyone is given reassurance at this anxious time.

Falls

It is a known fact that you can ring “999” and request the ambulance crew to help pick up the fallen patient from the floor. When examined they will return the patient to a place of safety including a chair or bed. With your consent they take them to A& E for a full examination.

Don't forget to have phone numbers of family and friends who can help you in an emergency close to the phone along with the “Message in a Bottle” scheme. You can store a lot of extra information in this simple emergency resource. If you want to know more give us a ring 01883 745057

Emergency Response!

The GP Practice

Your GPs are contracted to provide extra support to known Carers. Each surgery does this in different ways. Do they know you a Carer for a loved one? Does the person you care for have the same GP surgery as you? Do ask to be put on the Practice Carers' list so action can be taken in your favour when it is really needed.

A further recommendation is to have this information recorded on your personal notes so that in an emergency you will be known as an "Active Carer". Also request that the name of the person being cared for by you with an emergency contact number is on their notes. For those **who must not be left on their own** make sure that the GP or Practice Nurse records this information on both your own and the cared for person's records - again with an emergency number. Make sure the person you have put forward as an emergency contact knows about this before you put them forward.

If you need a referral by the GP they should state you are the Named Carer and this in turn should be considered when appointment times and booked treatments are made especially if you need to prepare yourself and loved one's care before a routine operation or course of treatment.

Message in Bottle

We have promoted this national voluntary service a number of times. Do you have one, is it up to date? Paramedics use this simple system to gain information when they are called to your home in an emergency. The bottle containing the medical history, list of medication and who to contact in an emergency is to be kept in the fridge. You are welcome to personalise it by adding relevant family information including the name of the person you care for and the fact that they must not be left alone due to personal health reasons listed. This should be written in BOLD wording, red if necessary, at the top of the page.

If you would like to use this scheme you can obtain a bottle from us - 01883 745057.

Emergency Carers Cards

This small card is kept in your purse or wallet giving information about who to contact in an emergency and who you care for. If you fall ill or are involved in an accident when out and about the paramedics can make that vital call on your behalf making sure your relative is cared for in your absence. If you would like a card please contact the office - 01883 745057.

Phone Numbers

Do you have a list of Emergency Numbers by the phone especially for those who don't have them typed into a mobile or your landline? Relatives, GP, Hospital, Nursing staff, Hospice contacts are just a few.

Please talk to and agree your plan of action with close family and friends especially if they will be caring for someone in your absence. They too may have views and ideas that can be helpful to you all. If you are prepared you will not need it! If you find yourself in this situation you will be prepared which is reassuring when everything is looking bleak.