

ACCIDENT EMERGENCY (A&E)

Please Avoid Unnecessary Use of A&E - Can our surgery help you?

Following recent changes to NHS funding arrangements, each A&E attendance is now individually charged to West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group & ultimately to the patients' practice. Each A&E attendance is charged at a standard tariff rate (between £68.24 & £139*), for more complex cases the higher charge is levied & costs of admission or outpatient follow-up are added to these costs.

(* Cost + Market Forces Factor for The Princess Alexandra Hospital).

When Should A&E be used?

Examples of when it is right and appropriate to attend A&E without delay are:

- Major injuries such as injuries from road traffic accidents.
- Falls from a considerable height.
- Major head injuries.
- Collapse.
- Severe breathing difficulty.
- Severe chest pain.
- Severe haemorrhage.
- Poisoning.
- Extensive burns.

When it is Inappropriate to Use A&E Services?

Unfortunately, many people attend A&E with very minor problems. This makes it difficult for A&E to deal with the volume of cases, involves delays for patients & incurs considerable costs. The following are examples of minor problems for which A&E attendance is not appropriate. Generally, if the person is unwell, but alert & speaking without impaired consciousness or severe breathing difficulty, then they do not need to attend:

- Flu-like illnesses, coughs, earache, back ache.
- Sore throats.
- Minor breathlessness or wheezing.
- Abdominal pain (unless severe or associated with collapse).
- Urinary difficulties (unless completely unable to pass water).
- Vaginal bleeding (unless very heavy and associated with faintness).
- Rashes (unless it appears like spontaneous bleeding under the skin or the person appears very unwell).
- Backache.
- Diarrhoea and vomiting.
- Simple bites and stings.
- Social problems.
- Emergency contraception.
- Dental problems (except major trauma).

Such conditions can generally be safely managed by your GP, Practice Nurse &, in some cases, the individual themselves.

Alternatives to Attending A&E - General Practice

We are open between 8.00am & 6.30pm & provide comprehensive services. Urgent same day appointments are available for urgent problems. We also have Practice Nurses who can see & advise patients. We urge patients to avoid unnecessary use of A&E & to contact the practice in the first instance.

The **Out-of-Hours** service (contactable through the usual surgery telephone number at weekends & Bank Holidays & after 6.30pm & before 8am Mondays-Fridays) & **NHS 111** can provide assistance for urgent medical problems or assistance with the treatment of minor illnesses and injuries. Most **pharmacies** can advise on minor illness & can provide medication to help you manage your condition yourself.