

eConsult

eConsult Q&A's

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- To start the eConsult process please access our home page at <https://www.portlandpractice.co.uk/>

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- Click on the **Green** square labeled **eConsult, consult your GP online.**

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- You will have the option to get help for you medical problem/condition, if you can not find anything that matches your problem/condition from the list of options use the general advice request but be very clear about your problem/condition, for requesting letters, sick notes and forms use the administrative request.

4

- Parents can submit an eConsult on behalf of their children if they are over 6 months old. For children under 6 months please phone the surgery. On eConsult select **'I want help for my child'** if the problem is not listed please click on **'My child is generally unwell'**

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- Once a condition is chosen, you can access self-help information, access local services and pharmacy advice, or get advice from your GP at the surgery.

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- If you need to complete a review please go to **'I want help for my condition'** scroll to the bottom of the page and click **'Start a review'** then choose the review needed.

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- If selecting 'treatment and advice from my GP' you will be directed to complete an online form about your symptoms. To start, please agree to the privacy notice and click **'Next step'**

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- You will need to confirm that you do not have any symptoms that require immediate or urgent care. **Please answer questions as accurately as you can** so we can find the best way to help you. **Do Not** try to use an NHS Login, Please click **'Continue as guest'**

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- You will then complete the eConsult online form and provide your phone number and email address at the end.

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- Following this you will be emailed a confirmation of the consultation and the practice will **respond to you by the end of the next working day.** We may be able to deal with the issue immediately and if it is urgent you will be contacted on the day, or we may book a telephone, video or face-to-face consultation.

What is eConsult?

NHS England has been promoting the use of online consultation solutions across the health service, particularly in primary care settings. Efforts to widen uptake of virtual alternatives to face to face appointments have been accelerated as a result of COVID-19. eConsult is one such solution that is widely used across primary care providers already. eConsult provides a text-based clinical consultation service which guides patients through a consultation algorithm to assess their symptoms and recommend appropriate next steps, which may include arranging a GP appointment, self-care advice, or signposting to other services (e.g. NHS111, pharmacies etc.). The solution is provided by the UK-based eConsult Health Limited. Where patients access the service via the NHS App, the integration will be provided by NHS Digital. For the purposes of data protection in relation to the provision of online consultations to patients, eConsult Health Limited and NHS Digital are data processors on behalf of NHS England and the primary care provider, who are joint controllers.

How do I access the eConsult service?

eConsult can be accessed via our practice website www.portlandpractice.co.uk on a smartphone, tablet, or computer, at any time from 00.01am on Monday morning until 6.30pm on Friday evening. eConsult is switched off during the weekend as there are alternative medical providers available during this period e.g. NHS 111, Gloucester Access Centre, and Gloucestershire Out of Hours Service.

Who can access eConsult?

eConsults can be adult (over the age of 18 years) or paediatric (between 6 months but under 18 years). Paediatric eConsults can be submitted by a parent or guardian or by the patient if they are between 16 and 18 years of age. Any patient who uses the eConsult service must be registered at Portland Practice or Hatherley Surgery. If you are below 16 and wish to discuss an issue that your parents are not aware of, please phone the surgery to speak to reception.

How much time does it take to complete an eConsult?

How long it will take to complete an eConsult will depend on how comfortable you are using your device of preference, and how detailed you are in your free-text responses. You are able though to complete the eConsult at your own pace, and possibly include information that you would be uncomfortable discussing in a face-to-face consultation.

What happens if I have more than one issue?

Please submit one eConsult per problem. This may mean you are submitting more than one eConsult. This will allow us to gather more accurate information to help you. If you submit more than one problem the Clinician will select the problem they consider to be the most urgent. You will then be required to submit further eConsult requests for each of the additional problems you are experiencing.

How are eConsults processed?

eConsults can be submitted for clinical or administrative requests. There are templates for over 100 clinical conditions and 5 administrative requests. eConsult reports are no longer than two sides of A4 and are delivered into a dedicated email inbox as a PDF. They are then added to the relevant patient record and forwarded to the appropriate person depending on whether it is a clinical or administrative eConsult. Clinical eConsults are always actioned by the appropriate clinician. This could be a GP, or an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Pharmacist, Advanced Practice Physiotherapist, Mental Health Nurse, or Practice Nurse. Admin eConsults could be actioned by either clinicians, or administrative staff, depending on the request. eConsults are responded to by the end of the next working day, although this does not necessarily mean that the query will have been resolved in that timeframe. The response to an eConsult could be:

- A follow-up call to get more details or provide advice over the phone.
- A message through the post-consultation (one way) messaging feature provided by eConsult – this is received as an email by the patient, but they cannot respond.
- A text or voicemail asking the patient to get back in touch or pick up their prescription from the local pharmacy.
- A call from one of our patient advisors to arrange further tests or to book an appointment.

How safe are eConsults?

All templates are created by a range of clinicians and content is approved through eConsult Health Limited's Clinical Governance process, designed in line with SCCI0129 requirements. eConsult Health Limited's team meets regularly, led by a Medical Director and Clinical Lead for Urgent and Emergency Care. This allows for a multidisciplinary team approach that focuses on both clinical and patient safety. Any clinical incidents are fully investigated by their Clinical team, and this investigation is shared with the GP practice involved. Some templates allow patients (or guardians) to upload photos to assist the clinician in understanding the patient's request for advice. eConsult asks the user (the patient/parent/guardian) for consent at the point of uploading. All photo upload questions are optional and do not need to be completed by the user. Under data protection law, Portland Practice is the Data Controller, therefore any images received and uploaded into the clinical record will fall under our information governance and GDPR policies. eConsult doesn't store or retain any of these images.

What are the benefits of eConsult

- Approximately 70% of eConsults can be dealt with without the need for a face-to-face appointment
- More appropriate use can be made of the whole clinical team – not all eConsults require GP review, so work can be distributed based on need and expertise.
- Standardised clinical histories are taken.
- Prioritisation of those patients with the greatest clinical need therefore improving the care that we provide.
- Improved patient access.
- Reduced telephone call volume and queues.

What if I am unable to access eConsult?

While we are strongly encouraging everyone to use eConsult for the reasons given above, we appreciate that there will be some patients that it would not be appropriate or suitable for. These patients should continue to contact us by phone. Please note though, that you may be asked to complete an eConsult form over the phone with help from one of our patient advisors.

Some hints and tips on using eConsult

- You do not need to log in to use eConsult, just click on 'Continue as guest'
- Give as much information as possible in the free-text boxes.
- Try to use the best condition fit applicable to your condition(s).
- If the clinician has specifically asked you to book a follow-up appointment then there is no need to use eConsult to do this, please phone and make the appointment. If however you feel that you don't need an appointment but would like to update the clinician, then please use eConsult to do this.
- Include photographs whenever you think they would be useful.
- Have your mobile phone nearby for the next two working days after submitting an eConsult as one of our team may call you.
- You may be told to ring 111 or your GP surgery while completing an eConsult. If this is the case, please call us in the first instance, if this occurs during our normal opening hours.
- Please do not complete the 'send a review to your doctor' eConsult unless we have specifically asked you to do so.
- If your condition is not listed, please select the option 'Ask about general symptoms....'
- You can submit administration requests such as requesting a fit note (sick note) by visiting our website. Go to the eConsult banner and select administrative requests.

The logo for eConsult, featuring the word "eConsult" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a light purple rectangular box with a thin black border and a subtle gradient.