

Choosing your hospital

When you see a GP, he or she may decide to refer you on for further tests or treatment.

You can now choose the hospital where you would like to be treated, either within the NHS or the independent sector.

You may like to choose a hospital you are familiar with, one that is close to your family or one where you can be treated more quickly.

You may be able to choose a hospital that offers faster diagnostic tests.



Ask your GP about the choices you have.

How PALS can help you

If you are having difficulty using NHS services, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). They can provide advice and information and help you sort out queries quickly and easily. Contact PALS on **01305 361285**, or email **PALS@dorset-pct.nhs.uk**

What to do if you become unwell when your GP surgery is closed

Medical help and advice is available if you become unwell when your GP surgery is closed. You should:

Dial 999 or go to A&E if you are worried about the sudden onset of new symptoms or have suffered a serious injury or illness. An emergency is a critical or life-threatening situation.

Call the **Dorset Out of Hours Medical Service** on **0845 600 10 13** if the person is unwell but not facing a life-threatening emergency and you think you cannot wait until your GP surgery opens.

Go to an **NHS walk-in centre or minor injuries unit** with a minor injury or illness. Find your nearest one by calling NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

You can also call **NHS Direct** (see number above) if you are feeling unwell and are unsure what to do, or need information about finding a pharmacist, dentist or other service.

To obtain this information in another format or language, call **01305 368040** or email **communications@dorset-pct.nhs.uk**

NHS Dorset, Hillfort House, Poundbury Road,
Dorchester DT1 2PN
Telephone 01305 368900

Leaflet: Access to GP services in Dorset / SP 976
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Access to GP services in Dorset



Healthcare when and where you need it

Patients tell us that they are very happy with the services they receive from doctors in their area. However some people tell us that they want more convenience and choice. For instance, they want to be able to see a doctor in the evening, at weekends and when they are away from home.

Extended hours

We have been working with GPs to agree longer opening hours. This means you can see a doctor either earlier in the morning, during the evening or at weekends, depending on what has been agreed with your practice. You should be aware that you may not see your own doctor at these times.

Most of our GPs offer appointments outside normal working hours and all of them are expected to do so from January 2009. Arrangements vary from practice to practice, so please check with your own surgery's receptionist or log on to www.nhs.uk

Anyone can ask for an appointment during the extended hours, but they will be most useful for people who work or who are unable to see the GP during the day. We hope that anyone who can attend during normal hours will do so.

Making an appointment

Appointments during extended hours need to be booked ahead. Please note that routine procedures like blood tests are not likely to be available at an extended hours appointment.

You should be offered a daytime appointment within two working days. You may have to wait longer if you want to see a doctor of your choice, or to be seen at an extended hours appointment during the evenings or at weekends.



If you prefer, you should also be able to book an appointment more than two days in advance.

Registering with or changing a GP

If you are not registered with any doctor or would like to change your GP, you can find out about GP surgeries in your area, the services they offer and opening times by contacting **0845 46 47**. You can also visit the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk

A new health centre

We are working to give you new GP services for more choice and convenience.

A new walk-in health centre is to be provided in central Weymouth, operating seven days a week. The project is part of a national Government initiative requiring every primary care trust (PCT) in the country to provide a walk-in health centre in its area.

The centre, which will be up and running in 2009, will offer the following services. Any member of the public can simply walk in and see a doctor or nurse at the new health centre or phone and book an appointment in advance.

You do not need to be registered with the health centre – you can use the services offered at the centre as well as the services at the GP surgery where you are registered.

You will also be able to register with the centre, but only if you live in the nearby area.

The centre will be based at Weymouth Community Hospital where it will be accessible to people who live or work in the town as well as holidaymakers.

Neighbouring NHS Trusts are providing similar health centres in Bournemouth and Yeovil.