North Wales GP Out of Hours Service

Need urgent medical care out of hours - when the doctor’s surgery is closed?

What should I do if I have an urgent health problem outside of my GP surgery opening hours?
If you need immediate medical care when your GP surgery is closed, you should ring the North Wales GP Out of Hours Service on 0300 123 55 66

This out of hours service operates Monday to Friday from 6.30pm in the evening to 8.00am the following day, and all day and night (24 hours) on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays. Please call 0300 123 55 66 during these times if you feel unwell or are worried that you require urgent medical care that cannot wait until your GP surgery is next open.

This service is available for urgent medical situations but not for emergencies.

If you have a medical emergency, a critical or life threatening problem you should always call 999 or visit your nearest Emergency (A&E) Department, day or night.

If you have an open wound which may require stitching/dressing, you should go direct to your nearest Emergency (A&E) Department or Minor Injury Unit (MIU), or if it is an emergency call 999.

The GP out of hours service is unable to make an appointment for you with your own GP, nor provide you with repeat prescriptions or test results. You should contact your own surgery when it is normally open – Monday to Friday, from 8.00am until 6.30pm.

What happens when I ring the out of hours service?

When you ring the out of hours number, one of our trained call handlers will answer your call and take some personal details and basic information about the problem you are calling about. It would be useful to have the following information about the patient (if known) at hand:

Patient’s:
✓ date of birth
✓ full name and address
✓ GP with whom registered
✓ medical and current treatments
✓ details of current medication and allergies
✓ telephone number for the service to call back if needed
✓ patient’s relationship to caller

If you are not with the patient and are calling on their behalf, you must have received their consent prior to making the call.

You will then receive a call from a nurse or GP who will assess your condition over the phone and advise about the most appropriate care for you. During busy periods call back times can vary greatly, and are prioritised according to urgency of patient’s needs.
This may be:

- self care health advice
- an appointment to see a GP or nurse at your nearest out of hours treatment centre
- a home visit
- asking you to consult your GP during normal surgery hours

All telephone conversations are voice recorded, and calls to 0300 numbers cost the same as calls to standard geographic numbers (those beginning with 01 or 02); and are included with mobile network inclusive packages.

**Will I be visited at home?**
If you are assessed as needing to see a member of the medical team (GP or nurse) you will be asked to attend your nearest out of hours treatment centre. You will be advised where this is and given clear directions on how to get there when you contact the service, and will be given an appointment time to ensure that you are seen as quickly as possible when you get there.

Twelve out of hours treatment centres are widely spread throughout North Wales and are designed to provide the best facilities for diagnosis and treatment, and are staffed by GPs and Nurse Practitioners. Once the Individual Health Record (IHR) has been rolled out across the whole of North Wales during 2012, with the consent of the patient, the out of hours medical team will be able to access patient’s records if deemed necessary.

Home visits will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances, for those patients who are too ill and unable to attend the treatment centres. Patients that are to receive a home visit will be given an approximate time of the visit.

**Will I be given a prescription?**
Yes, if you are seen by a nurse or GP. If you need any urgent medication, this may be supplied when you are seen.

**Can I just turn up at a treatment centre?**
**No.** You should not to turn up at the GP out of hours treatment centres as they are not drop-in or walk-in centres. You should telephone the service on 0300 123 5566 for initial assessment, and if it is decided that you need to be seen by a GP or nurse you will be given an appointment to attend your nearest treatment centre. Patients who self present in one of the treatment centres may therefore have to wait until the next available appointment which can mean a wait of up to 6 hours for routine cases.

**Will my own GP be informed?**
Yes. The next working day your GP will be notified that you have contacted the GP out of hours service and told of any follow-up treatment you may require.

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  All day and night: Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays