



## Emailing policy for patients

Email is an attractive way for patients and doctors to communicate, however certain safeguards are required in order to maintain confidentiality and safety.

### Emails that we send out

We send out 2 types of emails – generic and specific.

**Generic** – These are emails that contain no specific clinical information about you. For example, information about flu campaigns, opening times or events that the practice is running. If we have an email address on file, then we will use it when we send out this sort of information.

**Specific** – These are emails that contain information about the person to whom the email is addressed. For example, invitations to asthma clinics or recommendations about medications. In order for us to send you information like this, we need you to consent to this. You can withdraw your consent at a later date just by letting us know.

### Emails that we receive

**Content** - The practice is concerned about being overwhelmed with emails coming in from patients. Time spend answering emails is time that could be spend in others to care for people. Therefore we are not currently encouraging people to send us emails about clinical matters. We certainly do not want people to send us emails about urgent clinical matters since we cannot respond to these with the urgency that they might need. Please contact us by phone instead.



We welcome emails about administrative matters such as changes to contact details.

Please think carefully whether your email is necessary before sending it.

Please could you also include your full name and date of birth in the email so that we can confirm your identity.

### **Response times**

It may take up to 5 working days for a doctor to see any email sent to them, and responding to them is not currently a clinical priority. Please can we remind you therefore that EMAIL IS NOT TO BE USED FOR URGENT CLINICAL MATTERS. Emails may also not necessarily be reviewed by the doctor to whom the email is addressed since they may not be available due to other commitments.

We aim to respond to administrative emails within 5 working days.

### **Format of emails**

We would ask that if you do email us, that it is clear in the title of the email to whom the email is addressed and what it is about. For example:

FAO: Prescribing admin re: request for medication clarification

Please be concise.

### **Confidentiality**



As with all data on our clinical systems, email addresses will be kept confidential and not shared with 3rd parties unless you give us specific consent. Generic emails sent to a number email addresses will be sent as Blind Copies so that you cannot see anyone else's email address.

We would remind you that email traffic could theoretically be intercepted and read by people without your permission.

Also, any email we send can be accessed by anyone who has access to your email account.

### **Unsubscribing**

You can withdraw your consent for specific emails at any time. If you want to withdraw from generic emails, then let us know and we will delete your email address from our clinical system.

### **Abuse of our email system**

If we receive emails that are inappropriate (such as continual requests for urgent help) or that are taking us excessive resources to deal with (such as number or length of emails) then we will write explaining this email policy. If people do not then change the way that they are emailing, then we will block their email address and ask them to instead contact us by phone, fax or letter.

### **Changing your email address**

Please can you inform us if you change your email address so that we can update our records appropriately and do not send out emails that you will not receive.



## **Non-receipt of emails**

If you have consented to receive emails from us, we cannot be responsible if for any reason you do not receive emails that we send. For example, you may have changed your email address without informing us, or our email could be blocked by your personal spam filter. If you are expecting an email from us and you do not receive one within 5 working days then please contact us via an alternative route to check.

*Last updated July 2013*