



# The Lighthouse Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG)

**College Road Surgery** 6 College Road, Eastbourne BN21 4HY. 01323 735044

**Ian Gow Memorial Health Centre** Milfoil Drive, Eastbourne BN23 8BR. 01323 766358

Chair: Liz Walke

[www.lighthousepractice.co.uk](http://www.lighthousepractice.co.uk)

**Issue No. 34**

The Patient Participation Group consists of patients of the surgery who work together with the Practice doctors and staff to help meet and improve the needs of patients.

## Practice News

Here we are in early 2025, the second half of the 2020s and what a tumultuous first half with the pandemic amongst many world issues. Life is moving faster, and the practice has continued to provide the patients with a great service and stability having to navigate the tremendous problems caused by the pandemic. We should remember the practice team created ways around these to achieve a continuing service having to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and NHS guidance. Many of the changes to our working service continue and give patients a more efficient and safer service of care.

The practice team has also seen changes in 2024 with the retirement of Dr Folwell, Dr Andrew Stewart, the Executive Partner, and in December Dr Andy Baldwin decided to leave us. All will be greatly missed. Dr Jeremy Durston has become the Executive Partner.

The practice has welcomed a number of new clinical staff including Dr Aman Chauhan, Dr Fritha Price, Dr Will Furlong, Dr Minil Patel, and Nurse Melanie Sharp.

**Penny Briggs** *Editor*

## A Leaving Message from Dr Andy Baldwin



Having increased my hours at the Eastbourne DGH within the Medical Examiner service and after 10 years at The Lighthouse Medical Practice, I have made the difficult decision to leave the Practice. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your trust and support over the last decade. It has been a privilege to be your doctor, and I am grateful for the relationships and friendships that have built up together. Your kindness and support have been the driving force to do my very best and getting to know you and your families, and providing continuity of care, has been the most rewarding part of this role. I know The Lighthouse Medical Practice will continue to provide excellent care and I will miss working with a truly great team.

*The Lighthouse team and PPG thanked Dr Baldwin for his knowledge, skill and care looking after patients.*

## Respiratory Infections - Advice for Adults and Children

by **Dr Jeremy Durston**, *Executive Partner*

**Respiratory infections are infections of your ears, nose, throat, voice box, or lungs.**

They are extremely common and are usually caused by viruses which cannot be treated with antibiotics. Almost all are mild and get better on their own without needing any medical help.

An adult may get 2-4 respiratory infections per year and children can get 8-12 infections a year. This means that the total number of these types of infections is probably greater than all of the available GP appointments a year across the UK – around 370 million a year in total!

**This is why knowing how to self-manage these infections is so important. It is also very important that the small number of people who may become seriously ill from one of these infections know when and how to seek help.**

**The information on the following pages may help you know whether you or the person you are caring for can safely manage the illness at home or needs urgent medical attention from the surgery today.**



*Continues on the next page...*

# Respiratory infections are either viral or bacterial

## Viral Respiratory Infections

These are caused by viruses and are very common. Common symptoms include a snotty, runny or blocked nose (rhinitis), a sore throat (pharyngitis), a chesty cough (bronchitis), a hoarse voice (laryngitis), fever symptoms – feeling hot/cold/shivery/achy, a headache or sometimes diarrhoea and/or vomiting (as some of these viruses can also affect the digestive system). If you have these symptoms during the same illness - particularly rhinitis, pharyngitis, and bronchitis, it's highly likely that you have a viral respiratory infection. **The good news is that these infections are usually mild, and most people will get better in 1-3 weeks without needing any medical help or treatment.**

Many patients believe that they need to take antibiotics, **but this type of infection cannot be treated with antibiotics** as it is unnecessary, increases antibiotic resistance, harms your body's

good bacteria, puts you at risk of side effects and even serious allergic reactions. There is no need to use up scarce NHS resources on GP appointments or A&E attendances that are not necessary and potentially will spread the infection.

### See the NHS advice:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-tract-infection](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-tract-infection)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/chest-infection](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chest-infection)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat)

It is common for symptoms to get better whilst taking antibiotics. This is probably because the immune system is clearing the infection over the course of the week when the antibiotics are taken and NOT because of the antibiotics themselves. This leads to the mistaken belief that the antibiotics worked to clear the infection. If antibiotics do not work, this is more evidence that the infection is most likely viral and further courses or 'stronger' antibiotics are not the answer.

## Bacterial Respiratory Infections

Sometimes bacteria can cause an infection too, most commonly tonsillitis (although most cases of tonsillitis are viral) and otitis media (middle ear infection). They can also cause pneumonia.

### 1. Strep A Throat

#### Infection/Tonsillitis/Scarlet Fever (a type of strep throat infection)

Group A Strep is a type of bacterial infection that commonly causes tonsillitis and scarlet fever but very rarely it can cause severe or life-threatening illness in children and adults. Serious illness from Strep A has always been around and is not new and every country in the world is affected. However the illness seems to be higher than usual for the time of year.

Around 1 in 8 people at any given time carry the Group A Strep bacteria in their throat without having any symptoms.



**Please seek medical advice if the patient has the following symptoms:**

1. Very painful sore throat to the point where they are struggling to swallow due to the pain
2. Fever
3. NO cough or a snotty/blocked nose (lack of these symptoms makes bacterial infection more likely)
4. You can see large tonsils or a very red, inflamed throat with white spots or patches. It's helpful if you can take photos to send into

us too via Engage Consult on the Lighthouse Practice website.

5. You suspect scarlet fever, having read the NHS advice below and looked at the photos of the usual body rash - fine, pinkish, or red with tiny, rough pimples having a sandpaper texture.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever)

[www.gosh.nhs.uk/news/scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep-advice-for-parents-and-carers](http://www.gosh.nhs.uk/news/scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep-advice-for-parents-and-carers)

[www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/streptococcus-a-strep-a](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/streptococcus-a-strep-a)

**If you believe the patient has symptoms of scarlet fever, please contact us today.**

### 2. Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection low down in your lungs where oxygen is enabled to get into your bloodstream. It causes breathlessness and often chest pain when a deep breath in and out is taken. It is often accompanied by uncontrollable shivers/shakes/sweats, drowsiness or even confusion as the body's immune system goes into overdrive to try and clear the infection. It does not always cause a cough, particularly if the infection is very low down in the lungs.

See the NHS advice including when and how to get medical help:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/pneumonia](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pneumonia)

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### 3. Ear Infections and Sinusitis

Ear infections typically cause sudden onset ear pain and reduced hearing, often with fever or other symptoms of respiratory tract infections. Sometimes the ear will leak fluid. Many of these infections will get better on their own without any treatment, but **SEEK PROMPT ADVICE FROM the Practice or 111 if:**

1. The ear is so painful you can't manage with over-the-counter pain relief and it's stopping you from sleeping
2. You have sudden total hearing loss in one ear, particularly if it's painless. **IT IS VERY**



**IMPORTANT YOU GET MEDICAL HELP ON THE SAME DAY IF THIS OCCURS.**

3. The symptoms are severe and have been going on for more than 3 days without any improvement
4. Your ear is leaking fluid.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/ear-infections/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ear-infections/)

#### Specific advice for monitoring very young children and babies:

It can be harder to know if your young baby or toddler is unwell or needs a medical assessment. Also, respiratory tract infections are probably more common in the pre-school age group than in any other age group.

They generally have similar symptoms to older children and adults but may not be able to tell you about them.



**It is very important to monitor them for the following red flag symptoms:**

1. Fast breathing, especially if the skin in between or below or above the ribs is being 'sucked in' with each breath.
2. A cough which sounds like a dog or seal barking (this is called CROUP)
3. A rasping, gasping sound when breathing in or out with every breath.

#### When to seek urgent medical help and treatment and when you can safely manage these infections by yourself at home.

Rarely, people can become seriously unwell from either a viral or bacterial infection – you should seek urgent medical advice.



**Seek Urgent Medical Advice and Treatment for All Types of Respiratory Infection (not just Strep A) for you or the child or adult you are caring for if you or they:**

1. Are significantly breathless/short of breath or breathing faster than you would expect.
2. Are extremely tired/fatigued to the point where it is extremely difficult to get to the toilet or move around the house.

### 4. Sinus Infections

These are also very common, particularly when there is a lot of nasal congestion and snot. They cause nasty facial pain mainly below the eyes, especially when coughing, straining, or bending down. They are usually caused by viral infections. Even sinusitis caused by bacteria usually get better on their own and antibiotics do not work well as they can't get into the space where the infection is.

Take over the counter pain relief, try nasal decongestants also available at a pharmacy, and wait for your immune system to fight the infection off, usually in 1-2 weeks. It's not pleasant, but you can expect it to get better on its own.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/sinusitis-sinus-infection/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sinusitis-sinus-infection/)

4. Significant drowsiness even when the temperature is normal.
5. Severely dehydrated (no wet nappies for 12 hours or more, dry mouth/lack of saliva)
6. Confusion
7. A rash, especially if it does not blanch with the glass test.

If you notice any of these symptoms, please seek prompt medical advice.

**Please familiarise yourself with the following:**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/is-your-baby-or-toddler-seriously-ill/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/is-your-baby-or-toddler-seriously-ill/)

**If you are still uncertain and worried, please contact the Practice.**

You can help yourself, other people and the NHS by ensuring you take up any offers of COVID and INFLUENZA vaccine every year. These may not stop you catching it, but having them means that if you do catch one of these infections it's likely to be mild.

3. Have had recurrent fever symptoms for more than 5 days, or have uncontrollable shivers/shakes, known as rigors.
4. Are severely dehydrated
5. Appear confused or delirious
6. Experience severe sharp stabbing chest pain over one or other lung particularly when deep breathing.
7. Have a rash – please send the Practice clear photos of this taken in a good light, in sharp focus. Most rashes are not serious and are common with viral infections, but it's good to check.
8. Have an underlying lung or medical condition that you believe places you at increased risk of more serious infection, such as COPD, bronchiectasis, or a suppressed immune system.



# Practice Team News...

## Welcome to **David Collie** *Physiotherapist at College Road*

David has been part of the extended practice team for a couple of years assessing and trying to help patients with their musculoskeletal (MSK) aches and pains.

David tells us about his work and life.

"I found a love for physio, when I realised the difference that I can make in improving people's functional quality of life without necessarily intervening in a medical fashion. Introducing subtle changes on a regular basis can have profound effects on MSK problems that have been hanging around the body for far too long.

This was typified during my work with elite athletes at the Commonwealth Games where I was based in the racket sports arena. The repetitive nature of the challenges of racket sports means that tiny alterations to technique can take great loads off structures that have become angry and inflamed. I have been lucky to travel to Glasgow, Limassol, Berlin, Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, and Gothenburg with football teams as part of the medical support. Intense, full-on days of medical care went along well with taking in the sights of a new city and culture.

My wife and two young children keep me running around so I almost feel I would not have time to be injured these days! I will always have time to listen to your stories and get you on the right path where required.

My non-clinical time at present is spent with my current studies, honing my skills in the world of MSK, which will add another masters to my academic portfolio. Postgraduate study has enabled me to offer injection therapy, which may have already helped you, if you have seen me for a stubborn knee or shoulder pain, or an annoying trigger finger.

To access my clinic, there is no referral process required as I work within the practice; simply requesting an appointment with the physiotherapist will get you an appointment with me or one of my colleagues. Although I do not provide traditional physiotherapy treatment in these clinics I can assess, advise a treatment plan for your problem, or refer you onwards if appropriate.



I also run a private physiotherapy clinic in The Beacon shopping centre (within Foundry Eastbourne). Here we provide hands-on physiotherapy treatment and design bespoke exercise plans to help reduce pain, restore function, and get you back to doing the things you enjoy. More information on this and online booking can be found at [www.dcpphys.com](http://www.dcpphys.com)

I know these days with our busy lifestyles, it can be hard to step back and allow the time required for an injury to heal. But the majority of the time, a little bit of rest, and gradually getting things moving does the trick! Our bodies are amazing at healing, even just watching a cut go through the phases of tissue repair has me in awe. If you find yourself struggling with a MSK problem which does not appear to be settling with a few weeks of gentle movement and attempts to return to normal function (or you are worried you might have suffered a more significant injury) then please do book in at the Lighthouse Practice.

I will be pleased to see any of you in the coming months, but as the old physio joke goes... I am sure you will be hoping not to see me!"

# Health Advice... Prostate Cancer

## Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Testing *by Dr Andy Baldwin*

There is no national screening programme for prostate cancer in the UK, however the news of Olympic cyclist Sir Chris Hoy living with terminal prostate cancer has significantly increased awareness. **50,000** men are diagnosed with prostate cancer in the UK each year and **12,000** die from the disease. It is rare in men under 50 years and risk increases with age, family history of prostate cancer and black ethnicity. Most early-stage prostate cancers do not have any symptoms.

### **PSA testing for men without symptoms of prostate disease aged 50 and over:**

PSA is found in the blood and is made by prostate cells. A PSA test can be used to screen for prostate cancer. Most men over 50 without any urinary symptoms will have a normal PSA level. However, a raised PSA test does not mean you have prostate cancer. PSA can be high with urinary infections, recent ejaculation or exercise, or an enlarged prostate. If you have a raised PSA level you will be offered further investigations such as an MRI scan or prostate biopsy to check for cancer.

**Possible advantages to having a PSA test** are that it can pick up prostate cancer before you have any symptoms, and it might pick up a fast-growing cancer at an early stage where treatment could stop it spreading or shortening your life. Possible

disadvantages are that the PSA test can miss prostate cancer in a small proportion of men with a normal PSA. Many men with a raised PSA turn out not to have prostate cancer or are diagnosed with a slow-growing cancer that would not have shortened their life. Being diagnosed with cancer could make you worry, and you might decide to have treatment you do not need which can cause urinary, bowel and erection problems.

Having a PSA test is a personal decision. If you are over 50 and do not have urinary symptoms and would like a PSA blood test, please contact the surgery. If you notice anything that is abnormal such as difficulty starting to urinate, a weak stream, dribbling at the end of urinating or getting up more than once in the night please speak to your GP.

If you decide to have a PSA test you should refrain from ejaculation or vigorous exercise such as cycling for two days before the test.

For more information on prostate cancer, prostate problems, and PSA testing visit:

[www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

[www.prostatecanceruk.org](http://www.prostatecanceruk.org)

[www.nhs.uk/psa](http://www.nhs.uk/psa)

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## Blood Tests

### **Only available when requested by Lighthouse GPs**

We are making important changes to our blood testing services to ensure we can continue providing high-quality care to all our patients at the Lighthouse Practice. To maintain efficient services and timely blood test results for our patients, we will now focus on conducting tests requested by our practice GPs only.

For blood tests requested by other healthcare providers, we ask you to use the convenient NHS Phlebotomy services available at both Eastbourne DGH and Bexhill Community Diagnostic Centre. These specialised facilities are well-equipped to meet your needs.

## *Who has requested your blood test?*

### **• Lighthouse GP**

#### **Book next available appointment at the Lighthouse Practice**

If not convenient availability can book via the Hospital system to attend your appointment there or we may offer an appointment at the Hampden Park Health Centre if they have availability.

### **• Hospital Clinician**

#### **Book an appointment online on NHS Website**

[www.esht.nhs.uk/service/pathology/phlebotomy](http://www.esht.nhs.uk/service/pathology/phlebotomy)  
or call 0300 131 5560

Or Online Appointment Healthcare Platform | Swiftqueue  
[www.swiftqueue.co.uk/east\\_sussex\\_phlebotomy.php](http://www.swiftqueue.co.uk/east_sussex_phlebotomy.php)

Please book directly with NHS Phlebotomy services for any blood tests requested by organisations outside our practice.

Our reception team will cancel and ask you to redirect any appointments made at our practice for external healthcare providers to these services. We appreciate your cooperation as we work to maintain high standards of care for all our patients.

# Supporting the Lighthouse Medical Team – Patient Participation Group



Our GP team is the backbone of our healthcare system. Every day diagnosing illnesses, managing chronic conditions, and supporting our physical and mental health. With growing patient numbers, fewer resources and mounting pressures, our GPs and nursing team are stretched. The constant pressure takes a toll on their mental health. As patients we often arrive seeking quick answers and care when we are at our most vulnerable.

**By showing kindness, patience and understanding we can help ease some of the pressure on the medical team.**

## The GP and Nursing Teams roles

The GPs, nursing and health care assistants' teams' focus is to deliver the best care possible. They diagnose and manage physical and mental health conditions and provide preventative care like vaccinations and screenings.

The broader team includes paramedics, physiotherapists, and pharmacists. Behind the scenes operations and administration managers and receptionists work to keep things running smoothly, balancing patient care with operational demands and ensuring smooth referrals, follow-ups, and prescription management. They also have to handle emergencies.

## Reality vs expectations

Patients expect timely appointments, clear solutions, and personal attention and the practice team hopes for respect, understanding, and collaboration. Unfortunately, the pressures of primary care can create gaps between expectations and reality.

For patients any long waits, short appointments and navigating new systems can feel frustrating. For practice staff back-to-back appointments, emergencies, and administration leave little time for unhurried care or a moment of reflection. Stress can magnify misunderstandings and erode the relationship between patients and the practice team. Primary care has limited resources and GPs are not magicians - diagnoses often require time, tests, or specialist consultation and good care sometimes requires follow-ups or other team members to be involved.



## Building understanding

Delays can be frustrating, especially when we are not feeling our best. **Taking a moment to understand the pressures on our GP team can make a real difference.** GPs juggle complex cases with tight schedules, while support staff manage telephones, appointments, and prescriptions, all the while keeping the practice running smoothly. Meanwhile, health worries and system frustrations leave us, the patients, feeling tense. **That is where patience and empathy go a long way in easing pressures on all sides, creating a better experience for everyone.**

## How patients can help make our GP Practice a healthier and happier place

**Be prepared for the conversation at your appointment about your health problem, note your symptoms, questions, and medications so your GP can focus on what matters most.**

1. Appointments are short, so focus on your most pressing concerns first. If there is more to discuss, ask your GP what to prioritise, what can wait, or how to follow up later.
2. Be patient. Delays can happen, whether due to emergencies, staff shortages, or complex cases.
3. **A smile, a kind word and a thank you go a long way at brightening the practice teams' day.**

## Patients' Praise for the Lighthouse Medical Practice

*"We are indeed so lucky to be under the care of College Road and our own DGH."*



# Community Connectors

## *Community Navigator Paul Heseltine outlines his job...*

Since February 2024 I have been fortunate to be part of a very welcoming Community Connectors team of eight who have been extremely generous in sharing their knowledge in different specialisms and guiding me during my start in my job. I work in the Eastbourne and Hailsham area and enjoy meeting our interesting clients with their mix of ages and needs.

Community Connectors is a social prescribing service where we support clients to improve their health and emotional wellbeing, developing personalised and practical solutions to any issues they have and connecting them to services, groups, and activities in the local community. Your GP may suggest a referral to us which with your consent they can send directly to us, or you can self-refer by completing our online referral form.

We support clients aged 16 years and over and offer a few sessions to them depending on their needs. Our service requires them to come to the clinics we hold in GP surgeries or community venues and their readiness for change is demonstrated by them either self-referring to us or asking their GP to do so on their behalf as they are taking the first step towards an often-scary experience of drilling down on areas of their lives which may be uncomfortable to discuss or consider.

I discuss with clients the things they feel are having an impact on their mental health and wellbeing and we then formulate a plan, ensuring it is appropriate

and comfortably paced, so they do not feel overwhelmed but feel that change is sustainable and realistic for them.

We signpost clients to specialist services to promote positive change and we use the coaching and recovery models to encourage engagement in social activities with the aim of improving confidence, self-esteem and feelings of empowerment and the ability to make positive, sustainable changes to their lives.

We hope our support will help bring about fulfilment in people's lives, routine, structure, and purpose. Some of the areas we can support you to connect with include: healthy lifestyles and active lives, arts, music, outdoors and creativity, befriending, counselling and other support groups, housing, benefits and financial support and advice, employment, training and volunteering, education and learning, physical activity and a healthier lifestyle, getting involved in local groups, social events and activities and accessing specialist services and support.

**For more information, please either call:**

**01323 340151 or visit:**

**[www.southdown.org/services/community-connectors-east-sussex](http://www.southdown.org/services/community-connectors-east-sussex)**



# SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

## OPEN DAY

# WITH ROOTED

**Drop-in  
10am - 1pm**

## We are celebrating Social Prescribing Day!

### Join us at our Growing Session on March 19th.

Kitchen Plot, Gorrington Road Allotment Site, Eastbourne, BN22 8XL

- Find out more, or share what you know about social prescribing.
- Meet and chat to the growing team.
- Suggest new session themes.

**What we'll be sharing with you:**

- Preparing soup • Gardening • Mindful art • Chi Gong

**Who's invited?** • People interested in Social Prescribing

- GPS & Link workers • Mental Health practitioners
- Local Auth depts.

**FIND OUT MORE**

**Wellness@Rooted.food**

(Please RSVP)

## Patient Participation Group (PPG) News

PPG members were invited by the practice to join an external company's presentation on AI development to help GP surgeries improve the information gathering when you contact reception, to learn how it can be made more efficient and safer. The information you give is provided for triage by GPs to identify how best to provide the most appropriate care for you.

## Would YOU like to join the PPG or Virtual Group (VPG)?

If you would like to contribute to the PPG and wish to attend our monthly PPG meetings then please contact Liz Walke [liz.walke@aol.com](mailto:liz.walke@aol.com). We also offer a Virtual Group for patients who would like to provide feedback online on their NHS experiences recently at the Practice, the Eastbourne hospitals or elsewhere.

## Think about others

Is there elderly, housebound, or isolated neighbour or relative you can make a bit of time for to telephone to make sure they are safe, warm and have a stock of food and sufficient medicine?

*A kind word goes a long way.*

## Managing your pre-booked appointments

If the practice has your mobile telephone number, we will text you an appointment reminder of your appointment 24 hours before. If you know earlier that you cannot make your appointment you can click the link in the reminder to cancel your appointment or telephone the practice.

Dear [Patient],  
This is a reminder of your appointment which is booked for Wed 19th Feb at 11:00.  
[Manage your appointment here.](#)  
  
Thanks,  
The Lighthouse Medical Practice

## Be SEPSIS Aware...

Call the Practice Immediately or 111 if, you have possible early signs of sepsis, as this requires quick treatment and without this it can lead to multiple organ failure or even death. Sepsis symptoms may include a high fever or low body temperature, chills or shivering, fast heartbeat, or fast breathing. Call 999 promptly and ask for an ambulance if more severe symptoms of septic shock develop. These symptoms include severe breathlessness, severe muscle pain, feeling dizzy or faint, vomiting, a change in mental state such as disorientation, not urinating or a loss of consciousness.

## Information and Contacting the Surgery

### Surgery Information

#### Opening Hours

**Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm**

if you need to telephone us.

**Engage Consult**, the online medical symptom-taking tool allows you to get a message to the Practice.

#### Out of Hours

If you need assistance between 6pm-6.30pm on weekdays, please call the out-of-hours service on **0300 555 5252**.

At all other times, please call the **NHS** on **111** (all calls are free).

## Communication to patients on our practice changes



Please keep the practice up to date with your email address as well as your mobile and landline telephone numbers to enable them to contact you and send updates on the practice services.

Before calling an ambulance, you can call **111** for advice



## Repeat Prescriptions

for patients who are not on Electronic Repeat Dispensing

Our service is three working days from the time that you request your prescription to the time it is sent to your nominated pharmacy provided it is straightforward; if there are queries it may take longer. We no longer print prescriptions unless absolutely necessary.

If you need your prescription urgently, please ask at your pharmacy who can issue emergency medications in many instances if there is no health risk.