



PRINTED COPIES ARE NOT CONTROLLED

Policy

Consultation Types (GP1.1 A)

Accreditation link: [GP 1.1 A](#)

Policy

Our practice has systems and processes to ensure patients can access their health care needs. These systems include:

- An appointment system that accommodates patients with urgent, non-urgent, complex, planned chronic care and preventive health care
- Our triage system, identifies and provides patients requiring urgent care with priority appointments
- Management of medical emergencies
- Access to home and other visits
- Delivery of care outside normal opening hours.

Patient appointments

Our practice provides different consultation types to accommodate the patients' needs and preferences.

Preferred practitioner

Refer to [Continuous and comprehensive care \(GP 2.1 A - B\)](#).

Appropriate appointment type

Based on the information provided by the patient, their carer or family, the practice team allocate the appropriate length of time for a consultation.

A standard consultation is booked for 15 minutes. Patients can and are encouraged to request longer consultations if necessary.

New staff receive training in these skills during their induction as well as receiving ongoing education and training with other staff members.

Clinician appointment prerequisites

The following clinicians have additional prerequisites for their patients. Patients must be informed of these requirements when they make an appointment.

Clinician	Advice to patients
Dietitian	All new patients are advised to keep a food diary for three days prior to their appointment.
Dr x	All obstetric patients have a weight and urine test prior to the appointment. You may bring a urine sample with you or provide one when you arrive.
Dr y	All patients have a blood pressure check with the practice nurse prior to the appointment.
GP registrars	GPT 1 & 2 will have limitations on the number of patients they are able to see. Please refer to your Regional Training Organisation.

Clinician requesting appointment change for patient

On occasions a clinician will require a patient's appointment to be changed. Our process for managing these requests is:

- Understand from the clinician why the appointment is being changed, e.g. pathology results not back, clinician on unexpected leave.
- Have alternative appointment times available in preparation for the conversation.
- Respect that the patient may be frustrated by the change.
- Record the request for change in the patient file.

Patient cancelling or changing appointment

As part of our Recall and Reminder system, our practice uses a 'Red Flag' system to identify patients who need to be seen by the practitioner. If a patient with a Red Flag wants to cancel or change an appointment the reception staff, follow the Red Flag procedure.

Walk-ins

Walk-in patients are triaged as appropriate and assessed using the [Triage Support Guide](#) and the criteria for suspected cases.

Non-urgent walk-in patients are accepted if there is an available appointment or scheduled to when there is an appointment.

Booking an appointment

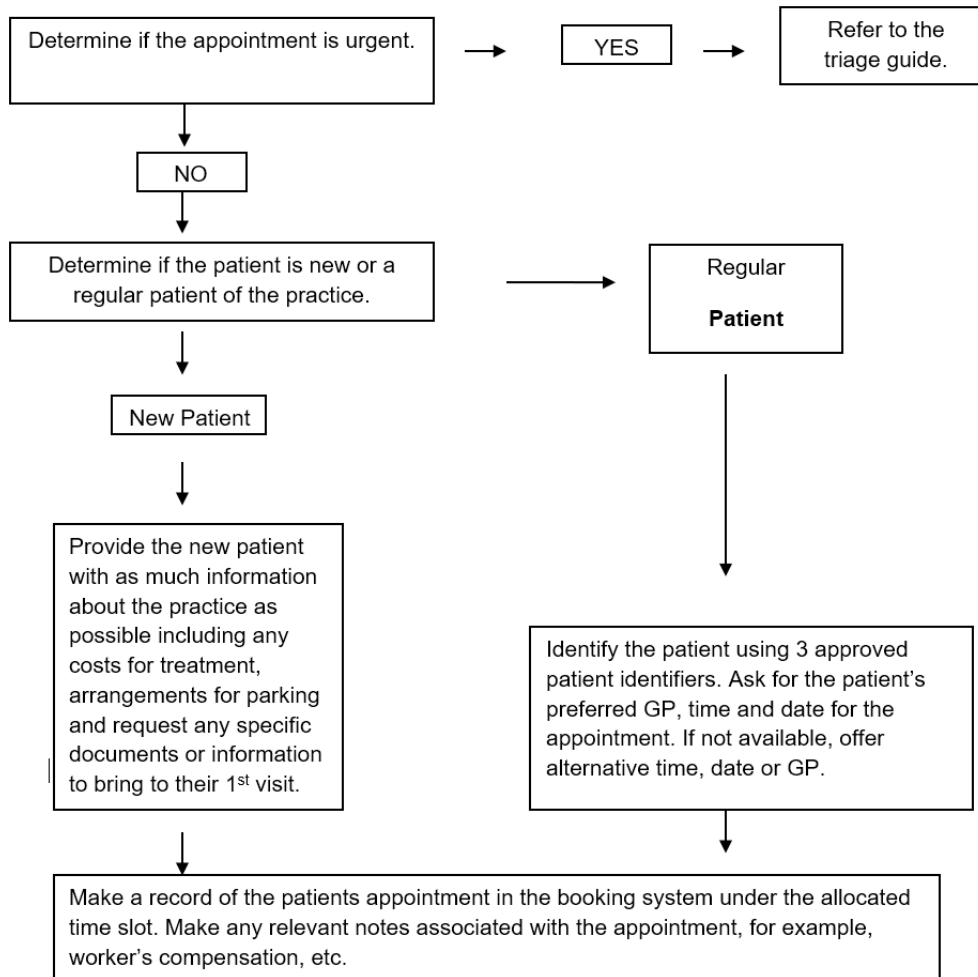
At our practice, patients can book their appointment/s either by contacting the practice or using our online appointment system, HotDoc.

Our practice procedure for booking appointments either via telephone or at the practice is as follows:

1. Ask the patient when they would like an appointment. Determine if the appointment is urgent or non-urgent
2. Ask the patient which GP they would like to see or who they normally see
3. Ask the patient if they have more than one issue to discuss and how long they feel they would need with the GP. Outline the different types of appointments available and their length
4. Advise the patient that one appointment will be allocated per person if they have multiple family members
5. Provide the nearest available time for the patient to see their preferred GP
6. Ask if another GP would be suitable if the patient's preferred GP is not available. If non-urgent, planned chronic care or preventative health care, ask if they would prefer another time and date
7. Provide the patient with a time and date for the appointment
8. Record the patient surname and given name in the agreed timeslot

9. Inform new patients of practice location, parking, costs, **including reference to out of pocket expenses and payment methods** (if applicable). Obtain phone number and record other demographics as able.
10. Reconfirm the appointment time and date and the patient's phone number
11. Encourage the patient to call ½ hour prior to their appointment to see if the GP is running on time. Practice staff must note on the Appointment screen details of patients who call to monitor waiting times.

Booking an appointment - flow chart



Online appointment bookings

Our practice uses the HotDoc online appointment system.

Patients can book with our GPs and Allied Health professionals the following appointment types using our online appointment system.

At our practice, the following types of appointments can be booked on-line:

Appointment	Types of issues	Length (minutes)
Short	<i>Renewed prescriptions and ongoing referral letters</i>	5 minutes
Normal	<i>Routine care, preventive care, address one health matter</i>	15 minutes
Telehealth	<i>Renewed prescriptions, ongoing referral letters</i>	

Appointment reminders

Appointment reminders are sent via Hotdoc hours prior to their appointment. Patients are requested to respond to the SMS and confirm their attendance.

Urgent access

There are times when patients require urgent access to a GP. All patients are asked at the time of requesting an appointment if the matter is urgent.

To accommodate patients with urgent medical needs:

- Our practice reserves a number of unbooked appointment times each day
- Triage according to our [Triage Support Guide](#)
- Designates a GP to deal with urgent cases

All urgent medical situations are documented by practice staff in the patient file and includes details of:

- The actions of practice staff
- The presentation state of the patient
- The names of any other staff or person involved in assisting with the emergency

Consultation length

Patients need to be advised that if they have more than one issue to discuss a longer consultation will be required. Methods include asking the patient if they have more than one issue to discuss with the GP and outlining the different types of appointments and their length. Another method is including such information in the practice information and on our website.

At our practice, we offer the following types of appointments:

Appointment	Types of issues	Length (minutes)
Short	<i>Renewed prescriptions and ongoing referral letters</i>	5 minutes
Normal	<i>Routine care, preventive care, chronic care, referral letters to new specialists</i>	15 minutes
Long	<i>Newpatients, excisions, complex conditions</i>	20-40 minutes
Prolonged	<i>Full medical check-ups, counselling, patient's carer or translator is present</i>	40+ minutes
Telehealth	<i>Renewed prescriptions, ongoing referral letters, routine care</i>	
Practice nurse	<i>Referred by the practitioner, immunisations, care plans.</i>	

Patient fails to attend

Patients are advised failing to attend their appointment may incur a non-attendance fee. This information is provided to patients as per [Costs associated with care initiated by the practice \(C1.5 A - B\)](#).

Appointments marked as 'R' (recall) must be telephoned if they fail to keep their appointment, the time and date of the contact must be entered in the patient's medical record (refer to the [Recall System \(GP 2.2B\)](#)).

Appointments marked as Urgent that fail to attend, must be contacted immediately the time and date of the contact must be entered in the patient's medical record.

If there is a failure to contact the patient, the doctor generating the recall or urgent appointment must also be notified.

Helpful Resources

Avant [Factsheet – Patients who fail to attend an appointment](#)

Avant Factsheet - [Recommendations when using SMS messaging](#)