

About the Out-of-Hours Medical and Urgent Health Care Service for North East Essex



If you would like this publication in another format, such as large print or another language, please contact:



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From 1st October 2007

What to do when your GP surgery is closed

What to do when you need an NHS dentist out-of-hours

What to do when your GP surgery is closed

Do you know what to do when you need medical advice or assistance but your GP surgery is closed? Harmoni is a leading provider of GP out-of-hours services and currently provides cover to your surgery when it is closed. This means that you, the patient, are able to access help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The 'Out-of-Hours' telephone number is:
0845 602 5215

You may find it helpful to keep the number by your telephone. Make sure that other members of the household know how to contact a doctor urgently at night or at the weekend. If you cannot remember the number when you need to use the service, don't worry, you can still call your GP surgery and a recorded message will give you the number.

What times are 'out-of-hours'?

Out-of-hours is the time between 6.30pm and 8.00am on each weekday, all weekend and bank and public holidays.

**PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS NUMBER FOR
REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS,
TEST RESULTS, OR
ROUTINE GP APPOINTMENTS**

When should the service be used?

If you need urgent advice about a medical or health care problem 'out-of-hours' that cannot wait until the GP surgery re-opens.

The service will help you if you become ill after your local GP surgery is closed or need to contact a doctor or trained nurse because of a seri-

ous medical need or an urgent health care problem.

If your medical need or health care problem is NOT urgent, either contact your own GP surgery when it re-opens or call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 (local call rate).

In case of a medical emergency, if you require an ambulance, DIAL 999

What happens when you ring 0845 602 5215? (local call rate)

Specially trained call handlers will answer your call. They will ask you some questions, for example, your name, address, name of your GP, a contact phone number and the reason for your call. All information is regarded as confidential and all calls are recorded and logged.

There will be occasions when all lines to the service are busy and you will hear a message to advise you to 'please stay on the line'. Please do not hang up as you are in a queuing system for calls to be answered.

The call handler will check the patient's safety and prioritise the call. If the patient needs to speak to a medical professional, then a nurse or GP will phone you back within a specified time.

In the meantime, if the patient's condition worsens, please call back.

The nurse or GP will ask more details about your urgent health care problem and may:

- offer advice on self-care
- refer you to a Primary Care Centre within North East Essex for an appointment to be seen by a doctor

- advise you to attend an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department
- arrange a home visit
- or in an emergency send out an ambulance

About the out-of-hours NHS dental service

This NHS service is for patients who have an urgent dental problem out-of-hours that cannot wait until NHS dental surgeries are open.

When you ring **0845 602 5238** (local rate), a dental nurse will ask you some questions about your dental problem and may:

- offer advice on self-care and pain control
- in a dental emergency, arrange for you to contact the out-of-hours dentist to see if emergency treatment is necessary

If your dental problem is NOT urgent then you need to contact a dental surgery when they re-open.

Who can I contact if I need to change an appointment or have a comment or suggestion about the GP or dental out-of-hours service?

If you wish to change an appointment that has been made on your behalf during the out-of-hours period, please contact the Harmoni Co-ordinator on 0845 602 5215 for the GP service or 0845 602 5238 for the dental service.

If you are unhappy with the service you receive or wish to make suggestions on how it could be improved, please contact Harmoni Patient Services on 01923 715 010.