

How Patient Triage Works at Dukinfield Medical Practice

When you call or visit the surgery, you might hear the word "triage." But what does it mean?

Triage is a way of deciding who needs help first and who is the most appropriate clinician to see. It makes sure that the people who are most unwell or in the most pain get seen quickly. It also helps the GP surgery run smoothly, so that everyone gets the right care at the right time.

What Happens During Triage?

You complete an online patient triage, or speak to a receptionist over the phone, or in the surgery.



When you contact the GP surgery by phone or in person, a receptionist will ask you a few questions about your symptoms. They are not being nosy – they need this information to make sure you get the right care. If you are able to complete the patient triage form yourself this can be accessed via the NHS Health App or the practice website.

A clinician then reviews your triage form along with your medical notes and decides how urgent your problem is.

- If it's an emergency, you will be told to call 999 or go to A&E.
- If it's urgent, you may get a same-day phone call or appointment.
- If it's not urgent, you might be offered an appointment on another day or given advice on what to do at home.
- If another service can help, (like a pharmacy or walk-in clinic), they might suggest that instead.

In general practice, triage helps direct you to the right person or service for your health problem. Depending on your symptoms and how urgent they are, you might be referred to:

A GP (Doctor) or Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP)

If your condition needs a medical assessment, diagnosis, or treatment, you may be booked in for a face-to-face or telephone appointment with a GP or ANP

Examples: Ongoing illness, worsening long-term conditions (like asthma or diabetes), chest infections and unexplained pain.

A Nurse or Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP)

Nurses and ACPs can **diagnose, treat, and prescribe** medication for many common conditions.

Examples: Infections, minor injuries, wound care, vaccinations, and contraception advice.

A Paramedic

Paramedics can **diagnose and treat minor injuries and illnesses**, including urgent care. Seeing patients who need same-day assessments but don't necessarily need a GP.

Examples: Infections, minor injuries, checking vital signs, listening to the chest, and assessing pain.

A Healthcare Assistant (HCA) or Phlebotomist

HCAs and phlebotomists help with **routine tests and checks**.

A Clinical Pharmacist

Pharmacists in GP surgeries help with **medications and minor illnesses**.

Examples: Medication reviews, repeat prescriptions, minor infections, and side effects

A Mental Health Nurse or Counsellor

If your issue is related to mental health, you may be referred to a **specialist service**.

Examples: Anxiety, depression, stress, low mood, and self-harm concerns.

A Musculoskeletal Practitioner (MSK)

If your issue is related to **muscles, bones, or joints**, you may be seen by an **MSK Practitioner**.

MSK Practitioners can assess, diagnose, refer for investigations or specialist care, and administer injections.

A Social Prescriber

If you need help with **wider life issues** affecting your health, a social Prescriber can support you.

Examples: Loneliness, housing problems, money worries, and support groups.

**Triage is there to make sure everyone gets the care they need.
By working together, we can make GP surgeries better for everyone**