

Summertown Health Centre

Patient's Consent to Observer Policy

Introduction

Summertown Health Centre is a surgery where students come to learn how to be doctors.

As a teaching practice, Summertown Health Centre provides medical students with a place where they can take the opportunity to talk to patients about their state of health and any illnesses that are affecting them. This helps students to understand how illnesses affect people and how they learn to cope with them day-to-day.

Reception Staff

Upon arrival at the practice for the consultation, or during the booking of the appointment, the receptionist will explain to you that the doctor / nurse that will be seeing you will also have a medical student or observer sitting in with them and would like your help in providing this service.

The receptionist will also explain that if you are prepared to see or have a medical student or other observer sitting in on your consultation, that the practice will need to obtain your consent.

An information leaflet will be provided for your reference and should answer any questions you may have. If this leaflet does not answer all of your concerns, please do not hesitate to raise these with the receptionist who will be only too happy to answer them.

The practice is grateful for your help in enabling us to provide this teaching service, however this is entirely voluntary.

No one will mind if you would rather not see a student, or if you change your mind or want the student to leave at any time.

You can also refuse to see particular students, such as those of a different sex or those you have met outside the surgery.

When might I see medical students?

- Students may be sitting with doctors or nurses at the practice. The receptionist should warn you about this and will tell the doctor if you would rather not see a student. Saying 'No' will not have any effect on the care you receive.
- You may be asked if the student can do the consultation while your doctor or nurse watches. The student may be asked questions. If something is said that you do not understand, please ask for clarification.
- You may be asked to see a student before your appointment, or to attend a student surgery. If you are asked to attend a student surgery a doctor will always be in charge and will see you to make sure your problems are dealt with appropriately.
- You may be asked to come in to the surgery specially to talk to students about a problem which has been dealt with by the practice on an earlier occasion. You may also be asked to see students about a longer standing problem to help them understand its effects on your life.
- You may be asked for consent for a medical student to video record your consultation. This recording will be viewed by the doctor and student. With your specific permission, it may also be taken to a teaching session at another practice where a group of four to eight students and a GP tutor will view the recording and give feedback to the student. This is a valuable learning tool for both medical students and experienced doctors.
- You may be asked if students can visit you at home.

- You may say no at any time before or during the consultation. You can also tell us to erase the recording at any time either immediately after the consultation or weeks later. Such a request will not affect the care you receive from the practice.

How will I be sure they are medical students?

They will always carry photographic identification: usually a University Identity card.

Please ask to see the identification if the students visit you at home.

What do I tell students?

If you are coming to see a doctor or nurse about an illness or problem, then tell the students about it, how it affects your daily life, what worries you have and what you hope to gain from the consultation.

It is important that students learn about illness from the perspective of the patient.

If you are seeing students by special arrangement, then they will want to know how your illness was discovered, how it has developed and how it affects you, your family or friends now.

They will also be interested in the investigations you had, what they were like, your treatment and any side-effects you have had.

It is important for them to hear things in your own words.

If you know what is wrong with you then it is all right to share that with the students, unless the tutor has asked you not to.

Will they want to examine me?

Medical students need to learn how to examine patients sensitively. Your doctor or nurse may ask if a student can examine you during a consultation. If it is too painful or embarrassing you can say 'No'. This will not affect the care you receive.

If a student sees you before a doctor, they may ask to examine you. We hope you would be happy for them to look at your throat or ears, hands or feet.

You may be asked to undress so that a student can examine your trunk or limbs: this is up to you. No one will mind if you refuse or want to wait for the doctor to join the consultation.

Students should not ask to do a sensitive or embarrassing examination unless a doctor or nurse is present.

Can students do tests or treat me?

Medical students are not fully qualified doctors and cannot treat patients or carry out procedures unsupervised. They may however carry out a simple urine test as part of an examination.

A doctor will always check on the need for, and sign, any prescriptions or requests for investigations suggested by a student after discussion with you and the student.

Students have been or are being trained to do simple procedures like taking blood. If the doctor has checked a student's ability, then if you agree, s/he may be allowed to carry out a procedure under supervision.

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns do ask. You can always say 'No' if you are worried!

Can I ask students to explain things to me?

Students often have more time available to them and may be able to explain things in simple language. However, they are still learning so may not have answers to all your questions. What they can do is listen to your questions and ask a doctor or nurse to give you fuller answers.

Do students have access to my records?

It helps students if they can read the history of your problem and see what doctors have found and we assume that agreement to see a student implies permission to look at your records.

Students are, of course, bound by the same rules of confidentiality as any doctor or nurse.

If you don't want students to look at your records please let us know.

Students may see the records of any patient when working with a doctor or nurse; this may include looking at results, dealing with hospital letters or reviewing notes as part of an audit. Students will not be given unsupervised access to your notes without your explicit permission.

Are my views about student behaviour useful?

Yes, indeed! It is always helpful to have feedback both positive and negative about students.

We like to know when they have been warm and helpful or if they have seemed cold or muddled. Please tell the doctor or receptionist whenever you feel it appropriate, or write a note if you prefer.

What happens if a student upsets me?

That should be a very rare event.

If it does happen please let the doctor or someone in the surgery know at once.

Be assured your concerns will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Finally!

Students learn an enormous amount from the patients they meet.

Thank you for your help.

It could be very important in making sure we have excellent doctors in the future who are both knowledgeable & caring.

Summertown Health Centre

Meeting Medical Students

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Advice for Patients

This Practice is a place where people come to learn how to be doctors. It is important for them to talk to people about their health and illnesses. This helps them understand how illnesses affect people and how they cope.

We would be grateful if you could help us in this teaching. However this is entirely voluntary.

No one will mind if you would rather not see a student or if you change your mind or want the student to leave at any time.

You can also refuse to see particular students, such as those of a different sex or those you have met outside the surgery.

Of course, the care provided to you by the practice will not be affected in any way.

If you are prepared to see a medical student, this leaflet may help answer some of your questions.

***Remember you can always say "No!"
or change your mind
and ask the student to leave at any time.***