

Spread the word about eConsult

The PPG information and education pack

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Overview of eConsult

What is eConsult?

[eConsult](#) is a bit of software that GP practices can add to their own practice website to allow you to make medical or administrative requests online, for free, in your own time.

Behind the scenes, eConsult is a digital triage tool -We've written a blog on our website explaining what triage is: [Read our 'What is triage for more information'](#).

Once the type of help needed has been chosen, eConsult asks you questions which change in real-time based on your previous answers. These questions are very similar to the ones that would be asked during a face to face consultation and have been designed to give the GP practice staff all the information they need to safely triage everyone to the right care. This might be a follow-up call, a video consultation, prescriptions to collect from a pharmacist, a face to face with a nurse, an email with further information etc.

Every eConsult is reviewed by a human at the practice, so you know you are getting the care your surgery thinks is right. Clinical eConsults will be reviewed by your doctors and administrative ones by the admin team, unless a clinician also needs to see them.

eConsult is a way of making sure patients get the right care as quickly as possible - Read our blog post on our website: ['What is an online consultation' for more information.](#)

What makes eConsult better than a phone call to the practice?

- eConsult is available to use any time of day or night, even on weekends.
- Because the questions follow structured paths, they collect detailed information (your 'medical history') that is easy for clinicians to review.
- There are inbuilt warnings to make sure patients who may show worrying symptoms are directed to more urgent care.
- You also never have to wait in a phone queue.
- eConsults are reviewed alongside phone requests and walk-in requests, so none of them are 'jumping the queue'.

Useful features of eConsult

You can use eConsult from any device connected to the internet

You can use eConsult from a smartphone, tablet or computer. You just need an internet connection.

Uploading a photograph as part of your eConsult

As you complete an eConsult you might be asked to upload a photograph. This will give your practice more information so that they can make a safe and accurate judgement of the care you need. You will not be asked to upload a photo with every eConsult as for some conditions a photograph would not be appropriate.

[See our guide on uploading photos](#)

eConsult is built into the NHS App

If you live in England you can download the 'NHS App' and complete an eConsult from within the app. This means you can access everything else the NHS App has to offer and your 'personal' details will be filled out for you if you use the App to complete an eConsult.

A detailed history means a more accurate triage

eConsult does take time to fill out. This is because your safety is key. We ask the questions your doctors need the answers to in order to make the right decision on the care you need.

Save yourself time later on and take the time to complete your eConsult to the best of your ability.

Built-in 'safety red-flagging'

To ensure patient safety is always a priority, all of our questionnaires have safety warnings built-in. If you answer a question that suggests you need more 'critical care' than can be given at a GP practice you will be directed to more appropriate care.

Any of your answers that we think your GP practice needs to see first we highlight to them, to help ensure you get the right care quickly. If you make a mistake, or want to reconsider your answer you can always go back and change their answers too.

Your practice can include relevant local services

If there are local services such as mental health services or physiotherapy, your practice can include these in their version of eConsult.

For example, if you say you have back pain you might be told about a local physiotherapist service. This way you get the best care for your condition every time.

How do you use eConsult?

eConsult is very simple to use. It does not require a password and can be accessed from any device that has an internet connection.

1. Go to your practice website and click on the **eConsult banner**
 - a. You can also use the NHS App or visit [eConsult's patient page](#)
2. Select the most appropriate option for you:
 - a. 'I want help for my condition' - When you have a good idea of what is wrong e.g. flu, back pain, anxiety
 - b. 'I want general help' - When the condition/ symptom is more general e.g. tiredness, weakness
 - c. 'I want administrative help' - To request sick notes, GP letters, test results, to ask questions about your medication
 - d. 'I want help for my child' - To request medical help/ advice for your child
3. Complete and submit the eConsultation filling out the questions as accurately as you can
4. Your eConsult is sent to your GP practice where it will be reviewed by the appropriate member of staff who will decide on the right care for you.
5. Next steps - This will be dependent on your eConsultation. You might be sent an email with self-care information, receive a phone-call with your GP, or be asked to come in for an appointment.

Please note

When you are completing an eConsult you might be shown a warning screen, to either call 111, call 999, or call the practice. If you see these messages you will have answered a question in a way that may suggest you may need more urgent care. A patient has the option to go back and change their answer, but we want to ensure the patient understands they may have more urgent symptoms.

What are the benefits of eConsult?

To the practice:

- Increased level of information about your needs means that the practice can make a far more accurate decision on the right care for each patient without having to spend more time calling every patient up
- The most critical patients are highlighted to the practice
- As eConsults are split into clinical and administrative the practice can ensure that the most appropriate staff see each patient

To patients:

- eConsult is available for you to make requests 24/7. If you work, are unable to take time off work or want to make a request on the weekend you can. The practice will look at the requests during their working hours and get back to the you
- No more phone queues - eConsult is online so you don't have to wait in a phone queue
- If more patients who can use eConsult do, it frees up the phone lines for those that cannot
- Take your time - As you complete the eConsult in your own time, you can ensure you get all the detail you want to include down
- No need to go to the practice unless your doctors think it's necessary. This saves you time and money

Community

By submitting an eConsult your doctors can make sure every patient gets the right care, saving appointments for those that need them. If you can use eConsult it means you free up the phone line for those who are not able to use the internet.

Reassurance

We don't always know what is wrong with us, which is why we go to the doctors. By submitting an eConsult you give you doctors all the information they need to decide on the right care for you and your family.

Speed/Access

eConsult is available to use any time, day or night, from any device connected to the internet. There is no need to wait in a phone queue or visit the practice. It takes just 3-4 minutes to complete an eConsult and your practice will get back to you within 1 working day, if not sooner.

How can you help educate other patients about eConsult

eConsult is already live in your practice and across your area. We want to help empower patients who will benefit from using an online platform like eConsult to make requests to their practice.

We know that patient groups like PPGs are vital in educating the wider patient population about new services, so we have put together the following resources to help you.

Not every Patient Group is the same, so we have created lots of collateral and resources that you can pick and choose from. If there is anything else you think would be useful to help educate patients about eConsult please contact: marketing@webgp.com.

Practice based marketing:

We work closely with practices to make sure they have everything they need to launch eConsult and ensure patients that need to know do know.

We provide practices with all the information in this pack and guides on how best to communicate to patients. We have been doing this for over 6 years and have a lot of experience in helping practices integrate online platforms.

From experience, we know that practices can be time-short which is why we want to help give you all the information you need.

Patient based education:

Patients listen to other patients. Now that eConsult is available in your practice it is completely free for you to use. Experience has shown us that lots of patients can benefit from using eConsult as opposed to calling in or walking into the practice, and the GP practice benefits from receiving eConsults over phone calls.

Every request is still reviewed in the same way, so letting patients that would use and benefit from eConsult know it is available is key. The following materials are available for you to use.

Newsletter content

From experience, we know that newsletters are one of the most used ways when communicating from PPGs to the wider patient list.

Use eConsult to receive care and stay safe during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant we've had to change how we do things in order to protect each other from the virus.

This includes how we interact with our GP practice and receive the treatment and care we need.

Our GP practice has put in place a free service called eConsult, allowing you to submit your symptoms or requests online.

You can ask for help or advice from your practice from the safety of your home, at any time of day, reducing the risk of you catching or spreading COVID-19.

How it works

There are three ways to access and submit an eConsult:

1. Via the eConsult banner on your practice's website, on any device
2. Download and use the NHS App on your phone or tablet
3. Through the eConsult GP finder on the website <https://econsult.net/nhs-patients>

From there, all you have to do is complete a quick online questionnaire which is sent to your practice. Using this, your GP can quickly check your eConsult and advise you on the best next steps.

You can also search for trusted NHS self-help advice, complete administrative requests and give your GP updates about long-term conditions through eConsult.

Help your practice and community:



eConsult not only helps you, but it also helps your practice and fellow patients. By using eConsult first, your practice can better understand the needs of all patients asking for help. By going online, it also frees up the phone lines for patients unable to use computers or the internet. You'll only be asked to come in for an appointment if your doctor decides you need one - saving you a trip to the practice. You'll still get a response from your practice quickly and know that your doctor is still there to help you.

Social Media and messaging

We have put together the following text that you can choose to use or edit when sending messages to groups on platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook Groups.

Our GP practice is now using eConsult!
eConsult allows patients to submit requests to their practice 24/7 from anywhere they have an internet connection. Rather than booking an appointment, the patient sends their request or symptoms and the GP practice will review and make sure every patient gets the right care. This might save you a trip into the practice.

There are three ways to access and submit an eConsult:

1. Through the eConsult banner on your practice's website, on any device
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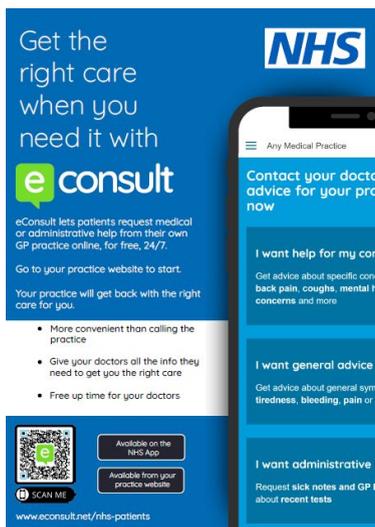
You can find out more about eConsult and watch a video on how it all works here: <https://econsult.net/nhs-patients>

PDF guides and leaflets

We have put together the following guides to help explain to patients how to use eConsult, what it is for and how it can benefit the practice. We have also started putting together guides on the most used features. More guides coming soon.

The following guides have been designed to either share as a PDF, or for you to print off and distribute as you like. If you need it, we can suggest cheap but professional printers.

How to use eConsult- General Guide



[Click here to download the guide](#)

How to upload a photo as part of an eConsult



[Click here to download the guide](#)

How to submit an administrative eConsult



[Click here to download the guide](#)

Easy Read guides - Coming soon!

We are working with a learning disability team to put together an Easy Read Guide.

Video guides - Updated videos coming soon!

We have put together the following videos to help explain what eConsult is and how to use it. We are working to update all the videos and produce more.

You can view all the videos here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZOdu-4oqXPNbglWoyzB8IKlbnkD1sMxL>

What is eConsult and how does it work?



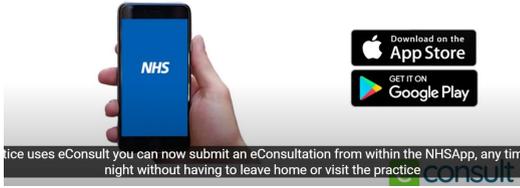
What is eConsult and how does it work?

How to upload a photograph as part of an eConsultation

understand your symptoms or conditions better.
Uploading a photo as part of your eConsultation

eConsult is now available from within the NHS App

eConsult is now available to use via the NHS App



Useful explainer blog posts and the eConsult.net website

We understand that for many patients this might be the first time using an online platform like eConsult. For other patients, they may already use other platforms so understanding what eConsult is for, what an online consultation is, and how it all works is important.

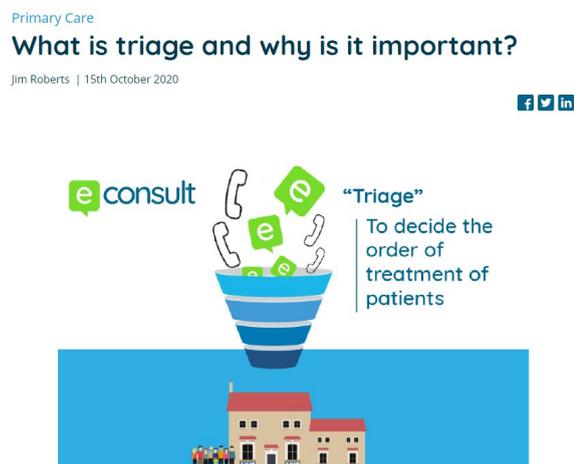
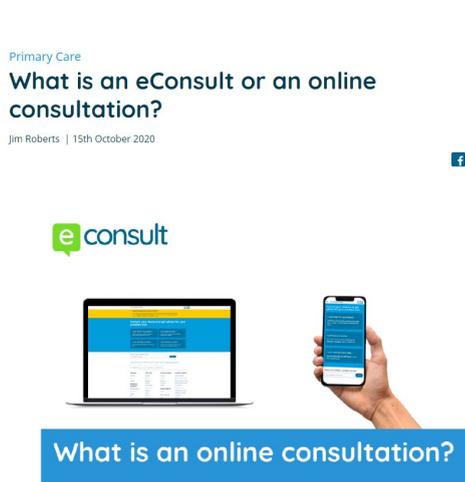
We have written some patient-friendly guides to help explain it all. You can send these onto other patients to help explain.

If you have any suggestions for future blogs, or you would like to help us write future blog posts, please get in touch with: marketing@webgp.com

Get even more information at eConsult.net

You can find out more about eConsult and watch a video on how it all works here: <https://econsult.net/nhs-patients>

Click on the images below to open the blog posts



Book your PPG onto one of our patient webinars

If your PPG is new to eConsult, or you would like to find out how to get more from it, or you would like to feedback on positives and negatives of eConsult, then we would like to invite you to book a Webinar with members of our team. If you would like us to join one of your PPG sessions we are more than happy to join when it suits you

What can I get out of the eConsult PPG Webinars?

We want these sessions to be useful to you, so we are happy to adjust them based on what you would like to get out of them. This might be:

- **Feedback on problems and positives of the eConsult product:** We take feedback very seriously and your input could help shape the future of the product.
- **Overview of eConsult** – including features and benefits to practice and patients, myth-busting session to run through common misconceptions of eConsult, Q&A
- **Top tips on educating other patients of eConsult** – A run-through of the different marketing techniques

How to organise a PPG Webinar?

We can either organise one and invite your members, or if it is more convenient we can join one of your PPG sessions

[Click here to get in touch and organise this with our marketing team](#)

FAQs:

Does eConsult keep patient data?

eConsult is a data processor, we collect patient information and then pass it onto the practice in a format that makes it easy for the practice to read. Once we have passed it to the practice (usually in a matter of seconds) we delete any identifiable patient information. We are not here to sell your data. We are not here to sell the NHS.

eConsult costs my practice money

eConsult has been designed to improve safety and efficiency in practices. From our experience practices using eConsult have been able to save money through better management of their staff and resources. [You can read our case studies here.](#)

eConsult is not safe

Patient safety is of the utmost importance to us. It is why we spend so much time with our clinical governance team of over 26 NHS specialists and clinicians. Our red-flagging directs to more critical care if needed, we highlight areas of medical significance or interest in the eConsult reports that are read by the practice and we review all our questionnaires regularly to ensure they are safe. [You can read about our governance process here](#)

eConsults take too long to complete

We are not a simple free text box where patients can request an appointment. We are a digital triage tool that collects a details patient history so the practice can accurately determine the right care for each patient. Our questionnaires change in real-time based on your previous answers, following the same kind of questions a GP would ask in an appointment. Spending a little longer to complete an eConsult could save you or the practice a lot more time later on.

What about patients who can't use eConsult?

eConsult is not for every patient. There will always be some patients who cannot, or will not, use eConsult and that is fine. eConsult should not be the only way to make a request at the practice. What we have heard from practices is that if more patients that can use online do, then it frees up other contact options for patients who can't use online.

