


Wheaton Hall Medical Practice Chaperone Policy



Wheaton Hall Medical Practice is committed to providing all patients with a safe, comfortable environment. If you would like a chaperone present during your consultation, please advise the receptionist when booking your appointment. You may also ask for a chaperone on arrival for an appointment, although the practice cannot guarantee a chaperone being available at short notice. If this is the case, your examination will be cancelled.

What Patients can Expect:

All clinical staff will be cognisant of patients' privacy and dignity and their obligations surrounding physical and intimate examinations

- A chaperone can act as a safeguard for both the doctor and the patient during an intimate examination. The doctor or nurse will ask the patient if they would like a chaperone to be present and record their wishes.
- If a chaperone is not available, the doctor or nurse will confirm if the patient wishes to proceed or make alternative arrangements, as long as the delay would not adversely affect the patient's welfare
- The practice will make every effort to ensure the availability of a chaperone at certain times in the working week so one will be available to comply with the absolute duty to offer a chaperone for intimate examinations.
- The identity of the chaperone should be recorded if one is present

What is an intimate examination?

- Before undertaking any physical examination, including an intimate examination, the doctor or nurse will discuss this with the patient, explaining why it is needed, what will be involved and addressing any concerns that the patient may have and obtain consent.
- Each doctor or nurse must use clinical judgement to decide if an examination is intimate depending on the individual circumstances of each examination including age, gender and culture. The Medical Council Guide states that intimate examinations include examinations of breasts, genitalia and rectum, but this list is not exhaustive
- Patients' dignity will be respected by giving them privacy to undress and dress, and keeping them covered as much as possible. The dr or nurse will not help the patient to remove clothing unless they have checked with them that they want help.
- On occasions such as a home visit, a chaperone may not always be available. In these circumstances the dr will consider whether the examination is urgent and necessary. If it is not urgent and the patient requests a

chaperone, the dr may advise the patient to reschedule or attend the surgery at a time when a chaperone is available.

- The presence of a chaperone protects both the doctor and the patient. Even if a patient declines a chaperone, the doctor may feel it would be more prudent to have one for their own protection and / or comfort.

Who should be a chaperone?

- Although the chaperone could be a family member, nurse or other staff member, it is considered best practice that family members may not be best to undertake the chaperoning role. They may not fully appreciate the nature of the physical examination performed, and may not be completely impartial.
- If non-medical staff members at the practice are to undertake the chaperone role, the practice will ensure that they are fully trained which includes training in maintaining patient confidentiality, familiarity of the procedure, where to stand and how to raise concerns about a doctor if misconduct occurs.

Reference:

The Medical Council's Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners, 9th Edition, 2024

