

TRIAGE PROCESS & CATEGORIES

Determine Urgency by asking the following questions:

1. **Who is calling? Is it the patient or someone calling on behalf of the patient?**
2. **Describe the problem**
3. **What are the symptoms? Are they getting worse?**
4. **How long has the person been unwell?**

**THIS CHART IS
TO BE USED AS A
GUIDE ONLY**

All symptoms listed in the following table must be confirmed by the above triage process. If unsure refer the call to the doctor or nurse.

CATEGORY	ATTENTION	SYMPTOMS	ACTION – DOCTOR PRESENT	ACTION – DOCTOR NOT PRESENT
Category 1 Emergency (all ages)	IMMEDIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person has been in serious accident Unconscious Fitting / Convulsions Breathing difficulty / respiratory distress Severe distress including chest pain or indigestion Major burn / Major injury / wound Collapse Severe and uncontrolled bleeding Looks or feels very unwell / grey / sweaty Suspected poisoning Severe allergic reaction – tongue swelling Unexpected death Acute psychiatric behaviour disorder Possibility of drug overdose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately refer the call to the doctor or nurse. Patient presenting in person: follow practice policy on removing patient from waiting room to treatment area. Notify doctor, do not leave patient alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately call an ambulance '000' on behalf of the patient and provide the patient's location, telephone number and an indication of the condition. For an existing patient, retrieve the patient's file and document the action in the history. Contact the doctor and advise him or her of the emergency and the action that you have taken. If not an existing patient, document event and any instructions given.
Category 2 Urgent	5-20 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe abdominal pain Haemorrhage in pregnancy (at any stage) Urine retention in males Eye injury or severe eye pain Sudden onset altered vision Allergic reaction – itchy rash Physical or emotional distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately refer the call to the doctor or nurse. Patient presenting in person: follow practice policy on removing patient from waiting room to treatment area. Notify doctor, do not leave patient alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately call an ambulance '000' on behalf of the patient and provide the patient's location, telephone number and an indication of their condition. For an existing patient, retrieve the patient's file and document the action in the history. Contact the doctor and advise him or her of the emergency and the action that you have taken. If not an existing patient, document event and any instructions given.
Category 3 Soon	2 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent / severe vomiting and diarrhoea Severe persistent headache or earache Persistent high fever Foreign body – ear or nose . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the patient to come to the practice within a 2 hour period and in clinic time and they will be seen Inform the doctor or nurse of the patient's condition and expected time of arrival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the patient to go to the nearest emergency department For an existing patient, retrieve the patient's file and document the action in the history. Contact the doctor and advise him or her of the emergency and the action that you have taken. If not an existing patient, document event and any instructions given.
Category 4 Today	Same Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe sore throat Persistent / productive cough Pain when passing urine Physical or emotional distress Fevers and chills Vomiting and Diarrhoea Children under 8 or babies presenting as unwell Abnormal or unusual bleeding 	Advise the patient to come to the practice as soon as is practicable and in clinic time or as reflected by practice policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the patient to come to the practice within clinic appointment time.
Category 5 Next day	1-2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of undiagnosed lump or alteration in existing lump (evaluate level of distress) Regular screening & / or review Repeat prescriptions Vaccinations Other non-urgent matters 	Advise the patient to attend the practice within a 24-48 hour period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the patient to attend the practice within a 24-48 hour period and they will be seen.