



The Health Centre, Oliver Street, Ampthill,  
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**The Oliver Street Surgery**  
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[www.oliverstreetsurgery.co.uk](http://www.oliverstreetsurgery.co.uk)

## One Problem / Patient Per Consultation policy

We kindly ask that all patients try and stick to our ‘One Problem / One Patient Per Consultation’ policy. The main reason for this request is for **clinical safety**.

We know that getting an appointment with the doctor is sometimes difficult and that some patients ‘save’ their problems and present them to the doctor at the same time, with or without a list. We also know that the clinician may run late. All of this increases the tendency for patients to present multiple problems to their clinician at one consultation.

Each appointment is only 10 minutes long. Ten minutes really is not a lot of time, even for just one problem, or family member, e.g., 1 minute to get to doctor’s room and sit down, 3 minutes to tell a history, 3-4 minutes to perform a targeted examination, 2 minutes to explain, advise and treat. There is no time left of the ten minutes to write up notes, fill out forms, dictate referrals or speak to other team members for advice. It is for this reason that we also will only see one patient per consultation. There is no clinical safety in having “a quick look” at another family member who may also be in attendance, as a **full** examination or consultation must be performed for each and every patient.

Presenting the clinician with multiple problems (or other family members) means that there is a real increased risk that mistakes will be made and things to be missed as the clinician may be inclined to rush, particularly if other patients are waiting.

One of Primary Care’s main purposes is to detect serious disease early. Presenting multiple problems (or other family members) to the clinician, not all of which may be serious, increases the difficulty of this task – it is like finding the ‘needle in a haystack’.

Doctors cannot see huge numbers of patients with multiple problems and continue to practice safely and effectively. Neither can they see patients that do not have a bespoke appointment for the same reason. A stressed doctor will struggle to be a good and safe doctor.

We do consider that GP appointments are a limited resource and we would kindly ask that such a service be used with care and consideration.

Therefore please do not be offended if the doctor asks you to rebook for your other problems or for other family members. We are working in your best interests in order to keep you safe.

We would always encourage patients to book double appointments if there are multiple problems that need discussing, or should a member of the family have an appointment but another family member has

more worrying or painful concerns which they would like to use their own appointment slot for, please advise reception on arrival and they will happily change the name of the person going into see the clinician