

## **A Guide to Online Consults**

### **What is an online consult?**

Online consults is an evidence based online website that allows patients to request advice from the surgery through completing the online consultation. The online consult may offer self-help or direct patients to other services which may be beneficial for their symptoms e.g. signposting to a pharmacy for minor ailments or emergency services for urgent care. Online consults can be completed for both existing and new conditions. Online consults should not be used for urgent/emergency medical advice – instead the patient should contact the surgery if during working hours, call 111 for non-urgent health advice or 999 in an emergency. Online consults are confidential as with all patient engagement.

### **What happens when I complete an online consult?**

The practice team will triage the online consult within 48 hours and book an administration slot for the appropriate clinician, who will review and action the online consult. Once reviewed, the clinician will either contact the patient remotely via text or telephone consultation or will arrange a face to face appointment if required. The practice team will send a text to patients to inform them that the online consult has been received when the clinician will review this consultation. If there is no mobile number provided, the clinician will call you within two working days.

### **Benefits of online consults**

- Using our online consult service allows patients avoid waiting times that may be experienced when calling the practice.
- Online consults can be completed 24/7 at a time that is convenient for the patient, rather than having to contact the practice during opening hours.
- Symptoms and queries can potentially be assessed remotely by the GP, in some cases removing the need to attend the surgery in person. The clinician can also request a picture if required which in some cases can

be assessed remotely. This can be helpful to avoid taking time out of work in order to get medical advice.

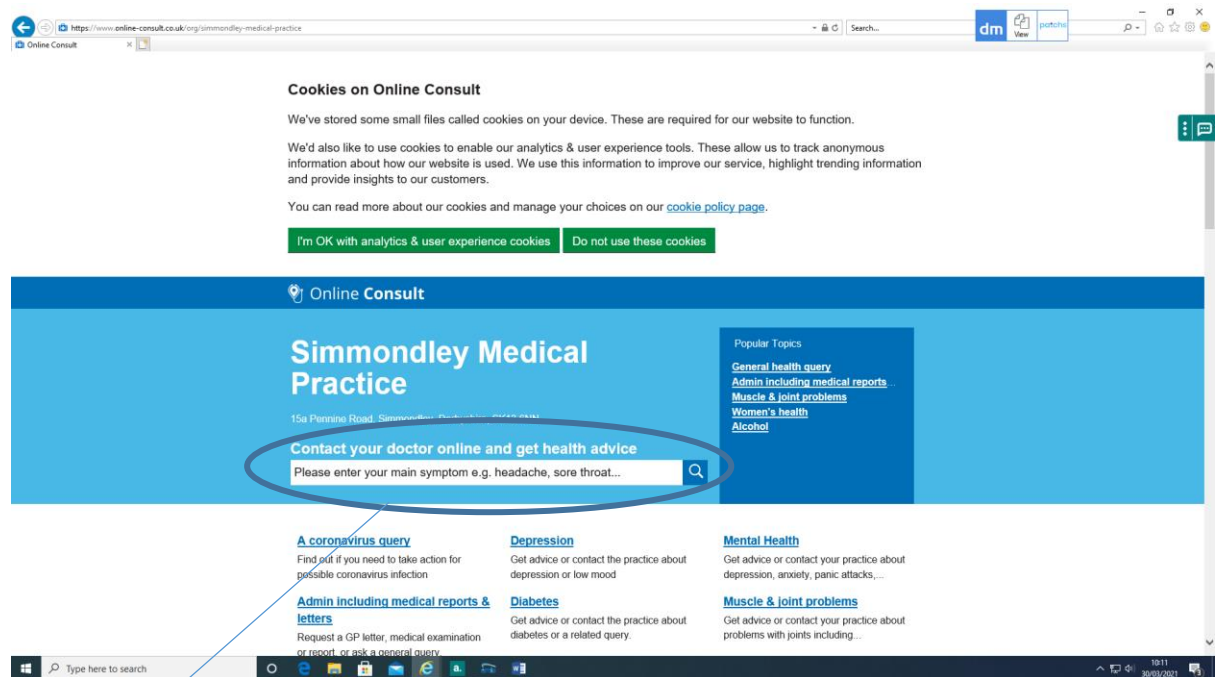
- In some cases patients may find it easier to communicate their symptoms in text rather than verbally.

## How do I complete an online consult?

To complete an online consult please open the website:

<https://www.online-consult.co.uk/org/simmondley-medical-practice>

It will look like this

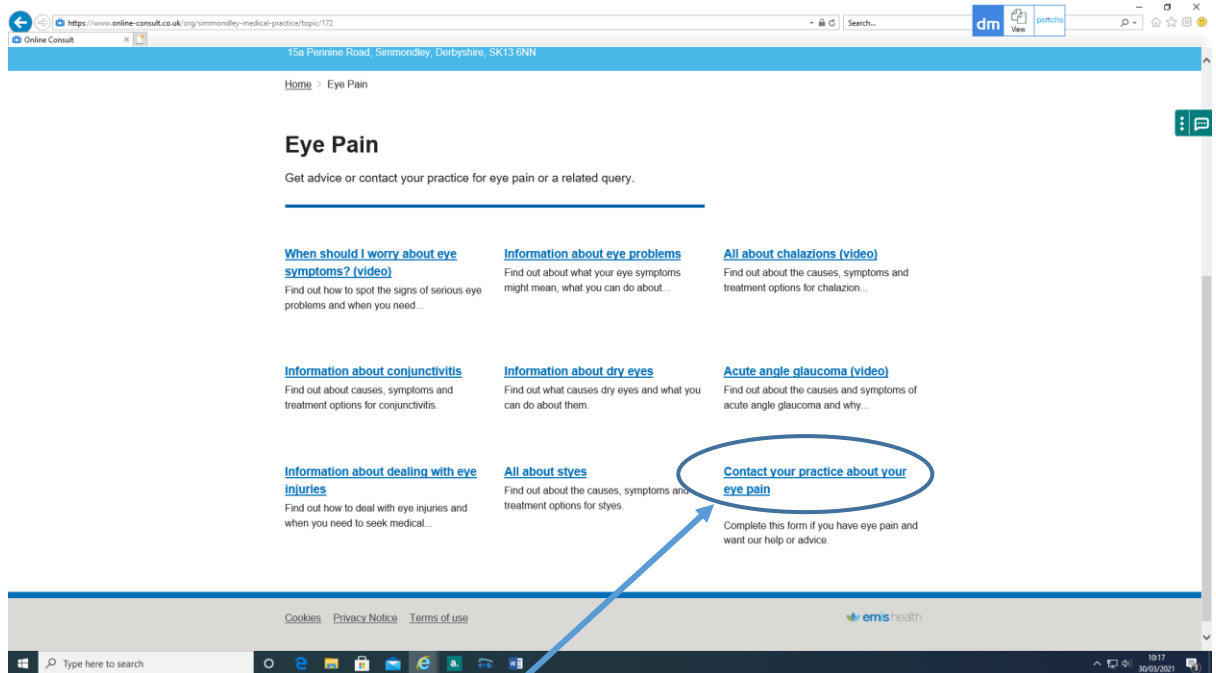


You can search for your main symptoms using the search bar at the top of the page.

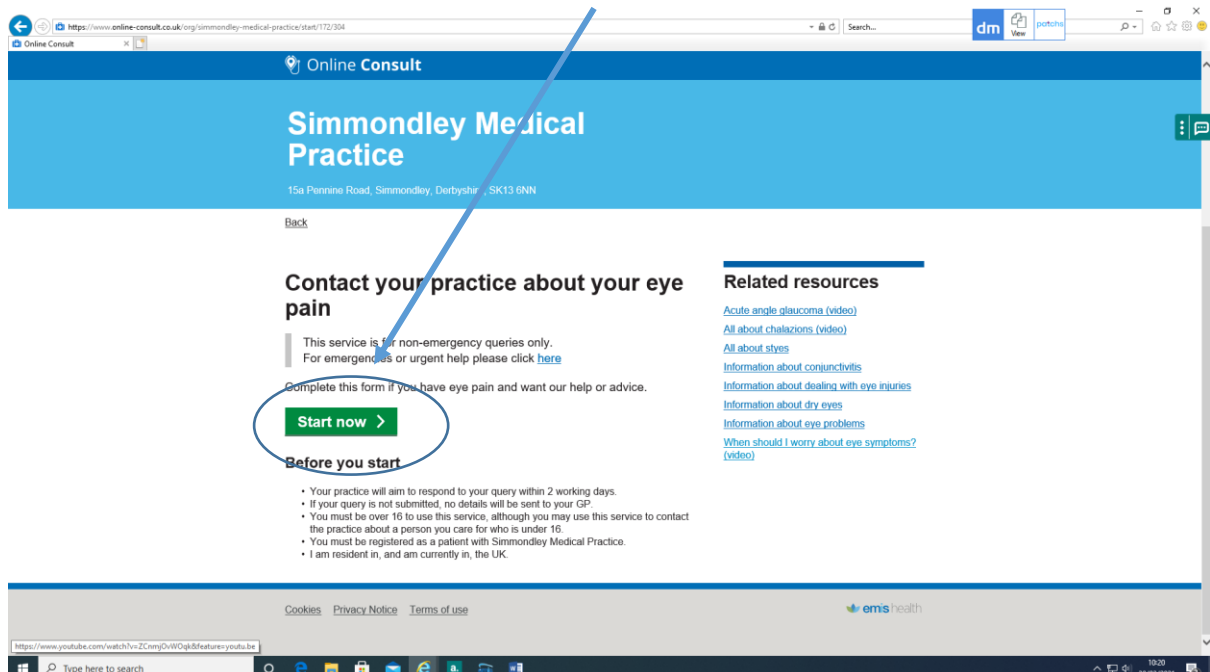
Alternatively, you can scroll down the website where they will find a range of medical queries and symptoms. Once you have selected the item that is most relevant you need to click on the link –



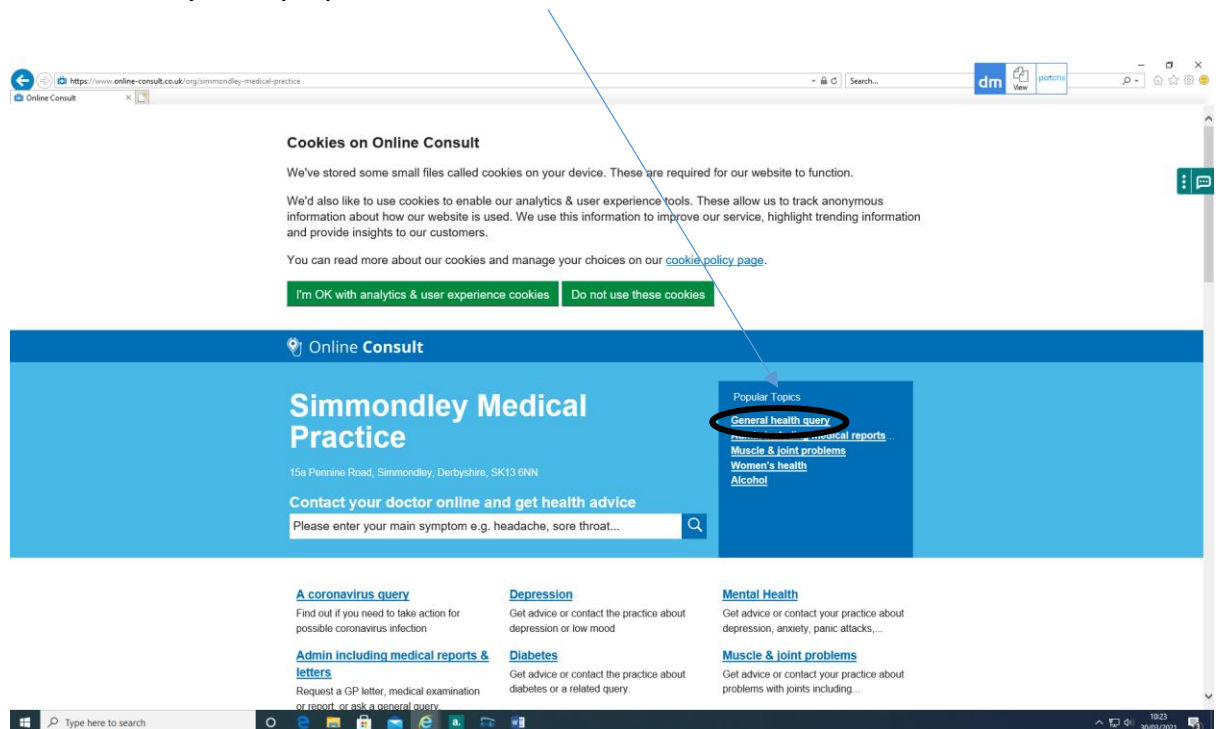
You will then be directed to a page which will offer information/advice/self-help regarding the symptoms.



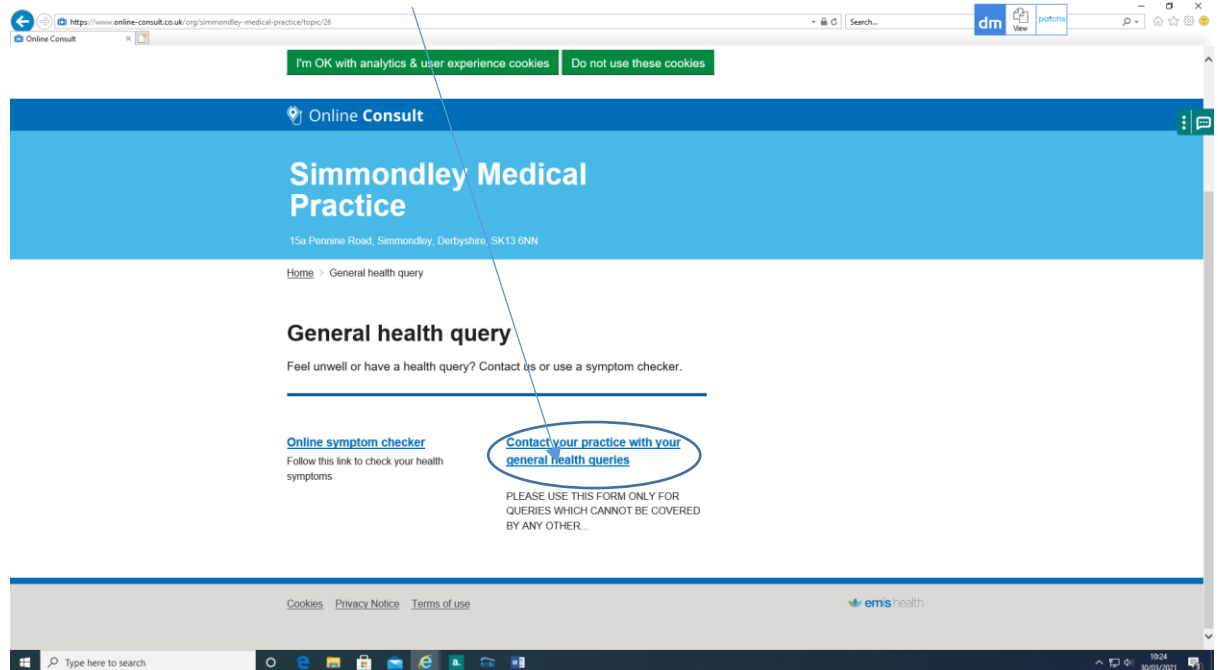
If you have read the information/advice provided and still feel you need to speak to a clinician regarding their symptoms they can select the contact your practice where the patient will be then directed to complete a short form which will be sent to the practice.



It is important to note that online consults are not a one size fits all and there may not always been a page relevant for your symptoms. In this case we advise that you complete a “General Health Query” which offers you an opportunity to free text the symptoms you are having for the clinician to assess. This can be found on the main page - <https://www.online-consult.co.uk/org/simmondley-medical-practice>. However, please only select this option if you cannot find a page that is relevant to your symptoms.



By clicking this link, you will be taken to the below page where you should select “Contact your practice with your general health queries”



The practice team are here to help and if you are experiencing difficulties completing an online consult, please contact the practice and we can work with you on this.

We do ask that requests for fit notes and the contraceptive pill are completed as an online consult as the standard.