



# General Practice Triage

## What is triage?

Triage is the prioritisation of patients upon presentation to a medical service. By triaging and categorising the urgency of the wound or illness of a patient, the medical service can decide the order of treatment in order of highest need.

In the general practice setting, triage is often undertaken by non-clinical staff, such as reception staff, when scheduling appointments with the doctor or nurse.

All staff working in direct contact with the public and potential patients should be trained in the techniques of triage and have a clear policy and procedure available.

## Scheduling care

Under the RACGP Standards for general practices: 4th edition (the Standards), Standard 1.1, Criterion 1.1.1 is the ability of practice staff to use and maintain a flexible appointment system which allows for all possible medical needs including:

- urgent care;
- non-urgent care;
- complex care;
- planned chronic disease management;
- preventative health care; and
- longer consultations.

## Training

Practice policies, procedures and external resources such as triage charts should be used in conjunction with regular training and reflection on events or near-misses to ensure quality improvement or identify further training needs.

Ideally, staff should be trained in the practice policies and procedures:

- at induction
- during regular emergency drills
- in staff or team meetings
- post event or following a near-miss event

## Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

It is important for all staff to know how to handle an emergency scenario, what to do and who to call for assistance.

General practitioners and nurses are required to maintain CPR skills as part of their continuing professional development (CPD).

The Standards also recommends that all administrative staff undergo CPR training at least every three years to maintain skills. Some courses also provide basic emergency life support training.

## Resources

Online training modules are available through the Triage Guide for General Practice which is available at [www.triageguide.com.au](http://www.triageguide.com.au)

Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.

Practice Assist is an initiative of



WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Rural Health West is funded by the Australian Government and the WA Country Health Service.

## See also

Practice Assist Tool:

- General Practice Triage Poster