

### Spinal Surgery – First Outpatient Appointment

#### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

#### Guidance for Patients

There are things you can do to stay well and get your body ready for hospital treatment. This will also help you feel more in control. Even small changes can make a big difference to your health.

- Stop smoking to improve your body's ability to heal and to improve your lung function. Guidance on the support available to help you stop smoking can be found on [the NICE website](#).
- Exercise regularly to improve your muscle strength. You will find gentle walking and swimming beneficial. Avoid sitting down for long periods as this will stiffen your joints and increase your pain. [Get active - Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Eat a healthy diet to help your body manage the demands of surgery and aid recovery. For tips on helping you to start healthier eating habits, be more active and start losing weight, download the free NHS Weight Loss Plan. [Eat well - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Reduce your alcohol intake to less than 14 units per week as recommended for both male and female (or preferably below). This will improve your ability to heal after surgery.
- Take care of your mental health by preparing yourself for your appointment/procedure, to help reduce anxiety and stress.
- Take your prescribed medication as instructed.
- Please keep a note of the location and severity of pain before your first OP visit. It may be very important to your clinician to know whether the problem affects the back/neck more or whether it affects the upper/lower limb. The exact location of the pain in the limbs will help your clinician in diagnosing your condition accurately.

General information about the Trust can be found on the RJAH website or please click the link below:

[RJAH General Information Patient Leaflet](#)

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Or to view all of our leaflets please log on to our website <https://www.rjah.nhs.uk/> and under the For Patients section, select patient leaflets.

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you feel that your condition is worsening, or you have developed further symptoms please contact your General Practitioner in the first instance and they will either be able to support you or inform your Consultant about your condition if they feel that this is appropriate.

If you are unable to speak to your GP please call 111 for advice or visit <https://111.nhs.uk/>

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

### Contact Us

Email : [rjah.accesspatientqueries@nhs.net](mailto:rjah.accesspatientqueries@nhs.net)

Please note: This mailbox is monitored Monday-Friday during office hours.

Outside of these times please use 111 as indicated above.