

Gastroenterology first outpatient appointment

Introduction

You have been referred to the hospital for an appointment with a Gastroenterology specialist. You may be having an appointment for treatment, diagnosis or a procedure. You may be offered a face-to-face appointment in a hospital clinic, or a telephone or video appointment. Please be assured that you will get the same quality of care no matter what type of appointment you have.

Guidance for Patients

While you wait for your first outpatient appointment, it may be helpful to think about what you will want to talk to the specialist about and write a list. This could include:

- Your symptoms and any changes in symptoms
- Any medicines you are taking, including prescriptions, medicines you've bought yourself or any alternative treatments
- Any allergies you have
- Any questions or concerns
- Anything your GP has recommended you ask

You can ask someone to come with you to your appointment, such as a carer, family member or friend.

If your appointment is taking place in the hospital, look up where it is and plan how you will get there. It may be helpful to look up local transport or parking arrangements.

Once your appointment comes through, remember to bring the details of your appointment with you. Allow plenty of time for your visit, especially if it is your first appointment.

During your appointment, the specialist will talk to you about:

- Your symptoms or how you manage your health or condition
- Your medical history
- Whether you need any tests
- How to get your results for any tests you've already had
- Options for treatment so you can decide what would be best for you
- How best to use any devices, equipment or medicines you've been given to manage your condition

Together you will decide a plan for your ongoing care. You may be given another appointment, or you may be asked to arrange another appointment when your symptoms or circumstances change. If you're unsure of anything, ask your specialist to explain it again, or to write it down for you.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

You might find it helpful to take some notes during your appointment. You can look back at these at home or at your follow up appointment.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your outpatient appointment has come through but your condition is getting worse, you should contact the hospital team or Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). The number and email for this should be on the hospital appointment letter.

If you haven't yet received your outpatient appointment and your condition is getting worse, you should contact your GP practice. Your GP cannot get you seen quicker at the hospital as they don't have access to the waiting list or appointment system. However, if your condition is getting worse or if you are experiencing new symptoms, they will assess the situation and give you some advice.

Alternatively, the NHS 111 service is available if you have a medical problem and aren't sure what to do. To access NHS 111, visit 111.nhs.uk or call 111. The service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

BSL users can use the NHS video interpreter service by going to <https://signvideo.co.uk/nhs111/>