

Respiratory

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

The Respiratory department provides specialist respiratory care for patients with conditions affecting the respiratory tract.

We are a team of consultants, specialist nurses and physiotherapists that provide a seven day in reach and outreach service for patients with respiratory disease. We provide supported early discharge for patients admitted to hospital with exacerbations of their lung conditions except Asthma. We do not see acute Asthmatics at home but can see them in clinic. We also provide rapid response services for patients at home to avoid hospital admission.

Services we provide include:

- Asthma (clinic only)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Lung Cancer
- Respiratory Infections & Bronchiectasis
- Pneumonia
- Pneumothorax
- Pleural Disease
- Pulmonary Embolus
- Respiratory Failure
- Non-Invasive ventilation

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What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Most patients who have been under our service before, will have a management plan and often a rescue pack of antibiotics and steroids. We would always ask you to contact us, before starting them, sometimes they are not required.

We would ask you to always keep yourself well hydrated, this does aid the ability to bring secretions up, from our chest.

If you are feeling unwell, with your chest, ensure you are using your inhalers as prescribed, via the plastic spacer to enable more of the drug to get into your airways.

We would also suggest you phone us sooner rather than later.

Try not to panic if you become short of breath, although it is very frightening when you cannot get your breath, if you panic, you can make your breathlessness worse. Try to sit in a comfortable position and practice your breathing control.

If you are very unwell and feel you need emergency help call 999

Guidance for Patients

Whilst waiting for your Respiratory specialist appointment it is important to look after yourself and your general health. There are many things that you can do to keep well.

Stop smoking: Stopping smoking helps to slow down the rate of lung function decline and is a proven effective intervention. It is considered a part of the patient's treatment plan and should be offered to all who smoke. Support and advice is available as listed in the useful resources section.

Exercise: Keeping active is extremely beneficial in many ways. Although breathlessness on effort can be uncomfortable, it is not necessarily serious. If there is any doubt about exercise, then it is important to discuss the concerns with a health care professional. Walking at a steady pace with frequent stops if you become breathless (stop until breathing gets back under control) is a good way to gently exercise. The aim is to have 20-30 minutes per day. Trying to increase the amount walked every day leads to improvements in symptoms.

Breathing exercises: Breathing can be much more efficient if more use is made of the diaphragm (muscle that lies between the lungs and abdomen). It is best to ask for some advice about the correct breathing exercises to do from a physiotherapist or the respiratory team.

Eat well: Keeping weight correct and maintained for height is essential as we use more energy and oxygen to carry the extra weight, and this increases breathlessness and decreases activity. People with lung disease need more energy to breathe so getting too thin means they get more tired, are more prone to

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infection and they lose their muscle strength and tone. It is very important to seek advice if losing weight as a dietician referral may be required.

Self-Management: It is important that the person with COPD and other lung conditions knows how to recognise when they are developing infection and/or a worsening of symptoms. Most patients with COPD should have a rescue pack of antibiotics and steroids at home to take when symptoms develop and contact numbers for advice and support.

Influenza and Pneumococcal vaccinations: These vaccinations have been proven to benefit patients with lung disease. The GP practice normally invites the patient to attend for flu vaccination annually and in most cases the pneumococcal vaccination is required only once.

Going on holiday and flying: Some patients may require oxygen in flight if travelling by aeroplane so in these cases a fitness to fly test is required. Contact the RRRT for further information.

Understand the medications: It is important that patients understand and have been shown how to use their inhalers properly. Medication use and the reasons for use should always be explained by the health care professional.

Further Help

[Stop Smoking Support Service :: Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust \(whh.nhs.uk\)](http://www.warringtonandhaltonhospitals.nhs.uk)

<https://www.blf.org.uk> (British Lung Foundation)

Contact Details

Appointments: 01925 662335

Respiratory Secretaries: 01925 662033

Rapid Response Respiratory Team (RRRT): 01928 753165 or 07584 270084 (service hours Monday to Sunday 08:30 to 19:30)

Email addresses

whh.respiratorysecretaries@nhs.net

Please note we will not give explicit clinical advice via telephone/email until you have been reviewed within clinic by a consultant first.