

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 can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

Guidance for Patients

It is important that while you are waiting for your surgery you remain as active and as medically fit as possible. If you have any long-standing conditions such as high blood pressure you should get this reviewed at your Doctor's surgery to make sure it remains well controlled. This will also help prevent any unnecessary delays when you come for your pre-operative assessment. Maintaining a well-balanced diet is also important, as is reducing any excessive weight that may be impacting on your general health. If you are a current smoker it would be advisable to seek support to help with stopping, advice can be found at your local pharmacy or Doctor's surgery.

We here in the Orthopaedic Department at St Mary's Hospital want to help you manage your osteoarthritis during these challenging times, when the delays to normal elective surgery, mean you are not getting your surgery as quickly as we would like. There are some very useful websites that can help you to manage some of the symptoms you are experiencing and guidance regarding help and support that you may be able to access.

Age UK - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/arthritis/>

Age UK provides information on activities and exercise class held by local Age UK representatives. They also signpost to advice on healthy eating options and maintaining a healthy weight especially important if you are being considered for surgery, and some of the options available to get help in the home (<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/homecare/>)

Versus Arthritis - <https://www.versusarthritis.org/>

Versus Arthritis is an arthritis charity, especially geared towards helping individuals manage differing forms of arthritis. They have useful online exercise programmes especially designed for those with painful arthritic conditions that will help maintain flexibility. They also offer self-help tips for managing arthritic pain.

NHS Website living with arthritis - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/living-with/>

This website carries useful information for those still at work and dealing with the impact of arthritis and useful links to financial and local government websites that may be able to offer you further support in your home.

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Whilst waiting for your procedure, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. To support local residents to stop smoking or lose weight, <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking> , <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight> has been commissioned to provide free stop smoking and weight management support to our community.

Call: Maidstone Hospital: 01622 729000.

Tunbridge Wells Hospital: 01892 823535

Website: <https://www.mtw.nhs.uk/>

Healthy lifestyles <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health> are here to help you and offer different levels of support to maintain a healthy weight and to stop smoking including telephone support, virtual and app-based support options.

Stop Smoking Service the stop smoking service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves.

If you are not ready to quit just yet but would like more information on how to protect your family, **Smoke free Homes**, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.

Weight Management Service The service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.

Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) living in Kent and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. Use this tool to <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator> to find out your BMI. If it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight BMI of 30+

If your BMI is 30 or higher, you qualify for free support from <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active>, <https://tbchealthcare.co.uk/>

BMI of 28+

You can get free support from <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-kent> if your BMI is 28 or over if at least one of the following applies:

- you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome
- you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension or high blood pressure
- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma
- you're from a black or ethnic minority background.

BMI of 25+

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If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher [Better Health Let's Do This – Lose Weight](#) website provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12 week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12 week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

Healthy eating and being active

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- [One You Eat Better](#) (website) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet
- [Better Health - Get Active](#) (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition
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- Sugar Smart <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/sugar> to campaign to raise awareness of hidden sugars, recommended levels and healthy alternatives by encouraging individuals, groups, businesses, schools and organisation to join the campaign and make a pledge. To find out how you can join in, become sugar smart and make good choices about what you, your family, colleagues eat, please visit our <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/sugar-calculator>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

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

GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in pain, inability to weight bear on this limb or a significant reduction in mobility, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to

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help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.

A list of GP practices with relevant contact details are available on the following website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Services/Trusts/GPs/DefaultView.aspx?id=154212> , <https://www.mtw.nhs.uk/>

Contact Us

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