

## **My Planned Care Patient Information Platform**

### **Spinal Surgery – First Outpatient Appointment**

#### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 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. When you are waiting for further treatment it can sometimes feel like a long wait.

The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health. The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider has to consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen. The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment.

This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible. Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

#### **Guidance for Patients**

Whilst you are waiting for your appointment with the Hospital Team, it is important that you look after yourself. Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle and a healthy and balanced diet to minimise the potential impact and frequency of your symptoms.

There may be occasions when additional scans or investigations are required despite you already having had a diagnosis and treatment plan. It is important that you attend these appointments, or let the hospital know urgently if you are unable to attend.

We will write to you with information regarding your appointment, what the intention of the appointment is, where to come and at what time.

Improving your general health will have a positive impact of your physical wellbeing; Whether you want to lose weight, get more active or quit smoking, there are many resources available at the Better Health website <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health>

If appropriate, good monitoring and management of your diabetes and/or blood pressure will positively contribute to your overall health and condition management.

Your mental wellbeing is also important and resources to help you can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/top-tips-to-improve-your-mental-wellbeing>

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

If your condition or symptoms change, please ensure that your GP is aware. They will be able to advise the appropriate actions to take whilst you wait for your first outpatient appointment with the General surgeons.

## Take your medication

If you have been prescribed medication to manage your condition whilst you await treatment, it is important that you follow the instructions from the doctor or pharmacist who has prescribed this.

When taking medication you should always:

- Take it at the right time of the day and the dose recommended by your GP
- Check the instructions, to make sure you are taking it correctly. Some medications should only be taken with a meal, or with water or food.
- Use your own supply and never take medication prescribed for someone else

It is important to let your GP, Pharmacist or Consultant in charge of your care know if you experience any side effects as they may wish to review the dose, or the medications you take.

Before taking any over-the-counter medication or supplements, that you can buy without a prescription, it's important to check with your pharmacist to ensure there is no effect on your prescribed medications.

**Urgent Health Advice** For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it is not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day.

## Life Threatening Emergencies

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

## Additional Support

For advice and support for a Healthier lifestyle, please review the information we have on our website at [www.ghc.nhs.uk](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk) and/or Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire [www.hlsghos.org](http://www.hlsghos.org)

Whilst you are waiting to see a member of the Hospital team taking positive steps to improve your health and wellbeing will have a positive effect on your condition management, and encourage a speedy recovery after your procedure

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.

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

Why not download the BEST YOU App on your smart phone,



Create goals and track your progress PLUS regularly updated free tips, top advice, easy recipes and much more.

Whether you intend to:

- Increase your activity levels
- Stop smoking
- Reach /maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce the amount of alcohol you drink

...using Best-You is proven to help you achieve your goals.

## Contact Us

Please use the information on your hospital correspondence or call us on 0300 422 5989