

## Gastroenterology - 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

Our Gastroenterology Department is spread across Poole Hospital and the Royal Bournemouth Hospital and is dedicated to the care of patients with gastrointestinal disorders both on an outpatient basis (e.g. in clinic and the Endoscopy Unit) and inpatients. We work in partnership with our surgery and radiology departments providing specialist services for patients in and around the Dorset region. We are the upper gastrointestinal cancer centre for the east Dorset area serving Bournemouth, Poole, Dorchester and Salisbury as well as offering a colorectal cancer centre and a bowel cancer screening centre.

A multi-disciplinary team approach underpins the philosophy of the department and we hold regular meetings with gastrointestinal surgeons, radiologists, oncologists, pathologists and our palliative care team. Our department also enjoys excellent support from interventional radiology. The unit is the hub for the Dorset Viral Hepatitis Network and our liver nurses work with colleagues at Dorset County Hospital and the Prison Service to deliver viral hepatitis treatment across a catchment area of over 750,000 people.

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The contents of this information has been reviewed and approved by the Medical Care Group Board of University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

The department runs daily outpatient clinics at Poole Hospital, the Royal Bournemouth Hospital and Christchurch Hospital, seeing more than 12,500 patients every year.

Gastroenterology specialists provide help, support and care for people with diseases of the oesophagus, bowel, liver and pancreas, gastrointestinal infections, gallstones, nutritional disorders, and other disorders of the digestive system.

Conditions treated include inflammatory bowel disease, coeliac disease and iron deficiency anaemia.

Our specialist clinics include:

- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Hepatology (including hepatitis B and C)
- Hepato-biliary medicine
- Oesophageal medicine (including Barrett's oesophagus)
- Nutrition
- Iron Deficiency Anaemia

You may need pre-investigations prior to your appointment with us which may include blood tests, a radiology scan or a diagnostic endoscopy procedure and we will write to you with details of these if we feel they are necessary.

Please bring a current list of your regular medication to all appointments. If you are invited to attend a face to face appointment you may be asked to have your weight and height taken.

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

If your symptoms deteriorate please contact your GP who will then get in touch with us if required.

### 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](http://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.

### Contact Us

Bournemouth site:

Telephone - 01202 303626

Poole site:

Telephone - 01202 665511