

## Gynaecology – 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

Many patients find it helps to prepare what they want to talk about in their appointment. It can be helpful to write a list of the things you want to discuss. This could include:

- all your symptoms
- medicines you're taking including prescriptions, medicines you've bought yourself and alternative treatments. You can bring the medicine packets or your prescriptions with you, or take photos of them
- any allergies you have
- any questions or concerns
- anything your GP has recommended you ask the healthcare professional

If you cannot attend your appointment at the time you've been given, contact the hospital or clinic to rearrange it. It may help to have your NHS number with you when you contact them.

Allow plenty of time for your visit, especially if this is your first appointment. You may have to wait if your healthcare professional's other appointments overrun or they are called away to an emergency.

# My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

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

If you feel you are becoming more unwell, please contact your GP or NHS 111 for medical review in the first instance. Your GP will be able to advise if this is something they can support with during your wait or they will be able to contact your Gynaecology team to discuss their findings in more detail and determine a management plan. From the This could be added to the list below

### **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**

Outpatients helpdesk: 0300 019 3995