Pain Management: First Outpatient Appointment

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide some routine 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.

You don't need to ring your GP, or the hospital caring for you for an update on waiting times because all the information is available on the My Planned Care website.

This guidance has been supported by clinicians who are responsible for your care to support and to help keep you well whilst waiting for your procedure.

Pain Management: First Outpatient Appointment

Guidance for Patients

You will be contacted by your trust for your first appointment, while you wait do please read the remainder of this leaflet for more information on what can be done to support yourself.

How you can support yourself while you wait for your procedure

There are things you can do whilst you wait for your procedure to make you sure you are as healthy and strong as you can be. This will increase your chances of a better recovery. In the time leading up to your procedure, be sure to take good care of yourself by taking a few smart steps. This can help you avoid complications. Follow these simple tips to ensure the best possible outcome and prepare for a successful recovery.

Take Your Medication

You will be advised to continue with your normal medications, but you may be advised to stop some medications before your procedure, your clinician or pre-operative nurse will provide you with this information.

Lifestyle

We would encourage anyone waiting for surgery to lose some weight if necessary and to stop smoking. Both these measures are known to lower risk of complications following surgery.

Losing weight is not about getting it right – it's about getting started. Making small,

simple changes can really help you shed the pounds. Get started today with our tips, support and specialist offers.

You can download a free NHS weight loss planning app to help you start healthier eating habits, be more active and start losing weight.

With help, you're much more likely to quit smoking than if you use willpower alone. Visit Make Smoking History to get free access to the latest quitting aids, one-to-one advice and support in your local area

Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on your body but importantly it can reduce your body's ability to heal. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits or lower to improve your ability to heal after your procedure.

Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) or Pulmonary Embolism (PE) before procedure

There are natural ways and lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk of developing blood clots, these include

- Staying active: make a point of moving every 30-60 minutes to ensure you keep your blood flowing
- Regular exercise – simply walking for 30 minutes a day is a great way to keep your circulation moving
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Keep hydrated.

Your doctor will assess your risk of developing a blood clot when you come into hospital and order a treatment plan to minimise your risk. This may include prescribed medications before or after procedure, or when you go home, to prevent blood clots.

Keep Moving

Exercise regularly. Among other benefits, better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. This allows you to leave hospital and return to your normal quality of life more quickly. Keeping an active lifestyle is good for your health and if you are normally an active person it is important to keep that up before your procedure. People with low activity levels can improve their fitness levels within as little as 4 weeks. This gives you an opportunity to get fitter before your procedure and improve your chances of a better and quicker recovery.

Good Mental Health

It's important during this time to take care of your mind as well as your body. You might be feeling down, worried or anxious while you wait for your surgery.

Here you will find some general information on mental health issues and some top tips to improve your mental wellbeing. Apps to support your health, mental health and wellbeing:

- Find tested and approved mental health apps **here.**
- **Feeling anxious?**
- **Feeling stressed?**
- **Feeling low?**
- **Trouble sleeping?**

Other local support services can be found on the NHS website

General information

Please watch this useful video from the Royal College of Anaesthetists which offers advice on preparing for a procedure.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

This information is designed to help you manage your symptoms and stay in the best possible health while you wait. It is however possible that some of your symptoms may get worse while you are waiting for your surgery. There are some things to look out for that would indicate you should seek medical help:

1. If your pain gets worse to the point that it is unmanageable with the pain relief suggested by the pharmacist or doctor and you are struggling to cope with it;

If you experience any of these issues we would recommend getting in touch with your hospital team. The number and email should be on your last hospital appointment letter.

Alternatively, you can contact your GP practice. Whilst your GP does not have access to the hospital waiting list to get you seen sooner, if your condition is getting worse they can assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.