

Paediatric – first outpatient appointment

Introduction

The information is designed to support children, young people, their parents and carers whilst they are waiting for hospital treatment. You will find information on what you can do to help prepare your child for surgery, how to look after their physical and mental health and what to do if you need any extra support.

Surgical Hubs

Hospitals in Greater Manchester are working together to get through the waiting list backlog as quickly as possible. A number of Children's surgery hubs have been set up to help increase the number of children that can be treated every day.

If your child is eligible, you may be contacted and offered the chance for them to have their treatment sooner at one of the surgical hubs. If you do get offered this, we would strongly recommend you take this up if you can.

The hospital team will be keen to understand your personal circumstances, answer any questions and look at how they may be able to support you to attend. They will also look to see if you are eligible for patient transport if this is needed.

The children's surgery hubs are located at the following hospitals:

- [Rochdale Infirmary](#)
- [Royal Bolton Hospital](#)
- [Royal Oldham Hospital](#)
- [Trafford General Hospital](#)

Guidance for Patients

Managing Pain

If your child is waiting for an appointment or surgery, they may experience pain or discomfort. The first line of treatment is pain relief that you can buy over the counter. Your local pharmacy can provide advice on what medication is best for your child, frequency and the dose.

“By the clock, by the mouth, by the ladder”

It is important to follow the 3 main World Health Organisation (WHO) pain relief ladder principals:

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By the clock: To maintain freedom from pain, drugs should be given “by the clock” or “around the clock” rather than only “on demand”. This means they are given on a regularly scheduled basis.

By the mouth: Giving the pain relief via the mouth (orally) is usually preferred. However, it may not be possible for children if they are vomiting or unable to take anything by mouth.

By the ladder: If pain occurs there should be prompt administration of pain relief. At home you should give pain relief such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen first, unless there is a medical reason not to. If your child is still in pain after this step or you are concerned you should seek medical advice.

If you are concerned about your child’s condition, please contact your GP, NHS 111, the dentist or the hospital department they have been referred to. If something changes, the hospital will review how urgent your child’s condition is and re prioritise them if necessary.

More information for professionals can be found via the [Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists Great Britain and Ireland](#).

Sepsis

Sepsis is the most common avoidable cause of death in the UK. **Recognising and treating sepsis in the first hour saves lives.**

You will know when your child is unwell. Sepsis can be very hard to identify as many of it’s signs are also common in routine childhood illnesses. It’s important to trust your instincts. If your child seems sicker than usual or something just doesn’t seem right, call your GP, NHS 111 or seek urgent medical help.

30% of children attending the Emergency Department (A&E) have a fever but only 1% will have sepsis.

Some signs to watch out for include:

S: Shivering, Fever, or a very cold

E: Extreme pain or discomfort

P: Pale or discoloured skin/rash that doesn’t fade when pressed, fast or racing heartbeat

S: Sleepy, difficult to rouse, confused, trouble waking up, sick, fitting

I: “I feel like I might die”

S: Short of breath/ fast breathing

Sepsis is more common in those who have a higher chance of getting an infection in the first place, such as:

- babies under 3 months; this is also called neonatal sepsis;
- people who just had surgery;
- those whose immune systems are weakened from conditions such as HIV, cancer or transplants.

You can help protect your child from infection:

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1. Get your kids immunized on the recommended schedule. Routine vaccines help prevent bacteria and viruses from causing infections that can lead to sepsis;
2. Encourage regular hand washing;
3. Clean any cuts or scrapes well. Keep a close eye on them to be sure they're healing as expected;
4. If your child has a medical device (like a catheter or long-term IV line), follow the doctor's directions for cleaning and using it.

If your child is sick and is not getting better, call your doctor or get medical care. If your child is prescribed antibiotics, give all doses exactly as directed.

Most important: If your child seems sicker than normal to you, or is being treated for an infection that's not getting better or gets worse, trust your gut and call the doctor or get medical help right away. Ask the doctor, "**Could it be sepsis?**"

More information:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/paediatric-sepsis-podcasts>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sepsis/>

Mental Health Support

We know things may be difficult for your child while they are waiting to have their treatment. There is support available if they are feeling anxious, stressed or overwhelmed. [Click here](#) to find mental health support where you live.

Free text and online support

Shout – all ages

With this 24/7 crisis text messaging service, you can send a text message any time of day or night wherever you are – every conversation is with a real person.

Just text SHOUT to 85258

- You don't need an app or data and there's no registration process
- It's silent and won't appear on your phone bill
- It's confidential and anonymous

HOPELINE UK

Are you, or is a young person you know, not coping with life?

For confidential suicide prevention advice contact HOPELINEUK. They're open 9am – 12am (midnight) every day of the year. Telephone: 0800 068 4141 or email: pat@papyrus-uk

Kooth

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Kooth is an emotional wellbeing and digital mental health support service available to children and young people aged 11-25. Providing immediate access to an online community of peers and a team of experienced, accredited counsellors. The service is free and there are no waiting times, no referrals, no thresholds to meet and complete anonymity.

Kooth is open for support 365 days a year, between 12noon – 10pm and 6pm – 10pm on weekends and holidays.

To find more information and to sign up [click here](#).

Apps to support your health, mental health and wellbeing

All these apps have been tested and approved gmmh.orchh.co.uk

Free online wellbeing programmes

SilverCloud – aged 16+ years

Online programmes to help ease your levels of stress, sleep better or to build resilience. You can choose to use any of the programmes. They are self-help, confidential and secure. Instant access to self-help support: GM.silvercloudhealth.com/signup

Living Life To The Full

Online courses for anyone affected by low mood, anxiety or depression. Materials have been designed to improve feelings and beat stress. Available online and totally free of charge if you live in Greater Manchester. Instant access to self-help support:

Hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/living-life-to-the-full

Crisis Line in Greater Manchester

If you feel you need mental health support please contact one of these 24/7 crisis lines – they're available to anyone of any age and are freephone.

Bolton, Manchester, Salford and Trafford - 0800 953 0285

Bury, Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport and Tameside & Glossop - 0800 014 9995

Wigan - 0800 051 3253

If there is an immediate risk of danger to life, you should ring 999.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you are concerned about your child's condition, please contact your GP, NHS 111, the dentist or the hospital department they have been referred to. If something changes, the hospital will review how urgent your child's condition is and re prioritise them if necessary.