

Orthopaedic First Outpatient Appointment

Introduction

You have been referred to the hospital for an appointment with an Orthopaedic specialist. You may be having an appointment for treatment, diagnosis, or a procedure. You may be offered a face to face appointment in a hospital clinic, or a telephone or video appointment. Please be assured that you will get the same quality of care no matter what type of appointment you have.

Guidance for Patients

While you wait for your first outpatient appointment, it may be helpful to think about what you will want to talk to the specialist about and write a list. This could include:

- Your symptoms
- Any medicines you are taking, including prescriptions, medicines you've bought yourself or any alternative treatments
- Any allergies you have
- Any questions or concerns
- Anything your GP has recommended you ask

You can ask someone to come with you to your appointment, such as your carer, family member or friend. Let the hospital know if you need an interpreter.

If your appointment is taking place in the hospital, look up where it is and plan how you will get there. It may be helpful to look up local transport or parking arrangements. Once your appointment comes through, remember to bring the details of your appointment with you. Allow plenty of time for your visit, especially if it is your first appointment.

During your appointment, the specialist will talk to you about:

- Your symptoms or how you manage your health or condition
- Your medical history
- Whether you need any tests
- How to get your results for any tests you've already had
- Options for treatment so you can decide what would be best for you
- How to use any devices or equipment you've been given to manage your condition

Together you will decide a plan for your ongoing care. This might mean another appointment with them, with another specialist or with your GP.

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You might be asked to arrange future appointments only when your symptoms or circumstances change. If you're unsure of anything, ask your healthcare professional to explain it again, or to write it down for you.

You might find it helpful to take some notes during your appointment. You can look back at these at home or at your follow up appointment.

Managing Pain:

There are a range of pain medicines that could help with pain relief, such as Paracetamol, Anti-inflammatory creams, Codeine, Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. If you need any advice, your local pharmacy will be able to help.

There are a number of resources to help you manage your pain:

- [10 ways to ease pain](#)
- [Escape Pain](#) is also a group-based rehabilitation programme for osteoarthritis of the knee and hip run by Life Leisure
- The Chartered Institute of Physiotherapy has produced helpful [guidance for managing pain and improving your quality of life](#)
- [Versus Arthritis](#) also has some handy advice on managing pain.

Mental health support:

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 appointment. Remember it's okay to feel like this, these are normal reactions. There are a range of services available to help you manage during this time. Take a look at our [mental health support page](#) for more information.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

The 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 appointment or treatment. 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;
2. If your mobility gets worse to the point you are off your feet or unable to work;
3. If your joint suddenly deteriorates

If your hospital appointment has come through but your condition is getting worse as described above, you should contact the hospital secretary, booking team or Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). The number and email for this should be on the hospital appointment letter. If you are unable to reach the

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specialist secretary/booking team then please contact PALS. [Find Patient Advice and Liaison Services \(PALS\) services across Greater Manchester.](#)

If you haven't yet received your hospital appointment and your condition is getting worse as described above, you should contact your GP practice. Your GP doesn't have access to the waiting list to get you seen quicker, however, they will assess you, give advice and can contact the hospital on your behalf if necessary.