

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform



Gastroenterology

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 like and its not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. We are working hard to get people seen as quickly as possible.

The information within this document is aimed at helping you arrive for your appointment or treatment in the best possible physical and mental health. Maintaining and improving your overall wellbeing will also lead to faster recovery if you require surgery.

Your appointment

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.

The Gastroenterology team will schedule your appointment at the earliest opportunity and will inform you by letter in most cases. If you have any specific accessibility requirements relating to communication of appointments, please email stees.gastropatients@nhs.net.

Your appointment could be held at either of the sites within the Trust and it is essential that where possible you keep the first available appointment.

Further information regarding location of appointments and the services provided between sites can be found at [Gastroenterology - South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#).

Take Your Medication

Whilst waiting for your hospital treatment continue to follow medical advice and take any medications as prescribed.

Make a list of any medicines you are taking, including prescriptions, medicines you've bought yourself or any alternative treatments and take this along to any appointments you have.

If you need to stop any medication before your procedure, you will be given clear instructions by the hospital at your pre-operative assessment. If you have any queries don't hesitate to get in touch with your hospital team.

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Looking After Your Physical Health

The Guts UK charity website provides information on how to help maintain a healthy lifestyle, managing a range of conditions both before, during and after your treatment within the department

The website can be accessed here: [Health and Lifestyle - Guts UK \(gutscharity.org.uk\)](https://gutscharity.org.uk)

Keeping yourself healthy is important. This document provides information on how you can maintain a healthy weight, get active, quit smoking and reduce your alcohol intake.

There are steps you can take now to help make your treatment a success. The national [Better Health website](#) can also help you to kickstart your health and prepare you for a healthier, happier future.

Keep Moving

No matter how much you do, physical activity is good for your body and mind. Adults should aim to be active every day. Some is good – more is better still. A daily brisk walk can boost your energy, lift your mood and make everyday activities easier.

All adults should do some type of physical activity every day. The UK guidelines for adults aged 19-64 (including disabled adults, pregnant women and new mothers) are to:

- Be physically active every day. Any activity is better than none, and more is better still
- Do strengthening activities that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) at least twice a week
- Do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity (such as brisk walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (such as running) each week
- Reduce time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity

Make sure that the type and intensity of your activity is appropriate for your level of fitness. Visit [Exercise - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) to find out more.

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Maintaining a healthy weight

Maintaining a healthy weight reduces the risk of complications during surgery. If your operation is not urgent and you are overweight, taking time to lose weight before going ahead may be of great benefit to you.

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.

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Food and Nutrition

You should continue to manage your diet as directed by your GP until you see a member of the Gastroenterology team. You may find it useful to keep a 'Food diary' so our clinicians can monitor symptoms in relation to your eating habits.

There are some useful resources in relation to healthy eating habits:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/healthy-living/healthy-eating/healthy-eating-toolkit>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/publications/healthy-eating-and-drinking/eat-better>

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resourceDetail/printPdf/?resource=healthy-eating>

<http://www.nutrition.org.uk/>

FULL TIME MEALS – TOM KERRIDGE

Recipe ideas from Tom Kerridge and Marcus Rashford that do not need lots of ingredient's equipment or skill.

[Nutritional Guidelines – Independent Food Aid Network UK](#)

Quit Smoking

If you're going into hospital for an operation, it's strongly advised that you stop smoking as soon as possible. Quitting smoking before an operation will reduce your chances of complications and speed up your recovery after surgery. It will also make our stay at hospital more comfortable as smoking is not permitted on hospital grounds.

Try to quit smoking as soon as you can, as this will give your body as much time as possible to repair itself before surgery. The best way to quit smoking is with a combination of personalised support and stop smoking aids, like nicotine replacement.

Free quitting services

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](#).

You can also speak to your GP or local pharmacist for help to stop smoking.

You can also keep motivated, monitor your health improvements and track how much money you save when you quit with the Smoke Free App.

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Alcohol

Alcohol can have many effects on the body, but importantly it can reduce the liver's ability to produce the building blocks necessary for healing. Make sure you are drinking within the recommended limits, or lower, to improve your body's ability to heal after surgery.

Cutting back on alcohol can be a really effective way to improve your health, boost your energy, lose weight and save money. Any reduction in the amount you drink every week will be beneficial – and with the right support, it's easier than you think. There are some simple tips and tools to help you start cutting down today.

You can also download the free [Drink Free Days app](#).

Get medical advice before you stop drinking if you have physical withdrawal symptoms (like shaking, sweating or feeling anxious until you have your first drink of the day). It can be dangerous to stop drinking too quickly without proper help. There's lots of support out there.

Find your [local alcohol support service now](#), or [call Drinkline on 0300 123 1110](#) for free, confidential help for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

Good Mental Health

Your mental wellbeing is just as important as your physical health.

In the time before your surgery, you can take simple steps to improve your mental health. Maintaining and improving your overall wellbeing will lead to a faster recovery if you require surgery. Once you are referred by your GP, the waiting journey begins. Make the most of the time before you see your specialist.

Looking after your mental health

Having good mental health helps us relax, achieve and enjoy our lives more. We have expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health issues – We all have mental health, and life is full of ups and downs for everyone. Here you will find expert advice, practical tips and plenty of help and support if you're feeling stressed, anxious, low, struggling with relationships or sleep.

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?](#)

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Free text and online support:

SHOUT. 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. Confidential and anonymous.

Free text and online support – children and young people aged 11 to 18 years: Kooth

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](#)

Shining a Light on Suicide

Whether you're feeling suicidal, worried that someone else is, or have lost someone to suicide, you're not alone. Whatever you're going through, [Shining a Light on Suicide](#) will help you get the advice and support you need.

Other resources:

Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity. Beat has lots of useful advice for adults and children <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/>

If you've noticed changes in the way you are thinking or feeling over the past few weeks or months that concern you and cause you distress, see your GP or current mental health practitioner.

If you need urgent medical attention but it is not a life-threatening situation, you should first call 111. If you think life is at risk, you should call 999.