

First Outpatient Appointment – Neurology

Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS's 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 a consultation/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 patient care.

The Department of Neurology provides expert care to thousands of adults each year, many with rare and complex conditions. Our areas of focus are general neurological conditions and also specialist care in Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis and other neuroinflammatory disorders, Epilepsy and difficult to control Headache Disorders.

Adult Epilepsy

The following clinics/services are provided: General epilepsy clinics, daily first seizure clinics, adolescent transition epilepsy clinic, Clinical Nurse Specialist [CNS] pre conceptual counselling epilepsy clinic, CNS pregnancy monitoring epilepsy clinic, CNS buccal midazolam training clinic, CNS Telephone advice for non-urgent calls.

- Clinics are held at the main University Hospital site and the City of Coventry Health Centre.

Patients with suspected and established epilepsy/seizures have access to the following investigations: Modern 3 tesla MRI with dedicated epilepsy protocol, standard and sleep deprived EEG (electroencephalogram/brain wave testing), ambulatory home video telemetry (monitoring of brain waves and simultaneous video recording of suspected seizures in the patient's own home) and inpatient video telemetry (monitoring of brain waves and simultaneous video recording of suspected seizures in a dedicated side room on the neurology ward). The EEG tests are provided by a team of specialists within the department of Clinical Neurophysiology based on the main hospital site. The epilepsy team works closely with colleagues at the West Midlands Complex Epilepsy Surgery Centre at the University Hospital in Birmingham in patients where surgical procedures for certain forms of epilepsy are being considered (such as temporal lobe surgery or vagal nerve stimulator insertion).

Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroinflammation

Our MS services include:

New Multiple Sclerosis Clinics

- Information about MS for newly diagnosed patients or for those who are experiencing a change in their MS, transition to secondary progressive multiple sclerosis or pregnancy. Education about first or second-line therapies

Follow-up nurse-led clinics can be face to face, by telephone or virtual

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- Update of clinical tests such as blood tests and vital signs. Follow up assessments to assess how treatment is going.

Relapse clinics

- This is a rapid access clinic to assess for possible acute relapse. If indicated patients go either to the Day Care Unit and receive medication via an intravenous drip or treatment can be given as tablets which can be collected from the hospital pharmacy or their GP.

Symptom management clinic

- In this clinic patients with established multiple sclerosis of all types can be assessed for how to best manage their many different symptoms, often in conjunction with other healthcare professionals.

Neurophysiotherapy

MS physiotherapists support patients through assessing difficulties patients may be having with movement, strength, mobility and balance, giving advice about ways to improve or maintain functional ability, giving advice on what exercises may be of benefit to help guide self-management techniques, giving advice on any equipment that may be of help, such as splints and walking aids, exploring options for on-going physiotherapy and exercise as required, making referrals to other health professionals, if required.

Occupational therapy

Occupational therapists support individuals to achieve participation in daily activities that are relevant and meaningful to them. This includes analysing how well patients can perform everyday tasks, assisting individual patients to adapt the way an activity is done, identifying environmental modifications and equipment, educating and advising on appropriate alternative activities or occupations, assisting an individual to resume their daily routine following a relapse, referring to external agencies such as social services, the Access to Work scheme, wheelchair services or local rehabilitation teams.

Continence clinics

Bladder symptoms are very common in MS patients and tend to be problems with storage and/or emptying. They are often easily treated or at least manageable following the right assessment, treatment and advice. The Continence team are able to fully assess any symptoms and suggest an appropriate, individually tailored treatment course. This may involve lifestyle changes, such as alteration to fluid intake, non-pharmacological treatments, such as the learning of intermittent self-catheterization, bladder retraining or pelvic floor exercises or use of medications, such as anti-muscarinics that relax the bladder.

Parkinson's Disease

The regional Parkinson's team comprises of doctors, nurses and therapists with specialist training in Parkinson's who work closely together. We also have very close links with the Parkinson's UK Local Advisers as well as the specialist nurses for other Parkinsonian conditions and non-oral therapies. The Service was Highly Commended in the inaugural Parkinson's UK Excellence Network Awards in 2017.

- Consultant-led clinics are held in all the acute hospitals in the county. The clinics see new referrals to the Movement Disorder and Parkinson's service as well as ongoing follow up of people with Parkinsonian conditions. The team also runs a specialist Apomorphine and Duodopa service at UHCW for patients requiring non-oral therapies.

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- Hospital nurse-led clinics are held at University Hospital Coventry, Warwick and at the Hospital of St Cross Rugby and are for one-off appointments for people newly diagnosed with Parkinson's, monitoring for people who are being considered for, or who are already on, non-oral Parkinson's therapies (Apomorphine and Duodopa), people recently discharged from hospital where required [referrals to this clinic can only be made by a Consultant or Parkinson's Nurse Specialist].
- Community Parkinson's Nurse Specialists run nurse-led community Parkinson's clinics are held in many areas around the region, including: Coventry, Rugby, Polesworth, Bedworth, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Southam, Shipston, Alcester, Leamington and Kenilworth.

The service is supported by physiotherapists and occupational therapists as well as dieticians and speech and language therapists both at the University Hospital and local to where patients live.

Headache Disorders

This consultant led clinic is supported by a specialist nurse clinic and caters for people with difficult to control headache syndromes where primary care or general neurological clinic management has failed. It has access to various injection therapies (Botulinum toxin, greater occipital nerve block) and newly licensed specialist migraine medications.

Please read the following information in conjunction with the staying healthy guidance and also the clinical guidelines for your specific procedure/condition.

What to bring to face to face clinic appointments

In preparation for your clinic appointment please prepare and bring with you:

- A detailed medical history, bringing an eyewitness can be very helpful in particular if the question is that of seizures/epilepsy
- A list of your current medications
- Your current social situation; e.g. do you live with someone, are you a carer for them, are you working and type of occupation etc.

You may be asked to have a blood test, an ECG or another form of scan either in preparation for your appointment or on the day of your appointment.

What if I have been given a telephone clinic appointment

This may be the case in the assessment of blackouts/seizures or headaches, for example when individuals already had a set of normal investigations such as bloods or scans in the community. The same preparations apply in principle as for a face to face clinic; if relevant please also make sure that an eyewitness is available on the phone with you in particular if the question is that of seizures/epilepsy.

Guidance for Patients

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How to access our service

If your GP feels that you need to see a Neurologist, they will send a referral to us via the Choose and Book service. We also accept referrals from other hospital consultants. All referrals are triaged and prioritised by a consultant to ensure your appointment is made in the appropriate clinic.

Whilst waiting for your appointment, there are a number of online resources that provide helpful information for many neurological conditions.

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

<https://www.merciamstherapy.org.uk/>

<https://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/neurosciences/neurology/www.mssociety.org.uk>

<https://www.mstrust.org.uk/>

<https://shift.ms/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency>

<https://www.mssociety.org.uk/about-ms/what-is-ms/women-and-ms/pregnancy-and-birth>

<http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/parkinsons>

<https://migrainetrust.org>

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk>

<https://www.neurosymbols.org>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your health is deteriorating, you need to be seen by your GP for review and further assessment and management.

Contact Us

Telephone 02476 964000