

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ability of the NHS to provide routine elective services. While we are continuing to deliver planned care, including diagnostic testing and treatment, 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 are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital.

Take Your Medication

If you have been prescribed medication to manage your condition while you await treatment, it is important that you follow the instructions from the doctor or pharmacist who has prescribed this.

When taking medication, you should always:

- take it at right time of day and at the dose recommended by your GP
- check the instructions, or your care plan, to make sure you're taking it properly. Some medicines should only be taken before a meal, or with water or food
- use your own supply and never take medication prescribed for someone else

It's important to let your GP, pharmacist or the Consultant in charge of your care know if you experience any side effects as they may want to change the dose or try a different medicine for you.

Before taking any over-the-counter medication, or supplements, that you can buy without a prescription, it's important to check with your pharmacist as sometimes these can affect other medication you're taking.

Keep Moving

Whatever your age, there's strong scientific evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happier life.

To stay healthy, the [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, on GOV.UK](#), state that adults should try to be active every day and aim to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week, through a variety of activities.

For most people, the easiest way to get moving is to make activity part of everyday life, like [walking for health](#) or cycling instead of using the car to get around. However, the more you do, the better, and taking part in activities such as sports and exercise will make you even healthier.

If you'd like to get active, but don't know where to start, an exercise referral service can help.

[Get active - Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Improve Your Health

There are a number of ways that you can keep yourself healthy while awaiting treatment.

[Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Good Mental Health

As many as one in four people will experience some form of mental illness at some point in their lives. Whether you're concerned about your medical treatment, feel overwhelmed after being diagnosed with a new medical condition, or just feel a bit stressed or down – it is important to know that you are not alone and there are a number of services that are here to help.

Further information related to available support can be accessed via our Mental Health and Wellbeing webpage – a central resource for all issues related to mental health and wellbeing in St George's Hospital.

[Mental Health and Wellbeing - St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust \(stgeorges.nhs.uk\)](https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing)

Talking Therapies

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/>

MIND

Mind provides support for people who are experiencing or recovering from mental health problems to engage in activities in the community as part of their recovery.

These include activities relating to sport and exercise, family and neighbourhood, faith and cultural communities, education and arts and culture.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/>

Other services

Details of other mental health support services can be found on the [South West London CCG website](#).

Need help now?

A 24-hour mental health telephone support line is available for people who are experiencing mental distress. The helpline can be used by patients, carers and anyone who needs advice, help and assistance while in crisis or facing difficulties dealing with mental illness. To speak to someone now, call Samaritans on **116 123** or text **SHOUT** to **85258**

Official website: [Samaritans](#)

If you are worried about causing harm to yourself or someone else, please call 999 immediately.