

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 like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place.

This document provides you with some information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting for your treatment. This leaflet is generic, and it is important that you take into account your own health needs when thinking about increasing your activity levels and changing your diet. Your GP is available to you should you want to discuss your health and wellbeing.

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 the 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, it's important to check with your pharmacist if this can affect other medication you are taking.

Keep Moving

Whatever your age, and ability 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 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/uk-physical-activity-guidelines-2019.pdf), state that adults should try to be active every day and aim to do at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of any physical activity over a week.

For most people, the easiest way to get moving is to make activity part of everyday life, consider making simple changes that suit you and your abilities, this may include doing exercises in your chair or more active housework and gardening. Making simple changes like walking or cycling instead of taking the car, walking upstairs instead of taking the lift or getting off the bus one stop earlier than you need to. However, the more you do, the better.

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If you'd like to get active, but don't know where to start, an exercise referral service can help. You can access these through your GP or you can look on the websites listed below.

If you live in Kingston: [Connected Kingston](#)

If you Live in Richmond: Contact your GP

If you live in Wandsworth: [Getting active with a health condition - Wandsworth Borough Council](#)

Improve Your Health

There are a number of ways that you can keep yourself healthy while awaiting treatment. Health and wellbeing schemes can be accessed via your GP.

You can also look at the national schemes linked here:

[The Eatwell Guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

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

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 seek support. There are a number of services that are here to help.

Talking Therapies

Can be accessed by speaking to your GP.

Richmond

[Contact us - Richmond Wellbeing Service](#)

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.

Referrals to this service are made via your community mental health team. Referral forms and more details can be found:

Kingston - [Mind in Kingston – For better mental health](#)

Richmond - [Richmond Borough Mind – A mental health resource for residents of Richmond \(rbmind.org\)](#)

Wandsworth - [Mind in Brent Wandsworth & Westminster \(bwwmind.org.uk\)](#)

Other services

Details of other mental health support services can be found here: [Home - NHS South West London CCG \(swlondonccg.nhs.uk\)](#)

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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:

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust: [0800 028 8000](tel:08000288000)

If you call, you'll speak to a professional in your local NHS mental health service. They can discuss your current mental health needs and provide access to further support if needed.

Calls to NHS urgent mental health helplines are free.

If you prefer not to call, read more about the support available in your local area:

- [South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust website](#)

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

The NHS is working hard to treat everybody waiting on an elective waiting list. If you no longer need to be on a waiting list please speak to your GP or contact us directly. If you are concerned that your condition has or will deteriorate please contact your GP. The more you can do to keep yourself healthy the more effective your treatment is likely to be.