

Useful information for patients due to have a consultation, treatment or surgery

Introduction

This factsheet has been written for patients who are due to have a hospital consultation, treatment or surgery at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. It has been developed by clinicians who are responsible for your care and aims to provide you with information and resources which you may find helpful while you are waiting. It also introduces My Medical Record, an online tool offering you access to information about your hospital treatment. If you haven't already done so, and are aged over 16, you may wish to consider signing up to My Medical Record while you wait for your treatment or surgery. We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any questions or concerns please contact: myplannedcare@uhs.nhs.uk

If you are concerned that your condition is worsening

This information is intended to support your general health while you are waiting for your hospital treatment. If you are concerned that your condition is worsening or are worried about any aspect of your health, contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice. In an emergency contact 999.

My Medical Record

My Medical Record is a secure online system holding your personal health record (PHR) provided by University Hospital Southampton. We have developed this service because our research has shown that patients value the ability to have access to their hospital information online to co-manage their healthcare.

My Medical Record can be accessed from any web-enabled device (computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone, for example). It allows you to see your appointment letters and other information that we hold about you and enables you to communicate with us about different aspects of your care.

My Medical Record can:

- Connect you with your healthcare team
- Provide you with information from the hospital, including:

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- clinic letters
- outpatient appointments
- test results, including blood tests
- Reduce the need for hospital visits

It also allows you to add your own information about your health, including details which may be being monitored as part of your treatment, such as your weight or blood pressure. In some cases this could reduce the need for you to attend outpatient appointments. You can also keep a record of anything you think might be relevant to your overall healthcare, such as medications or emergency contacts.

How do I sign up?

You will need to register to use the My Medical Record service.

Please visit: <https://mymedicalrecord.uhs.nhs.uk/> or scan the QR code below and select 'Log in' – then follow the steps to create an NHS Login.



Find out more

If you would like to find out more about My Medical Record:

- Access our [information leaflet](#)
- Email us at: mymedicalrecord@uhs.nhs.uk
- Follow us on Twitter: [@mymedrec](#)

Medication

If you have been prescribed medication, it is very important to take it exactly as directed.

Starting a new medication

Before using a new medication, carefully read all the directions on the label and the 'patient information leaflet' (PIL) that comes inside the packet or box (it is also a good idea to keep these leaflets in one place so that you know where to find them).

You can access NHS medicine guides online here: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>.

If you have any questions or concerns about your medication

If you have any questions or concerns about your medication or are confused or unsure about how to take it, it is important to talk to a healthcare professional such as your GP or pharmacist.

When taking your medication, you should:

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- Take it at the right time of day, and at the prescribed dose.
- Check the instructions in the packet or box, to make sure you're taking it properly. Some medicines should only be taken before a meal on an empty stomach, but others need to be taken with or after food, for example.
- Use your own supply and never take medication prescribed for someone else.
- Let your doctor or pharmacist know if you experience any side effects as they may want to change the dose or try a different medicine for you.
- Don't stop using your medication unless directed to do so by your doctor, since abruptly stopping some medicines can lead to severe side effects.

Tips on remembering when to take your medicines

The following tips may help you remember to take your medicines regularly, as prescribed:

- Create a medication plan that lists all your medication and when you should take them, to help you develop a routine.
- Build medication into your daily routine so you never forget to take it, such as before brushing your teeth at night or before/after eating breakfast.
- Use daily pill containers to help you keep track of whether you've taken your daily doses.
- Refill your daily pill container on the same day every week to avoid doubling up on doses.
- Timer caps for pill bottles can help keep track of when you last took your medications, although these need to be purchased separately.

Other medication tips include:

- Keep an updated list of all the medications you take on hand. This will allow any healthcare professionals you meet to know exactly what medicines you are taking.
- Don't share or give away prescribed medications. This practice is illegal and dangerous and can harm those who take your medications without a valid prescription.
- Take extra medication with you when traveling in case you stay longer than planned.
- When traveling by airplane, always pack medication in your carry-on bag to prevent damage from changes in temperature and air pressure. Also, you'll have it on hand if your luggage is lost or damaged.

Some common questions about taking medications can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/>

Medicines helpline

For questions about medicines prescribed by the hospital you can contact the Southampton medicines helpline on **023 8120 6907** (Monday to Friday 9am to 6.30pm) or email: **medicinesadvice@uhs.nhs.uk**

Finding a pharmacist

You can find a pharmacy near you by searching: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

Exercise

Regular exercise offers a number of benefits for our health. Better fitness levels reduce complications when having any procedure. This allows you to leave hospital and return to your normal quality of life more quickly. Having an active lifestyle is good for your health and if you are normally an active person it is important to keep that up before your procedure. People with low activity levels can improve their fitness levels within as little as four weeks prior to

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their procedure. This gives you an opportunity to get fitter before your procedure and improve your chances of a better and quicker recovery.

Your GP or clinical nurse specialist may be able to offer you personalised advice for keeping active while you await your treatment or surgery.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

Improve your health

Smoking

Smoking is bad for your health. Stopping smoking offers a wide range of benefits for your mental and physical health, including:

- You will be at less risk of smoking related diseases such as heart disease, lung cancer and chronic bronchitis.
- Stopping smoking lets you breathe more easily
- Stopping smoking gives you more energy
- You may feel less stressed
- Stopping smoking improves smell and taste
- A smoke free home will help to protect loved ones

Stopping altogether or reducing the amount you smoke while you await surgery can help you recover more quickly.

More information about smoking cessation can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/>

Find your local Stop Smoking Service: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/>

Weight management – healthy eating

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good health and can help you feel your best. This means eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions and consuming the right amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Information on how to help you and your family eat better and move more, including a food scanner app to reveal a range of healthier food swaps can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/>

Weight management

If you are overweight, losing weight has many health benefits. Making small, simple changes to what and how much you are eating and drinking can really help you lose the pounds. Further information and NHS weight loss plans can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/>

Alcohol

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Cutting back on alcohol can be an effective way to improve your health, boost your energy and lose weight. Any reduction in the amount of alcohol you drink every week will be beneficial. Advice on reducing your alcohol intake can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/drink-less/>

If you feel your alcohol intake is becoming an issue the first step is to get help, advice and support. The NHS live well website has further information here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support/>

Alcoholics Anonymous have resources that you can access via telephone, email, website and live chat. Information can be found at: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Good mental health

Good mental health is as important as good physical health. It is important that we recognise when we are stressed, anxious, low in mood, or depressed. Further information about self help and ways to improve your mental wellbeing, from expert advice to tools to work out what support you need visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

If you feel you are having a mental health crisis please contact your GP who can advise and direct you to the most appropriate care.

Other resources offering mental health support:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>

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

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

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

Further information and support

What to expect when you come into hospital

Our 'Your stay in hospital' booklet includes information to help you know what to expect when you come into one of our hospitals. It introduces the staff you will meet and outlines key safety information, plus details of our facilities and the support that is available to you. To access 'Your stay in hospital' and our full range of patient leaflets, visit: <https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-patients/patient-information-leaflets>

Patient support hub

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Our patient support hub coordinates a range of support for patients, families and carers. Our volunteers can support you during a visit to hospital and at home. We can also refer you to other community-based voluntary service providers who can help. We offer a range of helpful services, including:

- accessibility and interpreting
- carers support networks
- vulnerable patient transport

Telephone: **0800 484 0135**

Email: patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk

For full details see: <https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Visitinghospital/Patient-support-hub-patient-information.pdf>

Patient advice and liaison (PALS)

Our patient and advice and liaison service (PALS) team are here to advise you on any aspect of your NHS care and treatment. They can:

- offer advice and support for patients, families and carers
- provide information about NHS services
- listen to your concerns, suggestions and compliments
- help sort out problems quickly on your behalf

Telephone: **023 8120 6325**

Email: pals@uhs.nhs.uk

For full details visit: <https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/contact/tell-us-about-your-experience/getting-help>

For practical assistance and the latest information

Our website features the latest information for patients and a range of online services, including:

- consultant details
- parking information
- ward telephone numbers
- how to cancel or amend your appointment
- latest COVID restrictions and news

Please visit: www.uhs.nhs.uk