

Staying Healthy Guidance

Introduction

This section has some information about where you can find help to look after your health and wellbeing while you are waiting for a hospital appointment or treatment.

Guidance for Patients

Managing pain

Some people are in pain or discomfort while they are waiting for a hospital appointment or treatment.

You can find [help and advice on managing ongoing pain](#) on the NHS website.

The [Chartered Society of Physiotherapy](#) also has some helpful information on managing pain.

If your pain is getting worse or you are finding it difficult to cope with, contact the hospital team where you are waiting for your appointment or treatment (this information will be on your referral letter), alternatively you can contact your GP practice or NHS 111.

Healthy living

The NHS website has lots of [free tools and support](#) to help with:

- [Losing weight](#)
- [Getting active](#)
- [Quitting smoking](#)
- [Drinking less](#)

These actions are good for your health generally, but if you are due to have an operation, they can also help you to recover more quickly from it.

Worries about money

Waiting for your hospital treatment could be affecting how many hours you are able to work, and how much you are earning.

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

The Government website has advice on [disability and sickness benefits](#). This includes information on:

- applying for the personal independence payment (which has recently replaced the disability allowance)
- attendance allowance
- employment support allowance
- extra help for things like wheelchairs if you need them.

There is also help with applying for [universal credit](#) as well as with things like [managing debt, money, and how to claim sick pay](#).

You may also be able to receive help with paying for healthcare costs, such as prescriptions, travel costs, dental costs, and eye care costs. [Check if you qualify for help paying these costs](#)

There is also the [NHS Low Income Scheme](#) that may be able to help you with these costs if you are a pensioner, a student, earning a low wage, receiving state benefits, or living in a care home.

Do you look after others?

People who look after other people with health needs are often known as carers.

If you are looking after someone regularly because they are ill, elderly or are a disabled person – including your family members – then you are a carer.

You may help them with washing, dressing, taking medicines, getting out and about, or travelling to healthcare appointments. You may also help them with things like shopping, cleaning and laundry and organising their money.

Carers might give emotional support like sitting with the person they care for to keep them company or watching over someone if they cannot be left alone.

You can find information about [support and benefits for carers, including how to get a carer's assessment](#) on the NHS website.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Mental health

People sometimes feel worried or anxious before a hospital appointment or treatment. This is perfectly normal.

Some people might also find that an existing mental health condition gets worse.

You can find helpful links for mental health support on the NHS website:

[Information and support for your mental health](#)

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[Every Mind Matters: advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental](#) health and wellbeing

If you are finding that your feelings are becoming too intense or difficult to cope with,

if you live in England and are aged 18 or over, you can access [NHS psychological therapies \(IAPT\) services](#). A GP can refer you, or you can refer yourself directly without a referral. [Find an NHS psychological therapies service](#).

Contact Us

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