

## 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.

The Healthwise physical activity referral scheme (PARS) is for Croydon residents (or those registered with a Croydon GP) who are physically inactive and have an existing medical health condition which could be improved through increasing physical activity (for details of eligible health conditions please [click here](#)).

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Eligible Croydon residents will receive 12 weeks of physical activity support at regular training sessions. This is followed by, up to, three years of access to discounted monthly membership, to encourage you to continue to stay active independently.

If you think you might be eligible to participate in the Healthwise Physical Activity Referral Scheme, please speak to your GP so they can make a referral for you. If you have any further questions, please contact the Healthwise Team on 07752 084259 or email [healthwise.croydon@nhs.net](mailto:healthwise.croydon@nhs.net)

## Improve Your Health

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

Live Well Croydon aims to improve overall health and wellbeing of Croydon residents by helping them to change health behaviours. This includes; support for those who need help to stop smoking, maintain a healthy weight, take more exercise, reduce how much alcohol they drink, sexual health advice and supporting mental wellbeing. This is available to anyone willing to make a change to improve their health and wellbeing.

The programme, named JustBe Croydon, offers advice, hints and tips on a range of health behaviours, such as:

- weight management
- physical activity
- smoking cessation
- alcohol consumption
- mental wellbeing
- sexual health

It also includes apps, podcasts, expert advice, videos, diet plans and exercise routines to help you get started. There is a health MOT questionnaire which asks about lifestyles choices with regards to the areas named above and can provide you a better understanding of your overall health and wellbeing. Depending on your answers you could be eligible for our free 12-month programme called Just Live Well.

You'll also be able to meet with a Live Well advisor in one-to-one appointments. They can support you to make healthier lifestyle choices and improve your overall health and wellbeing.

To find out more, visit [JustBe Croydon](#)'s website.

## 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.

### Croydon Talking Therapies

Croydon Talking Therapies is a free and confidential service for adults who are registered with a Croydon GP, who would like to improve how they feel, learn ways to worry less and sleep better.

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

The service offers specialist support for patients experiencing stress due to living with a long term health condition (such as COPD, diabetes, arthritis) and also helps people who are experiencing common problems such as depression, panic attacks, anxiety and provide help for people who have experienced a trauma or have long term health conditions.

How to make an appointment:

- [Visit the website](#)
- Call **020 3228 4040**
- Ask your GP to refer you

There are many different types of talking therapy including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and counselling.

### **MIND in Croydon**

Mind in Croydon's Social Networking Service 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 on the [Mind in Croydon website](#).

### **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 in Croydon 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 [0800 731 2864](tel:08007312864).

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