

Introduction

The COVID19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. 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 can support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

"While still in its early days, the My Planned Care website will only provide an average waiting time for all procedures across a particular specialty, and therefore this should not be taken as an exact measure of how long you will wait. Some procedures will happen more quickly, while others may take longer than the average wait time stated. More detailed information is expected to be included on the platform over time, as the site develops"

While you are waiting you can use any extra time in a positive way to help yourself to be healthier before your surgery. Here are the ways that you can put yourself in the best place to have your procedure.

Take Your Medication

A better health outcome is the most significant benefit of using medication correctly as prescribed. Doctors prescribe medications to treat your symptoms and to help you manage or overcome certain health conditions. Failing to use medicines as prescribed can result in worsened health, longer recovery, unwanted side effects, substance use disorders, death, and other serious health conditions that require intensive treatment.

Before using a new medication, carefully read all the directions on the label and ask your doctor or pharmacist for help and clarification if you're confused or unsure about how to properly take the medication. This can prevent misunderstandings that could lead to accidentally doubling up on doses or using less than intended.

Your doctor or pharmacist can also explain possible side effects you may face when misusing the medication or combining it with certain other substances. For instance, benzodiazepines should never be mixed with opioids, since this combination can result in overdose or death.

Here are some additional tips for taking your medications as prescribed:

- Use your medication at the same time every day to prevent the overlapping of doses.
- Keep an updated list of all the medications on hand, so every doctor and specialist you meet with can screen for potentially fatal drug interactions.
- Check to see whether your medications should be taken on an empty or full stomach.

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- Build medication into your daily routine so you never forget to take it, such as before brushing your teeth at night or 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.
- Buy timer caps for all your pill bottles to keep track of when you last took your medications.
- Don't share or give away medications. This practice is illegal and dangerous and can harm those who take your medications without a valid prescription.
- Bring 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.
- 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.

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

You can find a pharmacy near you by searching on NHS Choices or alternatively see the local listings.

Moving More

“If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat.” – Chief Medical Officer for the UK

National guidelines for physical activity recommend 150 minutes of moderate intensity per week or at least 75 minutes of intensity per week. These websites have excellent resources to help children of all abilities to achieve these goals.

Moving Medicine: www.movingmedicine.ac.uk/consultation-guides/patient-info-finder

Change4Life: www.nhs.uk/change4life

Eating More Healthily

A healthy diet is important for development and even more essential before an operation. Preventing iron deficiency can reduce the risk of requiring a blood transfusion and improve recovery after major surgery. Iron rich diets are the best way to make this happen or sometimes iron supplements are needed to top up iron levels.

You can read more about the benefits of iron rich diets by searching 'NHS BT iron in your diet'.

Find useful tips and ideas on eating more healthily at Change4Life: www.nhs.uk/change4life

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The contents of this information has been reviewed and approved by the Surgery and Critical Care, Medicine and Family Services Clinical Governance Groups of Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust.

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People living within North East Lincolnshire can find further information and support provided by:

NELC Livewell: <https://livewell.nelincs.gov.uk/healthy-weight/>

Healthwatch

Healthwatch is the independent consumer champion for the community, influencing all local health and social care services. Healthwatch's role is to enable local people to monitor the standards of provision of local care services and decide whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved. Healthwatch gives people a voice to help improve the design of services as well as help to make the right choices about the services they receive. <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk>

Creating a Smoke Free Lifestyle

There is a free local Stop Smoking Service (LSSS) near you. With their professional help, you're 3 times as likely to quit for good. If you or a family member would like support stopping smoking visit the NHS website for advice and support. www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/take-steps-now-to-stop-smoking

Mental Wellbeing

Mental Health support is provided by NAViGO for people living in North East Lincolnshire who are experiencing an acute mental health crisis. This service is community-based and includes doctors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, healthcare assistants and associate practitioners. We provide crisis interventions through telephone support, assessments and intensive community-based treatment via the Home Treatment Team. Assessments and treatment can take place virtually via phone and video call, or in an appropriate community setting such as an NHS site, or your own home.

NAViGO: <https://navigocare.co.uk/>

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:

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

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

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing aims to connect people living in North East Lincs with community-based activities that can help improve overall health, wellbeing and independence.

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Social prescribing is a way for local agencies to refer people to a link worker. Link workers give people time, focusing on 'what matters to me' and taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. They connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support. When social prescribing works well, people can be easily referred to link workers from a wide range of local agencies, including general practice, pharmacies, multi-disciplinary teams, hospital discharge teams, allied health professionals, fire service, police, job centres, social care services, housing associations and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations.

Our service is called [thrive.nel](https://www.thrive.nel) and we have a small team of Link Workers based at Centre4. Self-referral is encouraged or ask about Social Prescribing at your GP practice for relevant long-term conditions including Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Atrial Fibrillation, Chronic Heart Disease, Diabetes Type 1, Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, Fibromyalgia and Epilepsy.

For more information please contact Centre4 on [\(01472\) 236673](tel:01472236673) and one of our Social Prescribing team will talk to you about what the programme can offer.

NHS England: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>

NEL Centre4: <https://centre4.org.uk/services/social-prescribing-thrive-nel/>

Voluntary Services

Many NHS organisations and charities need help from volunteers. This is a great way to support the NHS and get involved in your community. Local NHS Trust websites usually include details of how to get involved.

NE Lincs Council Volunteering Information: <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/volunteering-and-community-groups/volunteering/volunteering-opportunities/>

NHS England Volunteering Information: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/get-involved/get-involved/volunteering/>

The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HW Alliance) is a partnership between sector representatives and the health and care system. It is a key element of the Health and Wellbeing Programme, enabling the sector to share its expertise at a national level with the aim of improving services for all communities.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/hwalliance/>

Advice and Support

There comes a time in everyone's life when we can all use a little help, advice and support. Our friendly and professional team at Advice-Centre4 can provide you with practical, free advice on a wide range of topics and issues.

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If you are struggling or need some help, why not visit the centre today. You can ask our team anything including help with benefits, debt and money, relationships and family, employment, consumer advice and resources and if we can't help we will find you someone who can.

Can't make it to the centre? Give us a call on [\(01472\) 236675](tel:01472236675). In some circumstances we can arrange an appointment or home visit to ensure you get the advice that you need.

Centre4: <https://centre4.org.uk/advice/>

ConnectNEL is a helpful and friendly signposting service created to help you get in front of the services and activities you need faster. Our experienced team has a constantly updating database that can connect you to the services that you need, when you need them such as Therapists, Support Groups, Care Professionals, Social Groups/Events, Childcare, Health & Fitness Classes, Outdoor Exercise, Legal Advice.

ConnectNEL: <https://centre4.org.uk/services/connectnel/>

Pain Management

Pain Concern is a charity working to support and inform people with pain and those who care for them, whether family, friends or healthcare professionals. We believe that pain is best faced together by the 'Pain Community' of people with pain, their family, supporters and healthcare professionals. This ideal is reflected in the make-up of the Pain Concern team. Whether phone, online or in person, we have some great tools available to help you manage your pain. Confidential, anonymous and free telephone and email services to individuals in the UK via our helpline. Find out how we can put pain in its place - Resources to help you self-manage your pain. <https://painconcern.org.uk/>

Money and Social Care

Dealing with money issues can sometimes be off-putting, but if you don't understand how things like credit or mortgages work, you could end up losing out financially or getting yourself deep in debt. The following pages will give you the information you need to make the right choices, including help to deal with your debt problems, how to avoid losing your home and how to get your finances back into shape. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/>

Getting a carer's assessment Contact the social services department of the council covering the area where the person you care <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/s/?q=social+care>

Citizens Advice North East Lincolnshire offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free. We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

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We advise people across North East Lincolnshire from our main office and outreaches at the Immingham Hub, Freeman Street and West Marsh Community Centre

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/north-east-lincolnshire/>

Patient Information Leaflets

Here you will find some helpful information for patients and carers. This information is for guidance purposes only and does not replace professional clinical advice. Use the filters and searches below to find what you need. If there's something you can't find

https://www.nlg.nhs.uk/resources/?for=&resources_topic=all&resources_type=patient-information-leaflet&resources_audience=all